Tahoe water group accepting scholarship applications

Tahoe Water Suppliers Association is seeking applicants for the 2017 Future of Water Scholarship.

Applicants must be a senior at a Lake Tahoe Basin high school in California or Nevada. The scholarships will be available for a student working toward his/her first undergraduate degree and who is enrolled in a program related to water resources, environmental studies, or sciences for the academic year in which he/she applies for the award.

The undergraduate scholarship will be awarded to the student most qualified by academic performance. Measures of academic performance include the cumulative grade point average, relevance of the student's curriculum to sciences/environmental studies/water resources, and leadership in extracurricular activities.

The deadline to apply is April 14 at 5pm. More info is **online**.

Myriad ideas spill forth for SLT at vision session

By Kathryn Reed

Could South Lake Tahoe become the outdoor capital of the world while at the same time providing enough affordable housing for those working here?

The answer, according to some residents, is a resounding yes.

The future of the city was the focus of Tuesday’s City Council meeting. It was a workshop in advance of the Feb. 25 strategic planning session where decisions will be made. On Feb. 14 it was about hearing ideas from more than a dozen community members about their vision for the city.

Each councilmember was asked to invite three people who would each give a 15-minute presentation. The idea was to give more voices to the discussion. It also allowed the electeds to promote their own agendas. Councilmember Jason Collin told *Lake Tahoe News* he invited two people, but neither could make it.

Speakers in order:

· Jude Wood, director of Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club – invited by Councilmember Wendy David

The agency is losing its location at Al Tahoe Elementary School because Lake Tahoe Unified School District wants to return the building to a school. The Boys & Girls Club recognizes the need for its own building. Talks are under way with the city to move El Dorado County’s vector control, with the idea of the club erecting a building on that site. This location would be walking distance to the rec center. Wood would like the building to be a community center. Architecturally it could complement the new recreation center.

· Chris McNamara, owner of Outdoor Gear Lab – Councilmember Austin Sass

McNamara’s 2030 vision for the city includes making Tahoe the outdoor capital of the world. Several speakers after him seized that sentiment with gusto. He wants Ski Run Boulevard, where his business operates and where he owns property, to be a downtown hub. He plans to have a pilot project on Ski Run for affordable housing. He asked for more flexibility with how commercial floor area is allocated so it is more predictable for those wanting to build or renovate.

· **Duane Wallace, South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce – Councilmember Tom Davis**

Housing needs to be the No. 1 priority. Wallace called it a crisis in the area with people not able to find a place to live that they can afford. He'd like to see less taxes and fewer regulations, especially for businesses.

· **Bonnie Turnbull, Nick Exline, Devin Middlebrook, sustainability proponents – Councilmember Brooke Laine**

Their message was about how climate change is already impacting the Lake Tahoe Basin. They want the city to operate on 100 percent renewable energy. This in turn could lead to branding and economic gains for South Lake Tahoe.

· **Brooke Hernandez, real estate agent – Davis**

She touted all the benefits to vacation home rentals, and the negatives if they were to go away. Hernandez said a problem is that no VHR permits have been revoked. Enforcement is critical.

· **Cheyanne Lane, Tahoe Youth & Family Services – David**

She spoke about the homeless situation in the area. With her were two South Tahoe High School students who gave firsthand testimonials about what homelessness looks like. Lane would like $20,000 from the city to match what El Dorado County has given to create a single point of entry process to collect data countywide.

· **David Orr, Tahoe Mountain Lab – Sass**

He believes jobs is the No. 1 issue for Tahoe. But Orr also said that without housing, there is no chance of attracting those jobs. Bandwidth has to increase, too, for people to relocate. He mentioned how Mammoth has faster download capabilities than Los Angeles. Orr would also like the town to have an identity, and embraced McNamara's idea. He wants electric vehicle stations to be throughout the region.

· **Tyler Cannon, owner of Sprouts – Sass**

Housing is an overriding issue for him, pointing to how he's lost employees because they couldn't afford to live here. He believes VHRs are contributing to the housing woes. Cannon wants tourist traffic out of neighborhoods. He would like better wayfinding signs, and bike paths that connect to destinations. While he was against paid parking when the city initiated it, now he wants to stop people from parking in front of his business all day if they aren't in his restaurant. Cannon also would like fines for people who don't pick up after their pooch.

· **Brooke Laine, Dave, Kurtzman, Jose Henriquez – Laine**

The trio spoke about creating a Tahoe County and what that would entail. Kurtzman gave some history from having been on the county redistricting committee. He pointed out that in 2020 or 2030 Tahoe is likely not to have a local representative on the Board of Supervisors based on population distribution. Henriquez, who heads LAFCO, outlined the details for this county conversion process. Laine touted all the benefits that could come of creating such an entity.

· **Jason Drew, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce – Davis**

He talked about the need to have economic vitality, and embrace the chamber's 2020 vision. Chamber leader Craig Schmidt said the housing crisis and poor customer service are his main concerns.

· **Bill Roby, El Dorado Community Foundation – David**

He would like to take 3 percent off every home sale (so, out of the seller's pocket) to create a land bank, which would then buy old motels and convert them into long-term housing.

The land bank would own the land and the people would own the structure/unit.

In the afternoon City Manager Nancy Kerry stirred the collective creative juices by showing videos of other locales. Dilapidated areas were repurposed into thriving destinations. This takes vision, dedication and collaboration.

Kerry talked about how the city has been visionary – pointing to the gondola coming into the middle of town and Harrison Avenue.

Opposition should not be a roadblock because not everyone is always going to agree on everything.

"Keep the long game in mind," she said.

Department heads were more reality based instead of visionary, informing the council about what they are doing and the future they see.

· **Finance:** CalPERS is the biggest threat to the city's coffers, as the retirement agency keeps taking more from jurisdictions to pay for a defined benefit for retirees.

· **Recreation:** Need more staff, right now there are only four full-timers. This will especially be needed when the new recreation center is built; construction should start in 2018. Pickleball has been a huge success, generating new recreation users. Last season Campground by the Lake had 50,000 campers.

· **Development Services:** Proud of community design guidelines. Hopes council makes Bijou Park Master Plan a priority. Studying commercial project trends to use it as a budgetary basis.

· **Public Works:** Praised how well Bijou erosion control project is functioning, how the bike park is a destination. Seventy-four percent of the city's fleet is beyond its service life; this doesn't include police and fire. A dedicated source to fund roads needs to be found. Vehicle replacement and road rehab need to be the priorities.

· **Police Department:** Property crimes are increasing. In terms of being a safe city, it is in the 37 percent level, with 100 percent being the worst.

· **Fire Department:** Responded to 3,239 calls in 2016. Second smallest department in basin, but the busiest. Three radio systems in the city between fire, police and public works is old and not working well. They should be updated so they all can talk to each other.

· **City manager:** Creating three new teams – talent and career development team because fewer people are going into government; strategic communications team; City Council priority team.

The next step is for the council to digest everything they heard on Tuesday. Nine days from now they will hash out the city's strategic plan among themselves. This will be the time they come forward with a blueprint for the immediate future, and possibly more long term.

As City Manager Kerry pointed out not everything the council or community members want to do can be done. Time, money and resources are limiting factors. That is also why the strategic plan needs to be flexible, because priorities can change.

Opinion: Tapping moneyed elite began with WWI

By Charles Rappleye

From our earliest days we Americans have embraced leaders from among the ranks of the nation’s moneyed elite. Voters set the tone when they chose George Washington, the wealthiest man on the continent at the time, as the first president.

But that choice was accompanied by a healthy skepticism of the role of money in the halls of government. As the years went by, recurrent scandals prompted rounds of reform, fostering an intricate system of rules to promote ethical conduct.

The result is a daunting interface between private and public life, the line marked by financial investigation, disclosure and divestiture. Still, from the early 20th century, U.S. presidents began to routinely call on leaders from business and industry to head key agencies of the government. And despite nagging public suspicion, the moguls drafted into service were consistently free of accusations—let alone outright findings—of corruption or misconduct.

Keep in mind, the sort of corruption threatened by the rich and powerful is quite distinct from the more garden-variety graft usually associated with public officials—bribery, principally; or undue allegiance to one political party or another. Such concerns were addressed in the late 19th century by the institution of the civil service, when federal employees were subjected for the first time to entrance exams, and protected from political removal. It marked the advent of a new kind of entity: the career civil servant.

Reckoning with the threat posed by wealthy appointees—that they might place their private interests ahead of the public’s, using their positions to help their friends or augment their fortunes—came later, and required more elaborate safeguards.

It was the onset of the first World War, and the attendant task of retooling the nation’s industrial economy for wartime production, that brought a surge of business executives into the government. Drafted by President Woodrow Wilson, starting in 1917, they signed on for service in new government bureaus at the nominal salary of a dollar a year.

First among these wartime stalwarts was Bernard Baruch, a financier and speculator known in his day as “the lone wolf of Wall Street.” Appointed head of the new War Industries Board, Baruch recruited a bevy of his tycoon chums and together they put the peacetime economy on footing to produce uniforms, tanks and ammunition.

Another Wilson appointee was Herbert Hoover. A mining executive then based in London, Hoover emerged on the public stage by leading humanitarian war relief efforts for neutral Belgium. Calling Hoover back to the U.S., Wilson named him food administrator, and charged him with limiting domestic consumption and keeping the U.S. Army and its allies fed in the field.

Both of these men—and the dozens of other businessmen drafted to assist them—performed capably. Though these appointments came at the height of the Progressive Era, and the wary view of wealth that went with it, the American public came to accept these appointments as legitimate without audible objection.

Skip forward a decade, to 1929, and wealthy office-holders had become a routine feature in the federal government. More than that, it was a non-partisan phenomenon. Bernard Baruch had become the titular head and chief fundraiser for the Democratic Party, while Hoover, after a brief dalliance with the Democrats, won the presidency as a Republican. When Hoover became president, he decided to continue the dollar-a-year tradition, donating his salary to charity.

During Hoover’s tenure the crisis was not war but the Great Depression, and he again turned to men of wealth. One of Hoover’s principal innovations was to launch the

Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which would channel bailout funds to foundering banks and railroads. Selected to lead the new agency was Charles Dawes, a Chicago banker with a history of moonlighting for the government—he was the nation's first comptroller of the Currency, under President William McKinley, and later elected vice president with Calvin Coolidge. In 1925 he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his adroit management of postwar international debts.

Dawes immersed himself in launching the RFC until the bank owned by his family, the Central Republic Bank of Chicago, began to founder. Despite Hoover's protest, in June 1932 Dawes resigned his post and rushed home to wrestle with panicked creditors. Soon after, now against Dawes' private protest (he feared, rightly, political blowback), Central Republic was named recipient of the largest loan yet issued by the RFC. Though the bank ultimately closed, the bailout made for an orderly transition and the loans were repaid. But public resentment over what appeared to be an in-house deal damaged the reputation of Hoover and of the relief agency.

Here was just the sort of misconduct that critics had feared from the outset—men of wealth protecting their personal interests. But the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt later that year seemed to clear the air.

Roosevelt was more sparing in his reliance on the men of industry and finance—and yes, all were men— but utilize them he did, especially when faced with a new World War. As the crisis loomed, like President Wilson before him, Roosevelt called on the dollar-a-year crowd. Leading this troop of civilians was Bill Knudsen, then-president of General Motors. An expert in mass production, Knudsen was appointed in 1940 chairman of the Office of Production Management and member of the National Defense Advisory Commission, at a salary of $1 a year.

As production ramped up, Knudsen brought with him executives from car companies, AT&T, and U.S. Steel. New Deal bureaucrats and labor activists denounced the appointments, but despite all the procurement contracts, all the millions spent, there was hardly a whiff of scandal.

By 1942, when Knudsen was awarded with a formal commission as lieutenant general in the Army, the worst his critics could say was that he had been too slow in converting from peaceful industrial production to a war footing. “We are beginning to pay a heavy price for leaving the mobilization of industry in the hands of business men,” the *Nation* warned in 1942. Steelmakers, in particular, were fighting expanded production “as a menace to monopolistic practices and ‘stable prices,” argued an editorial. It was “Dollar-a-Year Sabotage,” the *New Republic* headlined.

But those criticisms were drowned out by the din of factory production, the great outpouring of armament that yielded an “arsenal of democracy,” as Knudsen phrased it, that carried the Allies to victory. “We won because we smothered the enemy in an avalanche of production,” Knudsen remarked later. For all the fears of conflicted interest, the businessmen had proved their worth.

The dollar-a-year appointment routine went out with World War II, but presidents continued to tap the moneyed elite for advice and expertise, a practice that became the source of a growing thicket of regulations designed to forestall malfeasance. Roosevelt broke first ground here, in 1937, with an order barring purchase or sale of stock by government employees “for speculative purpose.” Later, his War Production Administration required its dollar-a-year men to disclose financial holdings and undergo background checks.

From there, safeguards advanced by stages. John F. Kennedy, during his aspirational 1960 campaign, called for a new standard, by which “no officer or employee of the executive branch shall use his official position for financial profit or personal gain.” Upon his election, he followed up with an executive order barring any “use of public office for private gain,” and then lobbied Congress for parallel laws. The result was new criminal statutes covering bribery and conflict-of-interest.

Lyndon Johnson was never an exemplar of disinterested politics, but early scandal in his administration, involving influence peddling by Johnson intimate Bobby Baker, a businessman and Democratic Party organizer, prompted a new round of rulemaking. Each federal agency should have its own ethics code, Johnson ordered, and all presidential appointees were now required to file financial disclosure statements. In the 1970s, the fallout from the Watergate scandal, together with the troubles of presidential chum and advisor Burt Lance, prompted a new round of reform from President Jimmy Carter.

As with so many things, the status of ethics in an administration tends to reflect the character of the chief executive, regardless of the rules in place at the time. Consider the following exchange, in 1934, between Franklin Roosevelt, Joe Kennedy, and presidential aide Ray Moley, prior to Kennedy’s appointment at the SEC.

As recounted by Joe Kennedy biographer David Nasaw, Kennedy warned Roosevelt that he had “done plenty of things that people could find fault with.” At that point, Moley interjected: “Joe, I know you want this job. But if there is anything in your business career that could injure the president, this is the time to spill it.”

Kennedy’s reaction was quick and sharp. “With a burst of profanity he defied anyone to question his devotion to public interest or to point to a single shady act in his whole life. The president did not need to worry about that, he said. What was more, he would give his critics—and here again the profanity flowed freely—an administration of the SEC that would be a credit to his country, the president, himself and his family."

After an exchange like that, codes and rules might seem superfluous. To outsiders, the Kennedy appointment appeared rash; "setting a wolf to guard a flock of sheep," one critic charged. But Roosevelt was unfazed. Asked why he'd named such a notorious crook as Kennedy, Roosevelt quipped, "Takes one to catch one." In the event, while nobody ever proposed Joe Kennedy for sainthood, he was never accused of misconduct or self-dealing while presiding at the SEC.

Charles Rappleye is a former news editor at the LA Weekly and the author of four books, his latest, "Herbert Hoover in the White House," was published by Simon & Schuster in 2016.

Ruth Woods – 1927-2017

Ruth Woods

Former South Lake Tahoe resident Ruth Marie Hanson Woods died Jan. 16, 2017, in Logan, Utah. She was 89.

Ruth was born Sept. 5, 1927, in Santa Rosa to Percy Brunell and Helen Patricia LeCornec Hanson.

She was raised in Santa Rosa and graduated from Santa Rosa High School in 1945.

She married Norm Woods on April 13, 1947, in Santa Rosa.

Ruth is survived by her children, Cherie, Pattie and Steve (Penny), and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be at Happy Homestead Cemetery in South Lake Tahoe later this year.
In lieu of flowers donations may be sent to CAPSA, Sunshine Terrace Foundation, Barton Memorial Hospital Foundation, South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, or American Legion Auxiliary Post 21, Santa Rosa.

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4 Tahoe bear cubs returned to nature

Four bear cubs were returned to the wild on Feb. 15.

In April 2016, an 18-year-old female bear with four cubs (two males and two females) died of unknown causes on the South Shore. The cubs weighed 7 to 10 pounds, and are now closer to 70 pounds.

They were taken to Animal Ark in Reno because they were found in Nevada.

They were placed into hibernation in late autumn. On Wednesday they were placed in artificial dens in the Lake Tahoe backcountry. They are expected to emerge from their winter slumber in mid-March or April. They were flown to the denning sites in pairs.

4-car wreck injures 8 on Hwy. 88

Eight people were injured in a four-car accident on Highway 88 on Valentine’s Day.

It started when Maria Gonzalez, 23, of San Jose was headed west just east of the Kirkwood Inn. Her vehicle, for unknown reasons, left the highway and hit a snowbank on the south side. She had five passengers in her vehicle.

Karen Carver, 58, of Chico was not able to avoid hitting Gonzalez’s vehicle. Both were then blocking the road.

To avoid the wreckage Christian Nelson, 19, of Elko went into the snowbank.

John Steffens Jr., 70, of Reno was unable to avoid Nelson’s vehicle, and hit it.

A 4-year-old in the first vehicle was airlifted to Renown Medical Center in Reno with major injuries. Seven others went to Barton Memorial Hospital with either minor or moderate injuries.

The 1pm Feb. 14 accident is under investigation.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

South Shore survives Hwy. 50 road closures

By Kathryn Reed

It isn't until the roads close that residents and business in Tahoe realize how isolated it can be living and working here.

Fortunately, Highway 50 on the California and Nevada side were not closed for very long. Both reopened on Feb. 14. But there is a lot of winter left and no guarantee the roads won't be closed again this winter or into spring, especially with the slopes so saturated and rain in the immediate forecast.

Strawberry Lodge in the American River Canyon had to close on Monday after the last guest checked out because of the road closure.

Tom Davis was mayor of South Lake Tahoe in 1997 when Highway 50 closed that January. He didn't accept Caltrans' declaration the road would be off-limits for eight to 12 months. With Duane Wallace, who was then executive director of the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, the two worked with then Assemblyman Tim Leslie to persuade Gov. Pete Wilson to put pressure on Caltrans to open it sooner. It worked.

California's highway storm damage this winter totals $401 million at 190 locations.

For businesses that have been here through the more serious slides of 1982 and 1997, when Highway 50 in California was closed for 75 and 27 days, respectively, they have protocols in place to contend with the adverse conditions.

"In anticipation of the blizzards and floods, Barton Health ordered additional and back-up supplies. Patient care and hospital operations were not impacted," Barton spokeswoman

Molly Coolidge told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Emergency vehicles were able to get through on the Nevada side even though passenger vehicles could not. Most patients are transferred to Nevada facilities.

"At times, when routes were closed, patients were transported using the closest alternate route and, as appropriate, transported by air," Coolidge said.

Grass Roots in South Lake Tahoe had an issue with a produce delivery that arrived hours after normal, but otherwise was faring OK. The small market gets deliveries four days a week.

"Right now I don't feel like we are out of a lot of things. It was synergistic with not a lot of people coming to Tahoe so we didn't run out of a lot of stuff," Stephanie Hrbacek, Grass Roots' beer and wine buyer, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Raley's, which has two stores in South Lake Tahoe, has been using alternative routes to bring goods to the South Shore, relying on the California Highway Patrol for the most up-to-date information.

"We are delivering less because there is less tourism," Raley's spokeswoman Chelsea Minor told *Lake Tahoe News.* She said the goal is to make sure residents have enough food.

Safeway would not comment, nor would their corporate offices.

Conditions never got to the point where businesses in town needed to shutdown, unless it was for storm damage.

During the previous road closures there were times when hotels were not able to provide clean linens because laundry service is out of town and it wasn't happening. People back then lost their jobs, store shelves were empty. For the 1997 closure it was estimated that the impact was a $1 million per day loss to the South Shore economy.

This week residents were talking about filling up on gas just in case trucks could not make it to the South Shore.

One item that is still hard to find in the area is a sump pump. Those were flying off shelves earlier this month.

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority took the approach that it was still possible to get here, it was just going to be more scenic via Highway 88. With Emerald Bay reopening, it meant Interstate 80 traffic could easily get down here. With this being a three-day weekend, it was even more critical to get the roads open.

The U.S. Postal Service was using Kingsbury Grade to service the post offices on the South Shore in California and Nevada. Mail that goes to and from this area goes through Reno. However, many people who use the Glenbrook Post Office didn't receive mail for about a week or took about a three-hour drive to retrieve it.

"In the spirit of Snowshoe Thompson, there are no delays," David Rupert with the USPS told *Lake Tahoe News.* "We continue to encourage residents to keep their mailboxes clear so we can continue to deliver the mail in a manner that is safe for our employees."

For those who went to Sierra-at-Tahoe last weekend it was glorious. A winter weekend without crowds, awesome snow and sunshine. The resort coffers were not as flush, though, because so many people come up from the Sacramento area and they couldn't do so via the most direct route.

"This year, the few days Highway 50 has been closed, we relinquish our position as best location to Sacramento and the Bay Area. Which is tough for our guests, especially when conditions are incredible with all the new snow," Thea Hardy, Sierra spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

During these few dry days it has meant cleanup time as water has been receding. South Lake Tahoe crews this week have been: Cleaning up streets as needed, filling potholes, inspecting basins, rivers, creeks for obstructions, repairing and prepping heavy equipment in preparation, clearing drainage areas, inspecting and checking drainage pump systems at Colorado Court and Bijou area, and documenting issues.

Staff will be before the South Lake Tahoe City Council in March to address overtime issues. Public works crews have been working almost without a break since the start of the year.

Now it will be up to Mother Nature to determine if the roads stay open and commerce continues a normal, after all she always has the last word.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· Carolyn Wright from Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is now the USTA local area coordinator for the Tahoe-Reno region.

· Bingo at the Carson City Senior Center on March 18 from 12:30-3:30pm will benefit Train a Dog Save a Warrior.

· Go for a list of where free radon kits may be obtained in Nevada.

· Rocks & Rhones wine weekend at five El Dorado County wineries is May 20-21, 11am-4pm. Tickets are $35/$40 advance; $45 at the door, $20 designated driver. For more info, email info@PleasantValleyWineries.com.

· AMSOIL Arenacross is one of the most extreme racing environments in the world with athletes competing on man-made dirt battlegrounds built inside the Reno-Sparks Livestock Event Center. It will be March 24-25, 5pm each day. Tickets start at $15 and available through Ticketmaster.

Nev. seeks storm relief from Washington, D.C.

Nevada has asked the federal government for disaster relief from the January storms that caused widespread flooding.

The affected regions include Douglas, Washoe, Carson City, Lyon, and Storey counties, as well the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and Washoe Tribe.

The damage from the storms is estimated to be about $15 million.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Big winners among NorCal wines

By Mike Dunne, Sacramento Bee

At the start of a new year, I customarily find myself seated with two to four other judges in a curtained cubicle of a barny building on the Citrus Fairgrounds in Cloverdale in Sonoma County. We usually constitute one of about 20 panels at the annual San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, the nation’s largest such judging, which in recent years has drawn around 7,000 wines, all made in the United States.

This January, however, I took on a new role at the competition. Seated by myself at a desk in a back room far removed from other judges, my assignment was to taste every wine declared to be the best of its class and then write a few remarks about each.

Unlike other judges, who taste blind, I was handed the bottle from which their pours had been drawn, so I knew the producer, vintage, appellation and so forth.

Read the whole story