

# Own a piece of 'The Godfather' estate at Tahoe

By Johnathan L. Wright, Reno Gazette-Journal

Welcome to the family.

Fleur du Lac, the estate on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe made famous by "The Godfather Part II," has only 22 residences. One of them, residence 13, is for sale for \$3,749,000. Sierra Sotheby's International Realty has the listing.

In the movie, Fleur du Lac served as the family compound where mobster Michael Corleone threw a party to celebrate his son's first communion. Later, as Corleone watches from the estate, one of his soldiers shoots brother Fredo as they fish on the lake.

**Read the whole story**

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## Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- On Feb. 8 a group of approximately 25 local residents had a meeting to form the NoGlobe Alliance. Its purpose is to influence South Lake Tahoe elected leaders to stop, move or modify SnowGlobe so it does not disrupt the residents. To be a part of this group, email [noglobel18@gmail.com](mailto:noglobel18@gmail.com). The next meeting is scheduled for March. Location TBA.
- Here is the El Dorado-Tahoe roadwork schedule from Caltrans for the week.
- Truckee police on Feb. 9 were told by residents they

were receiving fraudulent telephone calls from the Truckee Police Department's main phone line. The caller claimed that they had warrants and would be arrested if they did not give the caller money. Officers will not call asking for money. Any with questions should call TPD at 530.550.2320.

· On the March 20 Truckee Planning Commission agenda will be the draft commercial cannabis regulations. The meeting starts at 6pm at the airport. The documents will be posted by 5pm March 15.

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# **Expansion and growing pains of Winter Olympics**

**By Heather Dichter, The Conversation**

When the International Olympic Committee announced that PyeongChang would host the 2018 Winter Olympic Games, most people outside of South Korea had probably never heard of it, let alone knew that the eastern part of the country had snow and mountains.

The shift in the type of place capable of hosting such a mega sporting event demonstrated how much the Winter Olympics has grown – but this change also brought with it a set of problems unforeseen when the event began in 1924.

Figure skating first appeared on the Olympic program in 1908, and ice hockey in 1920, but these events were part of the summer games. The first Winter Olympics took place in the French alpine village of Chamonix in 1924. The organizers of the Paris Olympics that year wanted to offer an International Sports Week at the beginning of the year with solely winter

sports as an experiment. Only after its success did the IOC decide to call the Chamonix event the Winter Olympics.

The first few Winter Olympics took place in ski resort towns known to winter sport enthusiasts: St. Moritz, Switzerland, in 1928, Lake Placid, N.Y., in 1932 and Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in 1936. In the 1930s the U.S. and Germany hosted both the Summer and Winter Olympics because the IOC allowed the country which won the right to host the summer games to decide whether they wanted to organize the winter ones too. If they did not – or could not in the case of the Netherlands in 1928 – then the IOC opened up the bidding to other countries.

The Winter Olympics has always been significantly smaller than its summer counterpart in terms of the number of sports contested and number of countries competing. Just over 250 athletes competed in Chamonix, and it took until the 1964 games in Innsbruck, Austria, for more than 1,000 athletes to compete. Fewer than 3,000 athletes competed in Sochi in 2014, whereas more than 11,000 athletes competed in the 2016 Rio Olympics.

### **No more village ski resorts**

Although still significantly smaller than the summer event, the growth of the Winter Olympics to include 102 events across 15 sports at PyeongChang, alongside its global media coverage, means that the games no longer take place in small ski resort villages. Instead, larger cities have bid for and hosted the Winter Games in the past few decades.

Urban centers provide many of the required amenities for a successful Olympics: huge venues for the opening and closing ceremonies, sizeable indoor arenas for ice hockey and figure skating, facilities to accommodate the world's media, and thousands of hotel rooms for all of the spectators. However, those same larger cities tend to be further away from tall mountains and the higher altitudes needed to ensure sufficient

snowfall and cold temperatures for the outdoor events of skiing, snowboarding, and the sliding sports of bobsled, skeleton, and luge.

At the 2010 Vancouver games, even with the widening of the highway that leads from the city to the mountains at Whistler, it still took nearly two hours to reach the mountain venues. The organizers put on buses for those spectators who purchased tickets to events in the mountain to minimize traffic on the highway. After the initial ticket allocation, only Canadians with a postal code within a small radius of Whistler were permitted to purchase the remaining tickets to some of the mountain events.

### **Further and further from the mountains**

One of the reasons the IOC selected the Korean city for the 2018 event was to spread winter sport to a new part of the world which had not held the Winter Olympics. But aside from concerns about the post-Olympic use of these venues in a country where participation in skiing has declined, logistics for spectators will be challenging.

The PyeongChang organizers recommend that visitors use the high-speed train from Seoul which opened in December 2017. However, a major Korean holiday falls during the Winter Olympics and the majority of seats on the train have already been reserved. International spectators who purchased special train passes for the games are now unable to book seats on trains to take them to the Olympic events. There have also been concerns about accommodation shortages.

The next Winter Olympics in Beijing in 2022 will be ever more spread out between venues. As larger cities further away from the mountains host the Winter Olympics, the games feel more disjointed for both athletes and spectators. Fans must decide where to stay and may decide not even to bother attending any mountain events. The organizers for recent Winter Games have

built two Olympic villages, one in the city and another in the mountains, separating athletes instead of them all living together.

Future hosts for the Winter Olympics have to find a way to balance the interests of athletes, spectators, and post-event use of facilities. This challenge will not be easily solved, although recent past host cities – such as Salt Lake City – putting their hat in the ring to host the Winter Olympics again may be one solution.

*Heather Dichter is an associate professor at Leicester Castle Business School at De Montfort University.*

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## **USOC: No plans for American bid for 2026 Olympics**

**By Eddie Pells, AP**

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea – If the U.S. Olympic Committee is going to bid for the Winter Games soon, it will be a bid for 2030, not 2026.

USOC Chairman Larry Probst ruled out the possibility of bringing the Olympics to Salt Lake City, Denver or Reno two years before the Summer Games return to the United States, in Los Angeles.

“It would make things extremely complicated from a financial standpoint with Los Angeles,” Probst said Friday.

**Read the whole story**

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# Sagan Fondo off-road cycling event coming to Truckee

Truckee has been selected as the “gravel” host location for one of two Sagan Gran Fondo cycling events this year and in 2019.

Event producers at Bike Monkey in partnership with three-time world champion cyclist Peter Sagan will bring the event to Truckee May 3-5. Bike Monkey is the producer of the famous Levi’s GranFondo out of Santa Rosa.

Featuring a long-course distance of 67.5 miles, the combo of trail/pavement is ideally suited for wide clearance cyclocross or gravel bikes and will take place on gravel and dirt roads. A shorter, 23-mile course route will also be offered. Participants should expect traffic-controlled intersections, on-bike marshals, moto officials, food stations and SAG providing rider support.

Spaces will be limited to the first 1,500 registrants, with competitive categories and awards for the top three riders in 12 total age and gender groups. **Rider registration** will begin Feb. 15.

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# Olympian takes up cause of vanishing ski trails

By Kendra Pierre-Louis, New York Times

Jessie Diggins fell in love with snow as a child.

Diggins is a member of the U.S. women's cross-country skiing team, which is favored to win a medal at the PyeongChang Olympics. It would be only the second medal in the sport for the United States and the first for the women's team.

Before Diggins was an Olympic skier, before she had even taken her first steps, her parents strapped her into a baby carrier and took her cross-country skiing near her hometown, Afton, Minn.. But she worries that future generations of American children might miss that opportunity.

The risk is real. In the United States, the average time between the last frost of the spring and the first of the winter has expanded by 10 days since the first half of the 20th century.

**Read the whole story**

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## Opinion: Wanting to converse

By Wendy David

First, a confession of weirdness. I love being a part of groups. I like the synergy of groups, how they work collaboratively, how the room sounds ... some listening, others talking.

I like the process of group decision-making, the back and forth, the quiet and noisy, the aha moments of clarity, that groups have goals and purpose. It may be quirky, but instead of being drained from being with and working in a group, I find it energizing.



So, with that confession, it is no surprise to hear that I really enjoyed the inaugural coffee and **conversation with the mayor** on Jan. 24 at Peet's Coffee inside Raley's.

I arrived a bit early, saw Mayor Pro Tem Tom Davis, whom I had invited to join me, bought my latte and sat down to wait. I had no idea what to expect, but was looking forward with anticipation to conversing with whomever joined me, hoping that they, too, were hungry for real conversation about our city issues as well. Back and forth, face to face, group listening, group talking.

First three people pulling around the small table, then 10. OK, I think, we will need three little tables to gather around. Then 20. Hmm, a few will need to stand. Then 30, standing, sitting, leaning. Some participants happened upon us by accident, first curious and then comfortable at joining in.

It was an amazingly diverse group, new faces mixing with old acquaintances, many regular City Council attendees and a few community and public agency folks as well. Remember my weirdness confession earlier? I loved it.

I invited each person to give their name and state one topic that they were interested in having a conversation about. VHRs, SnowGlobe, cannabis, roads, the Echo Summit bridge replacement project, arts and culture in our city, loitering and vagrancy issues were all discussed. The respect and

consideration for each speaker and for Davis and myself as the council members was appreciated. Divergent views made for an interesting and educational, open and varied hour with many topics and many opinions.

I need to have conversation with you. We, as a council need you. Our city has very big topics to discuss and debate and then culminating with big decisions to be made in 2018. We are your elected body. You are the electorate, the body we represent, the body of voters. Our community of voters is divided on many important issues that will continue to come before the council. On each topic, most of you have an opinion, a bias, a belief. The council must take in information, hear your opinions, study and become educated on all aspects of an issue and then vote in the best interests of the electorate as a whole and not the individual.

Good decisions require meeting and talking, conversing and debating, seeking to understand, even if we do not agree. I would argue that throwing out negative and personal barbs at each other through social media does not contribute to the process. I would venture that sitting in groups, discussing the positive and negatives of topics, the alternatives and options does help the process.

Come to the next coffee and conversation with the mayor on Feb. 21 at the Senior Center from 9-10am. I'm pleased that Councilwoman Brooke Laine will be joining me that morning. Peet's was great, but it was suggested to seek a venue without the music and loudspeaker in the background. It did have its own ambiance for sure.

Come to our Cannabis workshop as well. It will be on Feb. 20 at 5pm, the location to still be determined. The council chambers have proven a bit tight for some of our community topics of late.

If you like being a groupie of sorts, like me, you are in for

a fun year of learning, discussing, debating, disagreeing and even agreeing. Please join in.

See you for coffee, see you at the council meetings, see you for the cannabis workshop, all in February. Coffee and conversation with the Mayor will take place on the Wednesday morning after the second council meeting of the month through November.

It's OK to be a little weird about loving groups and having real conversation.

*Wendy David is mayor of South Lake Tahoe.*

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# Private company brings affordable houses to Indian Country

By Mark Fogarty, High Country News

Last year, in Yreka, a town of 8,000 in Northern California's Shasta Valley, Sarah Abono, a member of the Karuk Tribe, moved into a four-bedroom house in a new development on tribal land. She, her husband and three children, who had been living in a modest unit nearby, are enthusiastic about their new dwelling. "This house was a blessing, really," she said.

"Everybody gets their own room. ... We have a beautiful view," she said. "It's nice that there's a lot of young families moving in. Everybody seems to be happy." Abono's husband had been laid off, so the new house is especially welcome now.

In recent years, affordable housing creation in Indian Country

has been languishing due to the decreased buying power of tribes' federal housing assistance. But one company is helping alleviate some of those woes for people like Abono and her family. One for-profit consultant – Travois, based in Kansas City, Mo. – has helped build more than 5,000 homes on tribal homelands, most of them in 17 states in the West, including the one Abono moved into. Over the past two decades, the company has raised \$650 million for affordable Indian housing by leveraging the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit, created in 1986 during the Reagan administration. (That credit remains unchanged in the new tax legislation signed into law this January by President Trump.)

**Read the whole story**

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## **Snippets about Lake Tahoe**

- After receiving high marks from Standard & Poor's Financial Services and Moody's Investor Service in their bond ratings reports, Lake Tahoe Community College is ready to issue a second set of Measure F bonds this month for \$15 million. S&P raised the college's long-term rating from AA-minus to AA. Moody's reconfirmed LTCC's A1 rating and improved its outlook from stable to positive.
- Creedence Clearwater Revisited will be at the Carson Valley in on Aug. 12.
- The Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs has made changes in the wake of the resignation of former director Claudia Vecchio. David Peterson, formerly the department's deputy director, stepped in as interim director. Brenda Nebesky, formerly chief marketing officer, recently stepped into the role of interim deputy director, while former

marketing manager, M.E. Kawchack, was promoted to chief marketing officer.

· University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Radon Education Program is offering free short-term radon test kits to Nevadans until Feb. 28.

· Frontier airlines has added a nonstop flight between Reno and Austin.

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# **South Lake Tahoe City Council schedules meeting to fire city manager for undisclosed reasons**

**By Kathryn Reed**

South Lake Tahoe city officials appear to be operating in a vacuum of lawlessness and deceit, and with no transparency.

A special City Council meeting has been scheduled for Feb. 12 at 9am. The only item on the agenda is in closed session: Public employee discipline/dismissal/release.

The council is only in charge of two employees – the city manager and the city attorney.

Until Nira Doherty started sitting in the city attorney chair on a full time basis the council as a whole had not had a problem with City Manager Nancy Kerry. For nearly six years she received glowing reviews, including as recently as June 2017. At that time she was also given a 5 percent raise.

The City Council on Sept. 19 in closed session agreed to hire Burke, Williams & Sorensen out of Oakland to replace City Attorney Tom Watson, who left at the end of September. Doherty, who had been a deputy city attorney for South Lake Tahoe before going to work for that law firm, had been doing work for the city as special counsel.

She is the interim city attorney who keeps spending taxpayer money beyond what is contractually allowed. (The questions in this **Feb. 3 story** still have not been answered.)

Kerry was placed on indefinite paid leave after the Feb. 6 council meeting. There still has been no reason given.

The following day the city sent out a press release stating Fire Chief Jeff Meston would be interim city manager. *Lake Tahoe News* sent an email to Tracy Sheldon, who handles PR for the city, asking what the difference between interim and acting is because Mayor Wendy David had told *LTN* that Meston was the acting city manager.

Within 10 minutes Sheldon sent a correction to the press release stating acting was the correct word.

Doherty had signed off on the original press release.

In the legal/government world there is a huge difference between acting and interim. And had anyone been made interim city manager, it would have to be announced in open session. Plus, there are protocols to removing a sitting city manager.

There was no item on any council agenda in open or closed session about Kerry between the June review and the Jan. 23 review. That June review was done by consultant Ted Gaebler pro bono, after saying it would cost \$1,500.

An agreement from Mary Egan of Municipal Resource Group is dated Oct. 9. That public document was sent by Egan to Doherty and provided to *LTN* by the city.

Austin Sass was mayor at the time. It is well known Sass and Kerry had their differences; he was also having issues with his council colleagues. Sass, who sits on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board, is not well regarded by his colleagues there or among that agency's staff.

Sass has made it known he would prefer a strong mayor form of government instead of what the city has had for 52 years, which is a city manager led government. It was a contentious year with him in the mayor's seat.

If Egan's company sounds familiar it's because she has done work for El Dorado County.

El Dorado County entered a contract with Municipal Resources Group in 2014 to eliminate the "climate of fear" and create a Climate Action Plan. As was noted in **Larry Weitzman's column on Nov. 3, 2014**, "The purpose of the contract was to address the alleged problems supposedly enumerated in the 'Climate of Fear' study created by the law firm of Van Dermyden Maddux, a study which cost \$140,000." It was then CEO Terri Daly who kept wanting these studies.

While the City Council agreed to have Egan come do the assessment, no one will say whose idea it was.

For legal/Government Code reasons it could not be called an investigation. The word evaluation isn't even in the agreement. Still, what it amounted to was a witch hunt to find dirt on Kerry. And this came just months after that stellar review done by an outside firm.

The agreement letter with MRG describes the scope of work as "assessment of the city leadership effectiveness, the culture of the senior management team, succession planning status and related issues." It further states the plan was to interview department heads, Kerry, Doherty and the five council members. That happened later in October.

Egan refused to respond to *Lake Tahoe News*' inquiries about who first contacted her from South Lake Tahoe and why there was no written report.

One has to wonder how this council and future electeds are supposed to know what the succession plan is or anything else. And succession plans are usually handled in-house.

Egan told Doherty her report would be available in early November. The contract was for \$10,000, with another \$1,500 in expenses.

"There are no invoices/payment records that exist," City Clerk Suzie Alessi told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This is because Egan's bill went to Doherty's law firm, who then billed the city via her monthly agreement. That in part accounts for the higher monthly legal bills she submitted in October and November. The city has refused to release itemized invoices from Doherty's firm.

Paying the consulting firm via the law firm was also a way to hide from the public where taxpayer money is being spent and that Egan was even hired.

There was never any reportable action out of closed session about the firm being hired, which is where it had to be talked about because it was never discussed in open session. A Brown Act violation.

The Brown Act is California's public meeting law that ensures the public's business is conducted in public and not behind closed doors. The only items allowed in closed session are personnel and litigation. And when action is taken in closed session, it has to be reported out in open session.

So the public is left wondering when Egan's services were discussed or if a rogue councilmember or city attorney went on his or her own to hire the firm.

Because the agreement was sent to Doherty and lists her law firm it appears she is the one who at taxpayer expense launched a covert probe of the city manager.

Doherty, David and Meston were asked: How is this contract legal? How is this not a violation of the Brown Act?

The response – silence.

Egan was at the Jan. 23 meeting to talk in closed session about her findings. The department heads reached by *LTN* on Feb. 9 did not want to talk about their sessions with Egan.

One would hope if Egan had found anything egregious about Kerry – which is what the inquiry was focused on – that it would have been brought to council's attention immediately, not three months later.

It's normal in any work environment for co-workers to not all get along, even for people to not like their boss. People switch jobs all the time for a variety of reasons. Just as there is no perfect employee, there is not a perfect boss.

"In my department we are sad. We are saddened about the anonymous comments by past and current employees (as reported in other media)," Lauren Thomaselli, recreation superintendent, told *Lake Tahoe News*. She was not interviewed by Egan and didn't know about her until this week.

"(Kerry) never intended to hurt or put off anyone. The person I know would never intend to have that impact on somebody, especially a coworker or colleague. She is known to really stick her neck out for employees and support us any way she can," Thomaselli said.

The latest edict from the city as of Feb. 9 is that the public is supposed to go through City Clerk Alessi if they want to contact a member of the council. This has never been the policy in all the years this reporter has covered city

government.

Alessi, as an elected official, really has no boss other than the public – just like the council. That is why it might be difficult to reach her since she has been known to not work regular hours, has missed multiple council meetings, and takes off as much time as she wants without being held accountable to anyone. All of that is legal as an elected official.

Per Kerry's contract she is owed nine month's severance unless she is fired for cause. A settlement of some sort could be possible. Kerry could also sue for what appears to be multiple reasons. With the council being her boss, she has rights as an employee that are likely to be proved to have been violated.

David was asked what the process is after next Monday's meeting. No reply.

David as mayor appears to have adopted Sass's way of doing business with transparency and lawfulness not mattering. After the council meeting earlier this week she said there was no reportable action, but went on to tell **LTN** about Kerry being placed on leave and Meston stepping in. So, she either lied about there being no reportable action or she violated the Brown Act by talking about what went on in that meeting on Feb. 6, or maybe both.

And David, who is mayor and therefore the de facto leader of the council, will not say why she is behind firing the city manager.