

Angora Fire: Life altering tragedy

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News* this month will be running several stories leading up to the 10th anniversary of the Angora Fire on June 24, 2007.



Ken Herrmann's lot after the Angora Fire leveled his house in 2007. Photos/Ken Herrmann

By Ken Herrmann

First Wednesday

It had been a tough day. Actually, the last few days had been stressful and I had not been sleeping well. I am thinking again that it might be time to change my 25-year career to something new. But this evening I just want to go home and read a book, put on some CDs, turn on the idiot box, or do

something else to relax.

I drive up the main drag and turn onto my street. A neighbors' dog, a big Saint Bernard, is out on the front lawn, as usual, looking very contented with its place in the sun.

I pull into the driveway and step out of my truck. As my feet touch the ground the layer of pine pollen on the driveway puffs up around them. The pollen had been falling for about a week and gives a slightly yellow tinge to everything.

I set my lunch box on the front steps and open the side door to the garage.

One of my kayaks is just inside the door. Maybe this next Sunday I would get out on the lake for a while. I might even meet someone to paddle with in the future, and if she's cute and single, all the better.

A stack of boxes against the back wall holds a collection of "The World's Best Reading" from the magazine company. With the built-in shelves in this house, I can unbox them and start reading again. Other boxes hold remaining texts, work from college (both degrees) and general references that I have picked up through the years.

Also boxed are thousands of photographs documenting people, places, events, vacations and photo-logs including the bridge at Cal Poly and other work projects I'm proud of. I also have mementoes of driving athlete buses for the '84 Olympics, raising a guide dog, clogging in parades and being a parent in two years of the "Nutcracker" for Central Coast Dance.

Two two-drawer file cabinets hold documents and personal history papers including the "as your kid grows" binder of school papers, pictures, accomplishments and growth measurements that mom passed to me a few years ago. Now if I ever want to know who my third-grade teacher was, what my interests were, or how tall I was, I can look it up. But some

of that stuff must be made up. Haven't I always been able to see the top of the refrigerator?



Not all the boxes were unpacked before Ken Herrmann's house burned to the ground.

A few other cabinets and corners of the garage hold tools or various parts of assorted things that I want to try to turn into something else. Parts to make unique fountains, or lamps, or a combination of the two. There is also the stack of irreplaceable old-growth heart redwood siding recovered from an early 1960s vintage sauna that I dismantled a few years back. Beautiful wood grain patterns ready to be turned into ... something.

On the workbench is the magazine with plans for deck chairs. As with making additions for my existing furniture to make it all taller, I would alter these plans to make taller furniture from scratch. I have gotten tired of "fitting" into "normal" sized (short) furniture. From now on, find it or make it. It would also be nice to have furniture on the front and back decks for the summer.

The plan, now that my year of ceramics classes at the college is over, is to spend the equivalent time per week, (probably end up being much more) in the garage. My tools, which have been in storage for three years, finally have their proper places. The last thing to finish is that the new, still boxed,

Delta drill press gets a rolling platform and its own corner.

With combination chop saw, table saw, drill press and the multitude of other tools now arranged on steel shelves and in drawers I can get back to my fountain designing, make furniture that fits, and what else? It's time to play!

Hand testing my off-road bike tires, I find that the rear tire is low again from a persistent slow leak. I'll have to remember to fix that before I get the desire to go riding the trails up the hill toward the ridge.

I pull out my plumbing toolbox to take into the house. There is a leak in one of the bathroom sinks that needs attention and this box has any tool I need to repair just about any plumbing fixture I might come across. It even has some standard replacement parts.

Going in the house I set my toolbox in the hall, and lunch box and mail on the counter.

The dishwasher is partly open to remind me to empty it. What luxury! This is the largest most comfortable kitchen I have ever had. Four months ago when I moved in I wasn't sure what to do with the space. But it has worked out and although the cabinets are not full by any means, I find that not being limited to four feet of counter space is wonderful. The dining counter is also a very comfortable place to work or eat a meal.



The upside down drafting table
with G5 monitor, inside to the
left.

Thirsty for some good old H2O, I take down the mug sister gave me about 20 years ago, it's shaped like part of a saggy pair of jeans with my name written on a pant pocket. Always cute. Not her, the mug. Well, ... her sometimes too.

Boots off, I sit down to watch the last 20 minutes of a sci-fi show on the box. With no cable service and questionable satellite capability (trees) for the last three years, the swimmer TV (resurrected from a pool, by buddy Andy, 10 years ago) is finally getting to re-exercise its multiple channels capability, instead of the 2½ off the local airwaves.

Four months living here and my DVDs and CDs are still mostly boxed.

I've been enjoying the tree-based entertainment across the back deck or the many TV channels.

But the home-made "entertainment center" given to me by a friend on the coast some 12 years ago also might look better with DVDs and CDs in it rather than in boxes on it. Have to work on that as I might as well look as if I live here rather than just squatting.

Show over, I change into running shoes, shorts and T-shirt. The shirt is one of a collection of race shirts and fleece vests acquired from over 20 years of running benefit races, mostly 10Ks down in San Luis Obispo County.

On the way to the back deck for a pre-run stretch I notice that my Djembe, sitting on the fireplace hearth, and the tube-type amp and five-CD changer, just inside the door, are dusty. But also noticing that the window nearby is partially open I suspect that most of the "dust" is pine pollen. The stuff is everywhere.

Facing southeast the deck is mostly shaded this time of day. The garage is street level, the main house floor partly above that, with the lot sloping down to the back that puts me about mid-tree height. Even my downstairs neighbors deck is 10 feet above the ground. My deck is a very nice place to hang out (deck chairs please!).

A chickadee is running up a tree beside the house. He stops on a branch to look at me (maybe he's just resting from the climb) then flicks his tail and continues up into the branches. The local Steller's jay has landed down the deck rail and is yelling at me for intruding on "his" deck, I'm stretched and not willing to argue, so out the front deck doors, down to the walk and off running I go.

Turning left down the street away from town I reconnect with the main drag and turn right toward the stub street of the Creek Road to connect with a single-track forest trail.

While the forest is green with grasses and new shoots on the fir trees, it is drying fast. The 28 percent, or there about, snowload this last winter was not good. Last year at this time the basin mountains had snow on them. Today, in mid-June, there is less snow in the highest protected areas than there was in late August of last year. Not good.

After a time of crossing gullies, a small stream and following old logging roads, I arrive at the pond and take a break to stretch. Mr. and Mrs. Mallard, unconcerned with my presence, are having a spirited discussion about something while cruising in the direction of the small island. The tree caressing mountain breeze in a clear blue sky is very refreshing.

Running again, I retrace my steps down the trail and turn left at the fork to take a longer route home, uphill from the neighborhood. This area still has its slash piles from the thinning operation of some seasons back. Judging by the

condition of these piles, they are overdue for burning. The acres of piles burned around my previous solitary residence this last fall were evidence that these will also go to smoke hot and fast.

I see the water tank. If not looking, distracted by nature, it's easy to miss it. From the street below it is practically invisible, hidden by the trees of the forest. The many hard switchbacks going up the hill turn easier as the trail eases downhill. I cut down across the easy switchbacks and join a side trail down to my road, turning right up toward the house.

The white Shepard-cross-whatever-he-is from across the street comes to say hello and walk with me as I cool down. This dog really has it made. He surveys his realm from an elevated driveway, gets attention nearly whenever he wants it, and though he could have a lot to say, he just smiles, wags his tail and wanders around. After I've cooled, he really wants to come in the house, but I give him another good scratch and rub, tell him to go home, and go inside.



What had been boxed family
China became rubble.

More H2O from the mug and I grab my toolbox to fix the leak. I find that the seal retaining screw is loose, but the seal is also worn so it is best to replace it. It turns out that I have a seal that fits, so in less than 10 minutes and no more leak. Magic!

Toolbox back to the front hall, I go to my office to check email. This “office” contains my 20-year-old queen-size futon couch (3-year-old mattress), and the seven-wood slope-top desk that was someone’s woodshop senior project. The desk is on blocks because it is of course, too short, but also so I can use one of the bar stools, (that I assembled and finished years back) for it and the drafting table (in flat position) that my G5 sits on.

The room also contains the solid red oak two-drawer/two shelf nightstand that I made for a lady but never had a chance to deliver (funny how people move on.). My '95 PowerMac is also here. Still as useful as the day it came off the line; its only failing is that it couldn’t keep up with Internet speeds and software. If technology were only less shortsighted and money hungry, we could save a lot of energy and landfill space.

Against the wall, still not hung, is the tall bulletin board containing; lapel pins from events that I helped organize or attended (La Fiesta, Poly Royal, a parade or three), pinned birth announcements of nieces and nephews (six now) plus wedding invites and memorial notices (Uncle Bob, Mother Wood). Also pinned are pictures of me with a large boa constrictor around my neck and one of a nasal polyp. (Uh huh, next!)



Remnants of the snowblower and other items in the garage.

The less than 3-year-old G5 pulls a few notes and jokes written by friends from my ISP.

“Did you hear the one about the guy from Biloxi that found his hollering cat in the toilet with the top down? No? Me neither.”

Here’s another candidate for the Darwin Awards, seems he couldn’t wait for his ship to make landfall.

“Waaas uuuup?”

Going online there are no interesting/available jobs with the parks, or any of the normal “Favorites list” places to check for options. How to find another place to take care of...?

The camp was perfect. Flexible schedule, a certain autonomy, but also long hours and a fair amount of responsibility. If the owners had not failed to support it or the staff, camp might have been a long time gig for me.

Well, I was on my own way out (in disgust) long before the Forest Service threw their wrench in the works and ended the job. It still bugs me though. (Phhhptttz and sputter). Maybe I really should consider a total career change, just as long as it’s a creative trade.

Cooled from the run beyond the point of comfortable, I sign off and take a quick hot shower. I think the large, thick, colorful beach towel idea for bath mat/bathroom rug looks good. The four I have, in rotation, will keep the room lively and bright throughout the year.

Food! I whip up a cubed steak with my spices, a large salad with avocado and tomato, toast some thick raisin bread with butter, add a large milk and sit to eat. I decide to watch the TV news while eating so I pull out the “history” tray to balance the meal on.

Some 20 years previous I had worked at a student-housing

complex in San Luis. The complex closed to become senior housing a year or so after I was there. About 14 years later at a new job for the county schools I found, behind a refrigerator, a near mint-condition serving tray from the complex. Others that I know from that time were tickled to hear I had found the tray. It is a good reminder of college years to sit down with a Tropicana Village tray for a meal.

And as history goes, I still need to repack family China and crystal ware that are in boxes against the wall in the dining room. That's eight boxes of cool old stuff. The crystal glasses are items I have enjoyed the look of as long as I can remember. It's also fun, when using the leaded crystal, to make them "sing" with a wet finger on the edge.

Dinner over and cleaned up (I'm tired of doing everything myself but the plants will not raise a leaf to help) I decide to take an evening walk.

Turning right out of the driveway I'll walk a route down to cross the boulevard, go through the meadow neighborhood reconnecting with the boulevard again a mile or so away for the loop back to the other end of my street. Nice houses in that area, and great views of the mountains and the wooded ridge above where I ran earlier.

As I leave the house I notice the white Shepard-cross-whatever-he-is on his driveway across the street. I call to him but, as is his want, he chooses not to respond and just sits and watches with a grin as I walk away.

As the sun lowers toward the mountains a few people are out enjoying the evening in yards or on the streets, some are still tending a barbecued meal. The cooler air encountered when the road crosses a draw leading down from the ridge and mountains is one reason this area of the basin is so pleasant.

Just before turning up my street, I notice the new house on the boulevard is progressing with floor joists going in and

stacks of lumber on the driveway. A petrified deer stands not far away in a front yard. It's actually fake, but it always catches the eye. Hunter instinct I guess.

The white Shepard-whatever-he-is finds me two lots from home. He trots up with a smile for a good rub and scratch before taking off again to rejoin his boys that are playing on the street.

Back inside I go through the mail and then TV channel surf to finally settle on a crime show for a while.

Show over and nearly time to hit the hay. I move out to the back deck for a breath of cool night air. This pollen is really covering everything.

This is a great house. It's winter warm and in a quiet, wooded residential area. Looking through the trees there are good views of Twin Peaks east, the mountains to the south, and the summit and highway pass southwest. I have all my stuff with me, and room to play as a counteractive activity to the job and the type of work I've burned out on over the last years.

I think I can do this for a while ... though the 28-year-old GMC truck may not last to the winter.

Well, ...just another beautiful day in the mountains.

Tomorrow would be another day.



A few ceramics were able to be salvaged from the burn pile.

Next Wednesday

It had been a tough day. Actually the last days had been stressful and I had not been sleeping well. Too much to think about (or try not to think about) and do, and not enough daylight/ business hours to do it all. And then there is still (maybe more now) this job thing that I keep doing. It floats my boat but fails to put any wind in my sails. But this evening I just want to go home and read a book, put on some CDs, turn on the idiot box, or do something else to relax.

The checkpoint officer, finished with my ID, hands it back issuing a further safety warning (like I need one!) and lets me go.

I drive up the main drag and turn onto my street. The neighbors have an American flag flying. Just another thing, of many lately, that tugs at my heartstrings.

I pull into the driveway and step out of my truck. As my feet touch the ground the layer of ash on the driveway puffs up around them. It covers most everything within sight, making the neighborhood either black or gray.

I figure I would spend an hour or two here, then go find another hotel for the next few days. Maybe by that time I will have found a new place to hang my hat (the 16-year-old hat that I no longer have). Oh, and I need to eat dinner somewhere too.

I open the back of the truck that now holds everything I own, it barely fills half the bed, (including the Schwinn Frontier with low tire pressure) and pull out the rake I recently got from dad and my folding military shovel, one of the very few tools I have left.

Today, maybe some of my ceramics from the hallway and my collection of belt buckles.

I walk past the garage with its collapsed/deformed metal door that is draped over the exploded snow blower and what remains of my 36-year-old Schwinn Varsity. The twisted skeletons of tool shelves and cabinets are witness to the heat of that fateful Sunday afternoon.

I'm putting off spending time in the garage, I'm trying to work up the courage.

Down the hill, below the garage, I enter the house through my housemate's front door. Well, at least where it would have been. I step into the foot of ash and rubble with its protruding charred appliances that is all that remains of an over two-story house that contained evidence of my near 47 years, and what was once my best home, to start looking.

The neighborhood of destroyed homes, charred trees and lack of wildlife stands quietly around me.

The quiet is occasionally lessened by a passing car with the people inside, usually behind raised windows to keep out the smell, wearing shocked or disbelieving looks on their faces.

Life is different now. I really don't know what to do next. My side of the fence is bare ground and ash. Is there green grass on the other side?

Tomorrow would be another day. Maybe ... a better one.



The brand new drill press that never got out of the box.

Epilogue...

I was one of the victim/survivors of the Angora Fire that occurred on a very windy Sunday afternoon, June 24, 2007.

The wildfire, started by an illegal campfire, swept through 3,100 acres of forested land, destroying 254 human and thousands of wildlife homes, and killed or injured (some to die, or be euthanized later) hundreds, possibly thousands, of animals.

The fire left a portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin and its inhabitants with a scar to be seen, and felt, for years to come.

In January 2008, I moved out of the Lake Tahoe Basin to continue my recovery, trying to rediscover, and rebuild a life, in the warmer climate of San Luis Obispo. I was mostly using my heels and toes natural affinity for each other ... to keep moving. I miss Tahoe, and still visit every year to run the Kokanee 10K through the forest where I lived for three years.

Today, 10 years on, I am looking for a move and new opportunity to creatively enjoy life. I'm kind of burned out again, (figuratively) with what I'm doing.

Power out in parts of Tahoe City

An underground utility problem has hundreds of people in Tahoe City without power.

The outage was first reported at 11am June 21. At that time 1,500 customers had no electricity.

Liberty Utilities has no estimate on when power will be full restored.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Final OK gives Nev. state parks a 12,000-acre boost

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Nevada's state park system grew by 12,000 acres Tuesday with approval by a legislative panel to accept the scenic land along the East Fork of the Walker River.

The Legislature's Interim Finance Committee accepted the transfer of land, formerly three privately held ranches, which includes 28 miles of river access known for exceptional fishing habitat.

Gov. Brian Sandoval announced creation of the Walker River

State Recreation Area, about 60 miles south of Carson City, in his State of the State address in January.

Read the whole story

Bill aims to help California save water

By Anshu Siripurapu, McClatchy

After years of drought, the state of California is bracing for water. Lots of it. Maybe even a rerun of the havoc caused by the failure of the Oroville Dam this winter.

As the record snows in the Sierra Nevada mountains begin to melt, there's concern this spring and summer that the state will have more water than it can handle.

Earlier this year, heavy winter rains forced evacuations near the Oroville Dam, where repairs are now underway on the damaged flood-control spillway.

Congress is trying to help manage such drastic shifts in California's water levels. Thursday, the House plans a vote on legislation sponsored by Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Garden Valley, that aims to help the state capture more of that water to save for a future dry season. The bill is expected to pass the House. Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., is pushing a similar bill in the Senate.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Tahoe Rim Trail Association is having a fundraiser June 30, 5-9pm at Great Basin Brewery, Taps and Tanks location, 1155 South Rock Blvd., Reno.
- Wanderlust is July 20-23 at Squaw Valley.
- As a result of a silent auction during the Amgen bike race in May, the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority was able to give Tahoe Area Mountain Biking \$1,773 to be used for the **Angora-Fallen Leaf bike trails**.
- The Firecracker Mile is a race on July 4 starting at 9:40am going from U.S. Bank to downtown Truckee. Register **online**.
- Eldorado National Forest is looking to fill seats on a federal resource advisory committee responsible for recommending selected projects on national forest land within El Dorado County. Applications will be accepted through July 21. For more info, call 530.621.5280.

Set back for Truckee affordable housing

The Truckee Artist Lofts suffered another funding setback, but the town leaders are not giving up on the affordable housing project.

Twice now the project has failed to receive the 9 percent California Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

The proposal is for 77 apartments in a four-story building ranging from studios to three bedrooms, with a monthly rent of \$402 to \$1,600. Ten would be at market rate.

The housing project is part of the larger Truckee Railyard Mixed-Use Development Master Plan.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Will's Kids returning to Valhalla

Valhalla will host Will's Kids for the second year on Aug. 4 from 11am-5pm.

This is a free and family-friendly event.

Participants will be able to enjoy a variety of arts and watch a children's version of this year's Shakespeare on the Lake production of "Love's Labours Lost," put on by the Young Shakespeare Program. The event begins at 11am with food trucks available for lunch and snacks. The play will begin at noon on the lawn between the boathouse and Valhalla.

After the play, at 1pm, the art fair will begin, allowing children of all ages to join in. There will be face painting, live art, crafts, hula hooping, a silent art auction and more! Workshops by various organizations and groups will also be available throughout the day.

Will's Kids is appropriate for all ages and free to attend.

Will's Kids is a collaboration between Live Violence Free, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe, the D.G. Manchetti Young Shakespeare Program, and Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival to bring art to the children of our community.

Data: Visitors clogging Lake Tahoe roads

By Kathryn Reed

The time it takes to get from point A to point B all depends on the time year. Construction and snow are variables, but the real impact is tourists.

There are two main reasons they are staying in their vehicles. One, there isn't reliable transit for them to use once they are in Tahoe; two, most are coming just for the day.

July and February are the two busiest months of the summer and winter seasons. During those respective months 42 percent of visitors to the Lake Tahoe Basin are here just for one day. About 20 percent stay for two days, less than 15 percent stay for three days, and less than 10 percent stay for four days. The percentages are about equal for July and February.

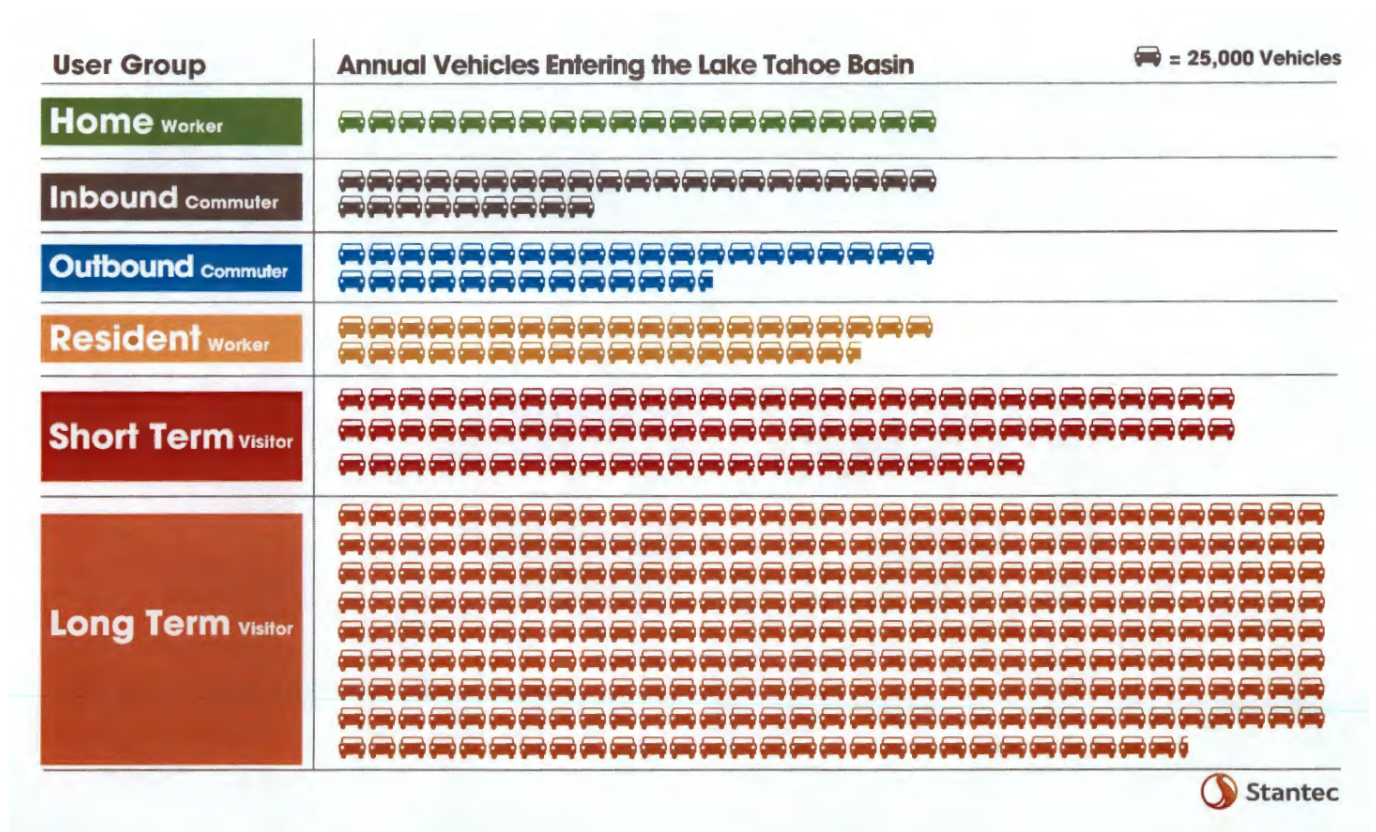
This data was presented to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on June 20 by Carl Hasty, leader of the Tahoe Transportation District.

Most of these people are coming from Northern California and Northern Nevada.

TTD a couple years ago paid a company for data that is

collected from cell phone users. Through various apps people have on their phones companies are able to track where the person entered the basin, how long they stayed and which portal they left from.

The data also shows cell phones that were at a particular airport and then in the basin on the same day. Reno is by far the preferred airport with more than 58 percent using that airport in February, 50 percent in July. Other airports: Sacramento (13 percent both months), San Francisco (11 percent February, 22 percent July), Oakland (9 percent February, 6 percent July) and San Jose (9 percent both months).



The above graphic shows the annualized vehicle trips by different groups in 2014. Visitors are making up more than twice the number of local trips. The South Shore is the No. 1 place they are traveling to.

“Visitors are pushing us over the edge when it comes to traffic,” Hasty said.

Of the 80 million person trips a year, only 1.4 percent use

transit.

Hasty attributes that low number to the fact that the focus of transit is on locals or commuters, and not tourists. The exception is during the winter with the ski resort shuttles.

At the TTD meeting last week the board agreed to an aggressive plan to make transit a higher priority. This includes a high-speed cross lake ferry and more boat taxis on each end of the lake.

The goal is to get those tourists off the roads and into reliable public transit. With 20 percent of visitors using transit, that would mean more than 7 million vehicle trips removed.

Opinion: Keep the internet neutral

By Terry D. Kramer

Why would someone who spent much of his career working for a multinational telecommunications company care so much about preserving “net neutrality?”

That someone would be me. I worked for Vodafone, the British telecom giant that serves Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania, while living in London and The Hague. I went on to work with young technology companies, then at the U.S. State Department, and eventually to teach at UCLA Anderson School of Management.

At the State Department, I held a role as U.S. ambassador negotiating the 2012 telecom and internet treaty called the World Conference on International Telecommunications. Those

negotiations sought to prevent nations from monitoring and censoring internet traffic, which is antithetical to U.S. political and economic beliefs.

And yes, I'm sensitive to the needs of broadband network providers. Such networks should receive sufficient revenues to ensure an adequate return on their significant capital investments.

One lesson connects all my various work and travel: A free and open internet is core to the future of our societies. Service providers have an abiding interest in this as well. After all, their networks have value because they can carry our fundamental traffic—guaranteeing individual access to the internet, voice and video communications, social networks, e-commerce, and access to crucial research—in an unfettered and unrestricted manner. Here there is no room for financial arrangements that would allow telecom operators to make solely financial decisions over which traffic is prioritized over a network and which isn't.

“Net neutrality” is the principle under which internet service providers would enable access to all content and applications regardless of their sources, without favoring or blocking any particular traffic, products or sites. The principle to me is defining.

Future innovation and economic growth comes from the individual rights we enjoy. Net neutrality helps protect those rights on the internet, and with good reason. Technology and ubiquitous high-speed networks can have such an impact on citizens, consumers, enterprises and, more broadly, society that they must be defended.

I have seen the consequences of philosophies and policies that lead to censorship, metering of traffic and attacks on the free and open internet we enjoy today. During the WCIT treaty negotiations, nondemocratic nations sought to win legitimacy

for their efforts to monitor internet traffic and block spam. While spam in the United States might represent unnecessary commercial content, in these countries spam could express political dissent.

I also saw nations in emerging markets that, in lieu of creating competitive broadband providers with private investment, sought to impose fees for any internet traffic that ended on their networks. This model only promised a limitation of internet traffic flows, as many organizations wouldn't want to pay the fee to have their traffic transported, including small entrepreneurial or nonprofit organizations. All of this would cripple economic growth and internet access to vital content and commerce in nations that need it most.

Of all my different jobs, my role at the State Department, heading the U.S. Delegation for the WCIT, allowed me to meet with the broadest array of international industry and government officials. Despite the many fundamental political and economic differences I encountered, I was struck by the number of my counterparts who asked me about the special success of the United States: its overall level of prosperity, adoption of technology, individual rights and vibrant entrepreneurial spirit. What, they would ask, enabled this success?

My answer was our immense privilege. Americans have been privileged to live in a system where entrepreneurship is encouraged and rewarded, where failures and successes are valued, and where individual rights and varying perspectives are not just tolerated, but encouraged in the quest for getting the "right answer" and stimulating engagement, whether in the community, new ventures, or society at large.

That system explains why we've led in technological advances—most recently in areas such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, which promise to yield amazing

conveniences as well as new insights and solutions. Our system is why we have made progress in understanding the causes, predispositions and effective treatments of life-altering diseases. And it's why we're quick to adopt autonomous vehicles that can reduce the number of traffic injuries and fatalities, lessen the impact on climate change, and create a major "gift of time" in congested cities, freeing up individuals to connect, be entertained, transact or do whatever they please.

But none of these advances is possible without a free and open internet, where the flow of traffic—be it university research, social media, connecting people, on-demand entertainment, and knowledge—is protected.

In 2015, the United States had a breakthrough in adopting net neutrality as an official policy. It's been concerning to see efforts by the current FCC, which seek to undermine that seminal 2015 decision.

Those opposing net neutrality often cite the need to protect future pricing models and revenue streams for telecom networks. But such protection is not worth the worrisome precedent and unintended consequences that would be triggered by the abolition of net neutrality. I fear those consequences would fall on telecom itself.

In the absence of net neutrality, internet traffic could be easily throttled or blocked. We could live in a world where only those organizations with the greatest resources could afford to have their traffic sent in a seamless manner. And in a broadband environment with limited resources, what would happen to nonprofit organizations and universities that seek to send their content free and unfettered?

I fear we would be creating an environment similar to the costly mobile phone one. In that economic ecosphere, it's expensive to call a mobile user overseas, where callers often

encounter costly “termination fees.” Such rules have restricted the flow of mobile phone calls internationally and encouraged “over-the top” calling solutions, which undermine telecom revenues.

The end of net neutrality would likely stifle the flow of information globally. It’s hard to see how stifling information flows would be good for anyone, much less the telecommunication companies for which I used to work. A free and open internet is a rare development that benefits citizens, consumers, enterprises and societies. Very few other offerings can make such a claim.

Telecom operators have and should exploit numerous growth opportunities to meet consumers’ insatiable demand for mobility, tapping new bundling prospects with video and content. Pursuing new revenue sources by invalidating net neutrality would lead to a potentially dangerous scenario for everyone, where free and open access to the internet is curtailed, traffic is limited and everyone is hurt.

Terry Kramer is a former Vodafone executive who now teaches at the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

73% of Americans have financial regrets

By Matthew Frankel, Motley Fool

Only one-fifth of American adults say they have no financial regrets whatsoever, and 73 percent say that they regret making one of six specific financial mistakes, according to a new survey. Here’s what money mistakes Americans regret, and how

to prevent the regrets of other Americans from becoming your own.

Just 20 percent of American adults said they have no financial regrets at all, in a recent survey by Bankrate, and 73 percent say that they've made a specific mistake that they wish they hadn't.

Read the whole story