

Accident at Hard Rock Hotel halts construction



South Lake Tahoe's SWAT vehicle rams the entrance of the former Horizon casino in Stateline on Aug. 13. Photo/Provided

Updated Sept. 4 1pm

Construction at what will be a Hard Rock Hotel in Stateline temporarily stopped because of an accident on the job Friday.

The porte cochere – or overhang for what was the valet area for the old Horizon hotel-casino – collapsed Aug. 29, trapping one of the workers in the debris. The person was projected by equipment and not injured.

Brothers Jon and David Park are spending \$60 million to transform the property into Lake Tahoe Hard Rock Hotel. Neither was available for comment, nor was Nevada OSHA. Occupational Safety and Health Administration officials have since OK'd all work to continue.

Tahoe-Douglas Fire Marshal Eric Guevin said his agency and Nevada-OSHA put a "red tag" on the site, meaning work had to stop at least in the area of the accident. This was lifted on

Sept. 2 at 2pm.

“They have new plans and doing things differently,” Guevin told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Construction crews had a permit from the county to demolish this outside structure on the west side of the property. Some of it had been destroyed Aug. 13 when law enforcement used it as a training site.

Someone driving by the site that morning about 8am said they saw dust wafting in air and that two sides of the ceiling looked like it was folding in on itself.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Health plan deductibles weigh down employees

By Tara Siegel Bernard, News York Times

Anita Maina was working on an arts and crafts project she found on Pinterest – creating a table out of wood and cork – when she ripped off a fingernail while removing staples from a piece of wood.

“It is one of those things that really hurt, and I thought I should go to urgent care,” said Maina, 27.

But she ultimately skipped the visit since she had not met the \$6,000 deductible on her health plan, and she knew she probably did not have much left in her health savings account, a type of tax-advantaged savings vehicle that is often used with high-deductible plans to help defray out-of-pocket costs.

Maina, an associate in a health and human services consulting agency, said her employer added the high-deductible plan earlier this year; though her monthly premiums are only \$34, these plans require employees to pay for a greater share of their medical expenses upfront, before the plan starts making payments.

Next year, even more corporate workers are likely to be offered high-deductible plans – sometimes known more benignly as consumer-directed plans – and at a rising share of large companies, it will be the only option remaining.

“You can’t sugarcoat this,” said Paul B. Ginsburg, a professor of the practice of health policy and management at USC’s Sol Price School of Public Policy. “This is a more challenging situation for consumers and it’s a reflection of how difficult it is to afford health care.”

Just as employers replaced pensions with retirement savings plans, more large companies appear to be in a similar cost-sharing shift with health plans. Besides making workers responsible for more of their care, employers hope these plans will motivate employees to comparison-shop for medical services – an admirable goal but one that some say is hard to achieve.

Read the whole story

How mental toughness gives athletes the edge

By Rachel Jacqueline, Life

At a sudden-death play-off for first place in the World University Championships of golf earlier this year, Hong Kong amateur Tiffany Chan was staring defeat in the face. Watching her competitor sink a difficult putt, she knew she had to match her rival.

After four rounds of play, the two golfers were tied at 10-under-par 278 – and they had wowed the crowds, hole for hole. It all came down to a single shot. Chan took a deep breath, focused and holed a three-meter birdie putt for the win.

“I just told myself to keep calm, take one shot at a time and focus on the present moment,” says the 20-year-old Tuen Mun resident. “I had to be tough – I had only one chance and I had worked hard for it.”

Chan’s fortitude in a moment of immense pressure is known in sports psychology as “mental toughness”. A term championed by sports psychologist James Loehr in the early 1990s, mental toughness has since been recognized as the “X-factor” that gives winning athletes the edge over their competitors.

Despite its significance, health professionals and athletes still struggle to determine what being “mentally tough” means. “Mental toughness is a combination of a few traits like resilience and stoicism. It’s about finding the opportunity in everything,” says Laura Walsh, mental health counselor and applied sports psychologist at LifeShift Hong Kong.

Walsh has first-hand knowledge of what being mentally tough requires. She competes in triathlons and international adventure races, which are multi-day events covering 350 kilometers of mountain biking, kayaking, rope work, running and trekking.

Competing in the Canadian team during the Moroccan Eco-Challenge in 1999, she recalls being on the verge of physical and mental exhaustion from sleep deprivation and altitude sickness. “My stomach felt like it was in my knees and my

eyeballs felt like they were being sucked back into my head because my head hurt so much. I was done.”

Yet, she found the courage to continue. “After minutes of blubbering, I stood up and just started to put one foot in front of the other.” The team finished seventh.

The “plough factor” Walsh speaks of – continuing regardless of physical discomfort – resonates with endurance swimmer Simon Holliday, who swam 35km last May, from Hong Kong to Macau, to raise awareness of plastics in the ocean. He completed the swim in a record 10 hours, 20 minutes, and 30 seconds.

Read the whole story

Renowned organist to play in Incline

Internationally known organist Roger Nyquist will put on a virtuoso recital program Sept. 27.

This is first visit to Lake Tahoe since the dedication of the organ at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in 2005.

He will be at the church (341 Village Blvd., Incline Village) at 7pm.

Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Go online or call 775.781.4702 for tickets.

Barton changes medication distribution

Barton Hospital has adopted a state-of-the-art procedure to make medication use safer.

Before a patient receives a medication, a unique bar code on the patient's wrist band is scanned and the patient's information loads on the computer. Then the medication is scanned and verified with the patient's information. If the bar code on the prescription and the patient information do not match, an alert pops up and stops the nurse from administering the medication.

Medicare encourages bar code scanning with a goal that hospitals adopt this new procedure for 10 percent of all medications in the first three months of use.

Barton Hospital has worked diligently to install this program and within the first month, more than 80 percent of medications are now scanned by a bar code.

Policymakers rethink merits of Common Core

By Kimberly Hefling and Julie Carr Smyth, AP

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Millions of students will sit down at computers this year to take new tests rooted in the Common

Core standards for math and reading, but policymakers in many states are having buyer's remorse.

The fight to repeal the standards has heated up in Ohio, with state Rep. Andy Thompson, a Republican, saying it's kind of "creepy the way this whole thing landed in Ohio with all the things prepackaged."

It's playing out in Louisiana, where GOP Gov. Bobby Jindal is in a nasty feud involving his former ally, Education Superintendent John White. Jindal has sued the Obama administration, accusing Washington of illegally manipulating federal grant money and regulations to force states to adopt the Common Core education standards.

The standards were scrapped this year in Indiana and Oklahoma. Governors in North Carolina, South Carolina and Missouri have signed legislation to reconsider the standards, even though they still will be used in those three states this fall.

Like many critics, Thompson and Jindal base their opposition on federal support of the standards. But states led the Common Core movement that really took off in 2009 and that effort was voluntary.

The administration offered incentives to states to adopt college and career-ready standards, and Common Core fit the bill. The incentives included cash grants and permission to ignore parts of the much-maligned No Child Left Behind law.

The standards emphasize critical thinking and spell out what reading and math skills students should grasp at each grade level, while leaving how those skills are mastered up to districts and states. The hope was that higher standards shared across state lines would allow for shared resources, comparable student performance measures and smoother school-to-school transitions for children who move, such as military kids.

Nearly every state adopted the standards.

Debate spreads

The debate over Common Core has spilled into the national political realm. Among potential GOP presidential candidates in 2016, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush supports the standards; Jindal, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence and Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul do not.

Teachers' unions, historically aligned with the Democrats, endorsed the standards and helped develop them. But they now complain about botched efforts to put them in place and say it's unfair to use Common Core-based assessments in new teacher evaluation systems rolling out in much of the United States.

The issue has gotten pulled into a general anti-testing backlash in parts of the country. To ease the testing concerns, Education Secretary Arne Duncan recently said he would allow states to delay using students' test scores in teacher evaluation systems.

"What really has happened is that this has become a politicized issue and it's become an ideological symbol, interestingly, on both sides," said Patrick McGuinn, a political science professor at Drew University. He said the standards and the assessments designed under them are generally considered acceptable or of high quality.

Classrooms prepare

Far from the political discourse, American classrooms continue to be transformed by the use of the standards, with new curricula developed and teachers trained. Some parents are perplexed by the new ways their children are completing their lessons.

Supporters like former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue, a Republican

who helped lead the governors' group that identified the goals set by Common Core, say politics and mistrusts have hijacked a needed and effective education overhaul.

The standards were a response from governors in a defensive mode to keep the federal government out of education, Perdue said, and he supported the changes out of concern for U.S. students' global competitiveness. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is among backers.

"It's just a situation that I don't think should have become political, which has become politically toxic and I don't really know how to decontaminate that," Perdue said.

Shifting public opinion

A PDK/Gallup Poll released Aug. 20 found a dramatic change in the number of people aware of the standards. Last year, two-thirds of those surveyed said they'd never heard of the standards. This year, 81 percent said they had – and 6 in 10 said they oppose them.

Daniel A. Domenech, executive director of the national organization representing school superintendents, said polling provides more evidence it's important to "slow down to get it right."

This school year marks a milestone. This coming spring, roughly 11 million students in more than half the states are expected to take new computer-based assessments aligned with Common Core standards that were developed by two groups of states to replace the standardized tests that had been used.

States can choose the assessment to be used, but those decisions have not been without controversy. Some states, including Georgia and Michigan, that originally joined the consortiums, have dropped out and opted for different tests.

Awaiting results

The rollout of Common Core-based tests will be watched closely for computer glitches and other problems, as well as to see how well students perform.

The ambition of Common Core is “quite broad,” said Jonathan Supovitz, co-director at the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at the University of Pennsylvania. He said the standards have the potential to bring new tools and technologies into classrooms and lead to greater student mastery of subjects, but it will take time.

“This is not going to happen overnight. It’s going to take lots of resources and lots of teacher exposure to new ways of doing things and we’re just at the beginning of that process,” Supovitz said.

Many state lawmakers aren’t willing to wait.

State pushback

Jindal initially supported Common Core. He said that’s because the standards were first presented as a bottoms-up approach, but “the reality is what it has become is another tool for the federal government to try to dictate curriculum.”

He suspended contracts that the state Department of Education planned to use to buy testing material aligned with the standards. White and education board leaders say the governor overstepped his legal authority, and they sued. A state district judge has since said the governor’s actions were harmful to parents, teachers and students and he lifted Jindal’s suspension of the contracts. The decision allows White to move ahead with Common Core-tied testing plans until a full trial is held later over the legality of Jindal’s executive orders against the standards.

At the same time, 17 state lawmakers who oppose the standards have lodged their own legal challenge, but lost their first round in court.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan has criticized the Jindal's opposition to Common Core as politically driven. In a June interview with "CBS This Morning," the secretary said of Jindal's switched position: "It's about politics, it's not about education."

In Ohio, some teachers have raised concerns about how the standards came out, Ohio Federation of Teachers president Melissa Cropper said, but most largely support them. Some of the state's largest urban districts, such as Cleveland and Columbus, have spent two years and lots of money preparing for the rollout that started this school year, she said.

Cropper urged state lawmakers to stay the course with the standards, which were adopted in 2010.

"All that time, energy and resources would be wasted," Cropper said. "I think it will absolutely throw our districts in chaos."

State Rep. Thompson, whose wife is a Spanish teacher, isn't convinced. He says Ohio and other states adopted the standards in the wake of the economic downturn because they were in desperate need of money.

"When you take federal leverage, it affected people's behavior," Thompson said.

Other voices

Parents and educators opposed to the standards in Ohio were allotted three full days of hearings in mid-August to discuss the merits of replacing Common Core. Defenders of the standards were relegated to holding news conferences.

Lincoln Bramlage, a father of three from Ottawa-Glandorf in northwest Ohio, said the standards are "hardly relevant." He added: "We need to fight for the teachers and the kids. This is not education. It's indoctrination."

Carrie Moenster, a parent and teacher, said she's seen her fourth-grade students in tears because they couldn't understand math standards that she called "abstract and developmentally inappropriate."

"One child who was once very confident comes up to our desks repeatedly while working on an independent assignment because he doesn't trust his own mind and judgment anymore," she said.

Letter: Time to pay attention to net-neutrality

To the community,

Comcast, my father's Internet provider, has illegally slowed Internet speeds to chosen users. Net-neutrality may sound boring, but it's not. Soon you may be the target of discrimination, too. How often are you online? Our way of life depends on it.

Concerned about these and other developments the Internet industry, I wrote to Congressman [Tom] McClintock, I asked him to support proposed FCC rule changes that would regulate the Internet more like a public utility. I want the Internet managed not solely for a profit, but as an essential public good. My daughter's future depends on it.

Mr. McClintock responded that he strongly opposes government regulation that limits markets.

That argument sounds principled and traditionally all-American, but it isn't. Our government was an innovation founded explicitly to support the power of people to stand

against the tyranny of concentrated power. If commercial profits were the only worthy goal, we would not today have the free and open communication, education or transportation systems that underpin the American way of life.

Frustrated with McClintock's extremist position, I did a little (Internet) research.

This year, Internet companies have donated nearly \$9 million to Congress. In the last election, it cost, on average, \$1.6 million to win a House seat. Rep. McClintock spent \$5.69 per vote in our area, and the computer/Internet sector was one of Mr. McClintock's top donors.

This experience illustrates two important points:

1. The Internet is fundamental to our access to information – and so power – and it must be regulated as a public good. Express your American values. Show your support for a fair and open Internet.
2. Rep. McClintock is up for re-election this fall. Though congressional approval ratings are down to 9 percent, we are likely to do what we always do – re-elect the (monied) incumbent. Do your research. Then vote your real interests.

Bonnie Turnbull, South Lake Tahoe

Will traffic deaths rise as states legalize pot?

By Joan Lowy, AP

WASHINGTON — As states liberalize their marijuana laws, public officials and safety advocates worry that more drivers high on pot will lead to a big increase in traffic deaths. Researchers who have studied the issue, though, are divided on the question.

Studies of marijuana's effects show that the drug can slow decision-making, decrease peripheral vision and impede multitasking, all of which are critical driving skills. But unlike with alcohol, drivers high on pot tend to be aware that they are impaired and they try to compensate by driving slowly, avoiding risky actions such as passing other cars, and allowing extra room between vehicles.

On the other hand, combining marijuana with alcohol appears to eliminate the pot smoker's exaggerated caution and it seems to increase driving impairment beyond the effects of either substance alone.

"We see the legalization of marijuana in Colorado and Washington as a wake-up call for all of us in highway safety," said Jonathan Adkins, executive director of Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents state highway safety offices.

"We don't know enough about the scope of marijuana-impaired driving to call it a big or small problem. But anytime a driver has their ability impaired, it is a problem."

Colorado and Washington are the only states that allow retail sales of marijuana for recreational use. Efforts to legalize recreational marijuana are underway in Alaska, Massachusetts,

New York, Oregon and the District of Columbia. Twenty-three states and the nation's capital permit marijuana use for medical purposes.

It is illegal in all states to drive while impaired by marijuana.

Colorado, Washington and Montana have set an intoxication threshold of 5 parts per billion of THC, the psychoactive ingredient in pot, in the blood. A few other states have set intoxication thresholds, but most have not set a specific level. In Washington, there was a jump of nearly 25 percent in drivers testing positive for marijuana in 2013 – the first full year after legalization – but no corresponding increase in car accidents or fatalities.

What worries highway safety experts are cases like that of New York teenager Joseph Beer, who in October 2012 smoked marijuana, climbed into a Subaru Impreza with four friends and drove more than 100 mph before losing control. The car crashed into trees with such force that the vehicle split in half, killing his friends.

Beer pleaded guilty to aggravated vehicular homicide and was sentenced this past week to 5 years to 15 years in prison.

A prosecutor blamed the crash on “speed and weed,” but a Yale University Medical School expert on drug abuse who testified at the trial said studies of marijuana and crash risk are “highly inconclusive.” Some studies show a two- or three-fold increase, while others show none, said Dr. Mehmet Sofuoglu. Some studies even showed less risk if someone was marijuana positive, he testified.

Teenage boys and young men are the most likely drivers to smoke pot and the most likely drivers to have an accident regardless of whether they're high, he said.

“Being a teenager, a male teenager, and being involved in

reckless behavior could explain both at the same time – not necessarily marijuana causing getting into accidents, but a general reckless behavior leading to both conditions at the same time,” he told jurors.

In 2012, just over 10 percent of high school seniors said they had smoked pot before driving at least once in the prior two weeks, according to Monitoring the Future, an annual University of Michigan survey of 50,000 middle and high school students. Nearly twice as many male students as female students said they had smoked marijuana before driving.

A roadside survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 2007 found 8.6 percent of drivers tested positive for THC, but it’s not possible to say how many were high at the time because drivers were tested only for the presence of drugs, not the amount.

A marijuana high generally peaks within a half hour and dissipates within three hours, but THC can linger for days in the bodies of habitual smokers.

Inexperienced pot smokers are likely to be more impaired than habitual smokers, who develop a tolerance. Some studies show virtually no driving impairment in habitual smokers.

Two recent studies that used similar data to assess crash risk came to opposite conclusions.

Columbia University researchers compared drivers who tested positive for marijuana in the roadside survey with state drug and alcohol tests of drivers killed in crashes. They found that marijuana alone increased the likelihood of being involved in a fatal crash by 80 percent.

But because the study included states where not all drivers are tested for alcohol and drugs, a majority of drivers in fatal crashes were excluded, possibly skewing the results. Also, the use of urine tests rather than blood tests in some

cases may overestimate marijuana use and impairment.

A Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation study used the roadside survey and data from nine states that test more than 80 percent of drivers killed in crashes. When adjusted for alcohol and driver demographics, the study found that otherwise sober drivers who tested positive for marijuana were slightly less likely to have been involved in a crash than drivers who tested negative for all drugs.

“We were expecting a huge impact,” said Eduardo Romano, lead author of the study, “and when we looked at the data from crashes we’re not seeing that much.” But Romano said his study may slightly underestimate the risk and that marijuana may lead to accidents caused by distraction.

Many states do not test drivers involved in a fatal crash for drugs unless there is reason to suspect impairment. Even if impairment is suspected, if the driver tests positive for alcohol, there may be no further testing because alcohol alone may be enough to bring criminal charges. Testing procedures also vary from state to state.

“If states legalize marijuana, they must set clear limits for impairment behind the wheel and require mandatory drug testing following a crash,” said Deborah Hersman, former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board. “Right now we have a patchwork system across the nation regarding mandatory drug testing following highway crashes.”

Author to talk about Comstock

history

Mark McLaughlin, award-winning, nationally published author, professional speaker, and photographer returns to the South Lake Tahoe Library on Sept. 20 at 11am.

His presentation will be about the history of Lake Tahoe and the Comstock. The 1859 discovery of silver in western Nevada and the development of the Comstock brought entrepreneurs of all types to the region. It also brought disastrous consequences for the Tahoe basin and its environment. But one timber baron was a visionary who saw beyond the denuded lake-side slopes to dream of a paradise for tourists and nature lovers.

This history lesson is sponsored by the Friends of the Library and is free. The library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Palacio: 'It's time for a new generation'

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News asked the seven South Lake Tahoe City Council candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. The responses are being run in the order LTN received them.*



Name: Matt Palacio

Profession/work experience: *Did not respond.*

Age: 34 (35 later this month)

What organizations, committees or groups are you or have you been involved with?: I'm a member of the Tahoe Regional Young Professionals, South Lake Tahoe Economic Development Task Force, and the 2014 Leadership Lake Tahoe class.

Why are you running for City Council?: It's time for a new generation to be represented in City Council. I'm running to be a voice for everyone in South Lake Tahoe, including the young homeowners, business owners and professionals who see a future in South Lake Tahoe.

Why should people vote for you over the other candidates?: South Lake Tahoe needs new ideas and a new perspective in its leadership. Folks can vote for three City Council candidates in the upcoming election and a vote for me is a vote for a new voice and diversified representation within the council.

What do you think is the most pressing issue in South Lake Tahoe and how will you deal with it?: Lack of vision plagues this town. It's as if we can't get out of our own way and any opportunity we have to improve our town is botched due to infighting. I'd like to help build consensus by balancing facts with feedback and having City Council be more present in creating public-private partnerships and work together. This town is at a crossroads; we can have "more of the same" or we can put our differences aside and move forward with

improvements that make South Lake Tahoe a better place to live, work and play.

If the city cannot reach an agreement with its bargaining units, are you willing to go to impasse? Why or why not?: This is an issue for the city manager to handle, and it's something I look forward to being debriefed on. The City Council will vote on bargaining units, but they aren't necessarily at the bargaining table.

How would you resolve the CalPERS and health care issues in the city?: *Did not respond.*

What is your opinion about term limits for the council?: I stand behind term limits as a way to help the council from getting stale. It allows new council members to bring in fresh ideas to move the city forward.

If the city has positive cash flow, where should the money be spent?: Positive cash flow should be reinvested in the community by way of infrastructure that supports our environment like gutters and streets, and enhances public safety like sidewalks and bike paths. But we should also consider shovel-ready projects that provide immediate improvements in our built environment, access to recreation and create jobs.

What are your ideas for increasing the city's revenues?: I have a sales and marketing background, so I can tell you that to increase revenue, you have to increase business. How do you increase business? By developing your product and reaching new markets. By improving South Lake Tahoe's built environment and offering new amenities we'll attract better spending visitors and stand out against the competition. Let's not just go for "more" business – let's go for "smarter" business to drive revenue from our tourism industry.

What is your vision for the 56-acre project?: The 56-acre project is an opportunity for South Lake Tahoe to positively

position itself as a recreation destination. Improving the recreation center's facility and programs will help residents and visitors alike. Highway 50 is the main corridor through South Lake Tahoe, but only a short stretch runs along the lake. We need to capitalize on this portion and make this into a community hub for both residents and visitors.

What would you do to improve relations with El Dorado County?:

Are you referencing the El Dorado County government or the unincorporated area of Meyers within El Dorado County? I think the answer is the same for both: we need to have two-way communication with the government and citizens. Citizens of Meyers cannot vote in the city, but they are a part of our South Lake community, with the same schools, roads, and businesses. I look forward to working with El Dorado County as well; I've had brief conversations with both Kenny Curtzwiler and Sue Novasel regarding our mutual campaigns and what it would mean to work together. By listening to their needs and having them listen to the city's needs a mutual understanding should be reached. We may not always agree, but at least we'll understand where each other is coming from.

Is the city on the right course with restructuring debt and focusing on recreation? Why or why not?: The city is on track for focusing on recreation, with the Planning Commission and recreation plan building momentum. The city is maintaining transparency and giving residents the opportunity to give their feedback by conducting email surveys and public workshops. There seems to be a high level of collaboration, too, with recent projects like the Tahoe Valley Area Plan integrating bike paths and parks to continue in the direction of recreation. I think the OpenGov.com website that the city is now a part of is a huge step forward in transparency. If you want to see the money that comes into and out of the city coffers, this is the best place to start.

Name one vote the City Council made in the last four years you are proud of and one you are disappointed in – and why?: Proud

of: I commend the City Council for voting for the Harrison Avenue Project, and working to implement this public-private partnership that helps our town visually, economically and environmentally.

Disappointed in: I was disappointed to see our elected officials vote to delay the plastic bag ban's second phase despite overwhelming support for the initiative from shoppers and businesses alike.

What is working in the city and what isn't; and how would you go about changing what isn't working?: I think we have a movement in the younger generation with people who are ready for change. Some of us moved here for the recreation lifestyle and have become involved as change agents (myself), and others have come home after starting successful careers elsewhere to help their hometown flourish (Scott Fair, Darcie Collins). I'm the face of this movement; we're ready to lead South Lake Tahoe in the present and future.

I think what is lacking is community engagement. I think our citizens don't feel connected to their local government for a number of reasons, it could be the transiency that is natural in a resort community, but I also think a lack of representation on the council plays into this as well. It's hard to feel a connection to council members who say they want improved recreation and a cleaner environment when as council members they are not recreating nor voting to improve our environment. I hope to be a council member that is approachable for people of all ages, I am someone deeply committed to our environmental sustainability as this is our biggest asset, and as someone who moved here for a management position at a ski resort and the recreation opportunities in our community I feel I have a better understanding of where we need to invest in first to make life better for residents and visitors alike. I want to connect with the community by making myself available at community events like Live at Lakeview, the Stand Up Paddleboard Series, or chats at local coffee

shops in the winter. I may not always agree with every opinion I hear, but making yourself available is key to an inclusive government.

Being on the council requires working with four others. Give readers an example of how you work well others in difficult situations with differing opinions: Leadership Lake Tahoe's class of 2014 was tasked with putting on a summit as our class project. There were no real parameters given, no budget to start with, only a hierarchical framework. I was elected to be the co-chair of our summit and we set our sights on pulling off a large-scale summit. There were lots of differing opinions on what type of event to put on, how to raise funds, and who to invite as speakers for our panels and keynotes. These decisions were all made through consensus building and getting the class to buy-in to the vision so they felt they were a part of the overall decision making process.

I define leadership as someone who knows the way, shows the way, and goes the way. John Rice at Sierra-at-Tahoe is the best leader I've ever worked for and I use him as my leadership model. We believe in his leadership skills, he invites us to share his vision for the future, and then John actively leads us to our destination.

What is your opinion about the following topics:

- **Ferry service on Lake Tahoe?:** Ferry service on Lake Tahoe would decrease pollution by reducing emissions, and would allow us to increase visitation to the South Shore. A ferry system would create new, high paying jobs as well. So long as the boats had a moderate impact on the environment, I support a ferry service on Lake Tahoe.
- **Loop road?:** The Loop Road is a sensitive subject for many people in our city due to the issues arising from other development projects such as the Chateau project. The city has lost trust with some citizens in our community because of how

past projects were handled. Yet I believe that we need to create a walkable downtown area for our residents and visitors. The majority of the city's budget comes from TOT and visitors' sales tax revenue. Our tourism economy needs to adapt to what visitors want and we also need to embrace a future that doesn't rely on the automobile for your shopping experience. We are a ways off with green-lighting a project like the Loop Road due to many issues outside of the city's control (Caltrans, an environmental impact report, etc.) but I hope to be on the council to bring in all sides the Loop Road conversation and hopefully we'll move forward in a sensible fashion.

- **Future of Lake Tahoe Airport?:** The Lake Tahoe Airport is South Lake Tahoe's largest polluter, next to the Tahoe Keys. If it's going to exist, it should be to serve the greater good of the community. I'd like to see the airport redeveloped to bring in revenue to fund infrastructure and public safety.

- **Increasing the transient occupancy tax?:** I'm staunchly against increasing South Lake Tahoe's transient occupancy tax. Our TOT rates are higher than San Diego, Monterey and Palm Springs – all of which are thriving destinations with higher occupancy rates and a more vibrant tourism economy. A failing hotel doesn't raise rates to bring in more revenue; they work on improving the property to generate the traffic necessary for a successful business. Instead of increasing TOT, let's grow our cash flow by improving South Lake Tahoe's recreation offerings and bringing in better spending visitors.

- **Changing the vacation rental ordinance to reduce the number of such units in neighborhoods?:** A balance needs to be struck in the amount of vacation rentals and non-primary residences and the number of full-time residents that live, work and play in South Lake Tahoe. Vacation rentals are a reality of South Lake Tahoe and generate transient occupancy tax that benefits the city of South Lake Tahoe. But when our town is made up of mostly non-permanent residents, vacation rentals can quickly

take over a neighborhood. I look forward to reviewing the ordinance to see if a sensible balance can be achieved.

Your civic involvement is lacking, why should the public believe you have what it takes to step onto the City Council?:

Civic engagement is defined as individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. My life in Tahoe is dedicated to addressing public concern – whether working to bring more skiers to our slopes and putting heads in beds, volunteer at community clean ups or lead the charge in the creation of the Elevate Your View summit last spring, which addressed community apathy. My lack of experience as an elected politician is exactly why people should vote for me – our town needs new blood and fresh ideas within City Council. I'm not a career politician; I'm a homeowner who wants to create a future here for my family and everyone else.

Tell the voters something about yourself that they may not know: I came to South Lake Tahoe as a child once every winter to toboggan and saucer on the local hills and those trips to my aunt's cabin are the foundation for my love of South Lake Tahoe. My wife and I left Tahoe for two years and were eager to return to South Lake Tahoe to help this community move forward. Service also runs deep in my family. My two male role models growing up served their communities in different ways. My maternal grandfather was a CTA representative who helped his fellow teachers negotiate for fair wages and compensation, sometimes working past midnight on projects after putting his five children to bed. My father was a union representative at a paint factory in the Bay Area representing over 50 coworkers. I come from humble roots, my father's side of the family is from Mexico, and I'm proud of my grandparents for coming to the California to make a better life for themselves and their family. I think of myself at the epitome of the American Dream when seen through their eyes, I've achieved more than I ever thought I could in my life and I look forward

to a progressive future for South Lake Tahoe.