

Opinion: EDC wasting money on river committee

By Larry Weitzman

In case you are wondering, RMAC is the acronym for the River Management Advisory Committee, a committee set up in the early 1980s by the Board of Supervisors to help advise them on river and nearby land use issues. It is composed of more than five members who have a vested interest in the river: an outfitter, a commercial rafter, a resident land owner, two members of State Parks, a business representative, a private boater, and two members at large.

Meetings are attended by a few people. At the one I attended on Aug. 14 about 10 interested people were there, mostly from the rafting community.



Larry Weitzman

Adam Anderson is the chair and business representative. His connection is ownership of the Villa Florentino, which is under scrutiny regarding its special use permit because of complaints. A hearing is scheduled shortly in front of the Planning Commission. Anderson lives somewhere in Placerville, away from the river. I can't tell you the names of the four other members in attendance. Also in attendance were our very competent Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Laura Schwartz and Vickie Sanders of Parks and Recreation.

The committee meets about 11 times a year, which creates a huge problem for taxpayers. But first I must describe the meeting I attended which lasted nearly two and a half hours. My time watching Looney Tunes was better spent, it was so unproductive (maybe it was a live action Looney Tunes). Not only did not one panel member understand their charge, they didn't even understand their own agenda which consisted of three items. The first one was the approval of the prior meeting's erroneous minutes and the approval of the agenda for that night.

I also attended the prior meeting at the Marshall Gold Discovery Park Museum, which seemed to operate ultra vires. They were mostly concerned about the county's recommendation that RMAC be disbanded.

After listening to Schwartz's description of the nonfunctioning RMAC, many times not fielding a quorum, not understanding their duty or "job," not understanding their purpose, and certainly not understanding the Brown Act or how to conduct a meeting, it didn't take a rocket scientist to see the writing on the wall.

After two and a half hours, the meeting was done and nothing was accomplished but to set another meeting and perhaps another special meeting before the regularly scheduled meeting. The only thing I learned from the RMAC meeting was government dysfunction at its worst. But there is more.

Attending this meeting were two very highly paid EDC employees. In fact, their total annual cost to EDC including salary and all benefits as reported by Transparent California exceeds \$400,000. That's an hourly cost of more than \$200 an hour combined. I am not begrudging the fact that they are paid a lot of money. I am sure they work hard; I know Schwartz does. What I am pointing out is the fact that each of these meetings cost the taxpayer a lot of money.

You can be sure, with prep time, travel time, post mortem time after the meeting and actual meeting time, this meeting cost you and me at least \$1,000 or more for each one of these county dysfunctions. And they do this 11 times a year and have done so for years. You can do the math, but this RMAC thing is no free ride.

And now there is an outcry that the CAO staff, and Parks and Rec staff has recommended that RMAC be disbanded. Why did it take this long? To add some gasoline to the fire, RMAC has been nothing more than to protect the interests of the commercial rafting industry, the concessionaires along the river and other related enterprises. Have they solved any problems? No. The noise, crime, vandalism, and pollution are as big as ever. Have they ever told the board that it's many times out of control? Of course not. But they do tell the board what a boon they are to the county. Yeah, sure. So is Walmart, Big O Tires and every other business in the county, especially the hotels and motels. We get a special 10 percent tax off that tourist industry.

Let's determine what the "industry" really costs the county, sheriff, emergency response, environmental management, code enforcement, and SUP violations. We need to know the whole nine yards and then the causation needs to pay their way. Not the taxpayers. Disbanding RMAC is a great start. That alone will save the county over \$10,000 a year, more money that can be used for potholes and senior legal. Now let's get an accounting of and for everything.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

California colleges full of hungry students

By Emily DeRuy, Bay Area News Group

That old line about getting college students to attend events on campus by offering free pizza is no joke for some young people these days.

In a first-of-its-kind study that looks into the issue of hunger on college campuses nationwide, 13 percent of households with students at community colleges and 11 percent with students at four-year colleges worried about having enough money to buy food in 2015.

It's a problem that some schools say has become more prevalent in recent years.

Read the whole story

Truckee officers recover bikes worth \$125,000+

Four brothers from San Francisco have been arrested on theft charges. They are accused of stealing high-end mountain bikes from various locations in Truckee, Tahoe City, Squaw Valley, and Carson City.

Surveillance images caught the suspects committing the thefts, but no specific identifiable information could be established. Investigators were able to determine the make and model of an associated vehicle, however, no license plate

could be identified.

On Aug. 19 at approximately 10pm, a Truckee police officer was patrolling a location that had previous thefts, when he located the possible suspect vehicle. Officers detained Jesus Gallardo, 25, Sergio Gallardo, 23, Martin Gallardo, 27, and Juan Carlos Gallardo, 29.

All four were charged with multiple counts of grand theft, criminal conspiracy, and possession of stolen property.

Truckee police detectives served search warrants for the suspects' vehicles and a residence in San Francisco. Investigators recovered approximately \$70,000 worth of mountain bikes, road bikes, and related components. The dollar value of all the items taken from Truckee/Tahoe region is estimated to be in excess of \$125,000.

The Truckee Police Department is currently inventorying each of these items in an attempt to locate the lawful owners.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Fallen Leaf Lake joins ambulance consortium

A fifth board member is coming to the CalTahoe Joint Powers Authority board – a rep from Fallen Leaf Lake Fire Department.

The JPA operates the ambulance service on the South Shore. It has been functioning as a four-member board with two people from South Lake Tahoe and two from Lake Valley. This has not been a productive way to do business.

The board agreed to have Fallen Leaf join the ranks. Fallen

Leaf's interest is to have better ambulance response time, according to Chief Gary Gerren. Membership means an ambulance will be at the station at the west end of the lake on a seasonal basis.

The JPA will supply the ambulance, Fallen Leaf will provide the paramedics. Fallen Leaf is not paying into the JPA.

North Tahoe Fire Protection District joined the JPA in fall 2016, but that was short lived. That department folded into Meeks Bay a couple years ago, so it's boundaries are from the West Shore to Kings Beach. Meeks Bay had been a member in the past as well.

Barton Health is still in talks to be a member of the JPA.

As new agencies come on board, it's possible the representation from South Tahoe and Lake Valley could change, too.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Carson City fire at 100 acres, 25% containment



A hillside in Carson City is on fire after being struck by lightning Aug. 22.
Photo/Ceci Chourre'

By Siobhan McAndrew and Marcella Corona, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Voltaire Canyon Fire was burning an estimated 100 acres and was 25 percent contained.

Voluntary evacuations were still in place for the Carson Indian Colony, said Erica Hupp, of the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest.

"There was one house that was in immediate danger, but crews were able to protect the house with a fire retardant drop," she said.

Read the whole story

In solar scuffle, big utilities meet their match

By Elizabeth Shogren, High Country News

Near the end of 2005, Louise Helton had one of those life-changing moments that usually only happen in Hollywood movies. Friends had invited her to join Nevada movers and shakers in an ostentatiously decorated Las Vegas casino ballroom to hear former President Bill Clinton speak. He challenged the audience to diversify the state's economy, and to do so in a very specific way. Adopting a Southern drawl, Helton recalls the words that inspired her: "And he said, 'If I were y'all, y'all would be the Saudi Arabia of solar.'"

Clinton's pitch made sense to the 51-year-old Helton. With its abundant sunshine, Nevada was well positioned to become a clean energy leader. Besides, the state lacks its own coal or natural gas reserves, so it has to import those conventional fuels, thus benefiting other states' economies instead of its own. "There is no better or cheaper resource than the sun that is shining down on the sunniest place in the West," Helton says.

Clinton's words percolated away inside Helton for a few years. Then, in 2008, she took the leap. Using savings from the two decades she spent working with at-risk kids, she opened her own company, 1 Sun Solar Electric. She kept costs down by melding it with her life partner's successful tile and stone company, and in 2009, they started attaching solar panels to roofs in Las Vegas. Her timing was unfortunate; the recession hit Las Vegas especially hard and the impacts lingered, but Helton was able to keep her small crew working and her business in the black. By the time Nevada's economy bounced back in 2014, the cost of solar panels had plummeted. Helton's company was ready to ride the wave. "We were making a very good living and supporting a crew of folks who were able to support their families," she recalls.

Read the whole story

Letter: Keep pressure on El Dorado County

To the community,

Cannot tell you how much **your article** on media access means to me and a host of other living in ED Hills, Serrano. You hit that nail squarely on the head. There is a pending lawsuit as of April 17, but access to us has been limited these past four years.

I and others have been threatened on social media sites for commenting about concerns for the HOA well before the suit.

I write this because I posted two comments regarding this and one disappeared, not the one I deleted. I am hoping that you will not let the “lawsuit pending” club dampen your ardor for representing the public’s best interests.

Respectfully,

Merrilee Posner, El Dorado Hills

Nevada Gaming Commission to hash over weed and casinos

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada’s legalization of recreational marijuana has made life

easier for users but more difficult for gaming companies, something the Nevada Gaming Commission hopes to address in a special meeting on Thursday.

Legalized weed presents a number of problems for the gaming industry: Using and selling pot is still a violation of federal law, and Nevada's regulators don't want gaming companies to be associated with something that is technically illegal.

State gaming laws and regulations specifically prohibit behavior by gaming licensees that would discredit the industry. Violating a federal law, Nevada's gaming regulators have said, could do exactly that.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Warren Miller's "Line of Descent" ski movie will be at the Squaw Valley conference center at the Olympic Valley Lodge on Nov. 24-25 and at Harrah's Lake Tahoe on Dec. 1-2. All shows are at 7:30pm.

- Faces of the Homeless is an opportunity to promote awareness in South Lake Tahoe about the issue of homelessness. The talk will be Oct. 26 from 5:30-8:30pm at Valhalla. Talk is free, dinner is \$20. For more info, email tahoewarmroom@gmail.com.

- Native American basket weavers will have contemporary baskets for sale at the Gatekeepers Museum & Steinbach Indian Basket Museum in Tahoe City on Aug. 27 from 10am-4pm. Among the weavers will be Sue Coleman and Becky Eagle. Basket

identification and appraisal will be available.

- Auditions for actors for “The Polar Express” 2017 season on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad will be Sept. 3-4, 6-9pm at the railroad depot in Carson City. For more info, contact Carla Wilson at cw3595@charter.net or 775.781.0664.

- Douglas County sheriff’s Deputy Ignacio (Nacho) Gonzales is back working as a jail training officer after returning from his fourth deployment overseas. As part of the Army National Guard he was in Kuwait for 12 months supervising soldiers who were securing the borders.

New wolf pup spotted in Lassen pack

By Ryan Sabalow, Sacramento Bee

Earlier this summer, state biologists announced that a pair of wolves in Lassen County had three pups.

Turns out, they missed one.

Last week, Stafford Lehr of the Department of Fish and Wildlife told a state board that a fourth pup has since showed up on motion activated trail cameras that monitor the pack.

Read the whole story