

Bike committee outlines priorities for 2017

By Kathryn Reed

Finding ways to improve the South Shore cycling scene is not a difficult endeavor.

The advisory committee to the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority recently outlined its goals for this summer through 2019.

Snow removal of bike trails expects to be an ongoing project. Cyclists and pedestrians are regularly using these thoroughfares in the winter. It was only in the past couple years that they have been plowed for winter use.

David Reichel, the committee member who gave the report to the board last month, stressed the need for the JPA and city to pursue the connection at Sierra Boulevard and Highway 50 to the bike trail behind Scusa and Fitness Evolution. This might be doable when the health club seeks a permit to improve its parking lot.

“It’s a valuable connection,” Reichel said.

An easement would be needed to make this happen.

The money the JPA has to spend comes from Measure S/R that was passed by South Shore voters on the California side. South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District representatives make up the JPA board.

While the JPA board won’t allocate funds until its July meeting, the following is where the volunteer committee recommends the dollars be spent this year:

- \$25,000 – Improve surface of boardwalk in front of Lake

Tahoe Golf Course

- \$10,000 – 2017-18 winter snow removal in the city
- \$20,000 – 2017-18 winter snow removal in El Dorado County
- \$10,000 – Class 1 bike trail maintenance.

For 2018, the committee wants snow removal to continue. The bulk of the funds – \$50,000 – would go toward the match for the Al Tahoe, Johnson boulevards, Highway 50 project that should be constructed that year.

The following year, snow removal is projected to continue. Money for ongoing maintenance of Class 1 trails is also recommended.

Not all recommendations from the committee cost substantive dollars. Those include:

- Installing a yellow center line on the Linear Park bike path. That should happen this summer. The city, though, says the path cannot be widened.
- Adding green paint to the Class 3 street crossing at Eloise, Dunlap and Fifth streets.
- Continue putting in signs to help cyclists. More are expected to be installed this summer.

Opinion: Beekeepers and the

art of urban rebirth

By Juan William Chávez

The plight of public housing projects conceived with the best of intentions and then failing horribly is by now well-known in communities across America. Less known—and still unfolding—is the story of what happens next, both to the people who lived there and the physical spaces those projects inhabited.

As an artist and cultural activist in St. Louis, Mo., I've long been interested in the relationship between physical space and the needs of people and communities—in what works and what doesn't. About a decade ago, I began focusing this question on the site where once stood Pruitt-Igoe, one of America's most notorious public housing failures.

The project, named for Wendell O. Pruitt, an African-American fighter pilot in World War II, and William L. Igoe, a white former U.S. congressman, was completed in 1954. It was located just two miles northwest of the Gateway Arch, and envisioned as one of the nation's most ambitious attempts to address urban squalor. Its 33 high-rise apartment buildings, with 2,870 units, were designed by Minoru Yamasaki, who went on to design the World Trade Center in New York City.

But the project was plagued with problems from the start, both in its design and in its profound inadequacy in addressing the economic, social, and demographic needs of residents. By the early 1970s, most of the buildings were uninhabitable, their hallways vandalized and their windows broken. In 1972, they were demolished via a spectacular, widely televised implosion that soon came to epitomize the failed trajectory of public housing nationwide.

Over time, and years of neglect, the vast vacant lot that was once the Pruitt-Igoe projects transformed into what I came to

think of as the Pruitt-Igoe forest. In 2009, I was working on community-based art projects in North St. Louis. On my drive to work, I regularly passed the Pruitt-Igoe forest. Viewing it from the street, I daydreamed about what might be inside. At first, the forest seemed intimidatingly abandoned and potentially dangerous, but before long it beckoned me. I entered on foot to take photographs. I walked on weather-worn asphalt and saw overgrown weeds sprouting from dirt mounds, with bits of gravel, brick and crushed concrete. Mosses revealed the vague outlines of old streets. There were a variety of native plants, and oak and hickory trees. I saw hawks, owls, rabbits and deer. I had thought I would find the remains of a past civilization, but to my surprise I saw the beginning of a new community. This undisturbed vacant lot had become a sanctuary for an entire ecosystem.

I started thinking about Pruitt-Igoe's mission. The development had been created to foster community. Could it somehow return to that function? Did any community exist at Pruitt-Igoe now? One day, as I photographed some bees pollinating a patch of native flowers, it hit me: these buzzing insects were Pruitt-Igoe's new community. Bees and St. Louisans were in a similar situation. St. Louis's population had fallen to its lowest in a century. At the same time – for reasons ranging from the use of pesticides and industrial farming to the loss of native plant habitats to illness caused by parasites—bees were dying off. This posed a threat to humans, since bees pollinate our food. Perhaps Pruitt-Igoe could provide a place to reinvigorate the partnership between bees and humans, creating a kind of sanctuary for both. Its story could end on a positive note, with one of the worst failures of public housing becoming a leading example of revitalization.

I thought I would transform the urban forest into a public preserve, cultivating community through on-site beekeeping and urban agriculture. The aim was to memorialize the past and

provide opportunity for the future. But with Pruitt-Igoe's fate tied up with controversial development plans—construction for a new “urban village” planned for the site still hasn't begun —I and my scientific and artistic colleagues decided instead to initiate a one-acre pilot program that I called the Living Proposal, in the adjacent neighborhood of Old North. A Guggenheim fellowship and a Creative Capital artist's grant provided funding to construct a sanctuary.

Working on a feral property surrounded by other vacant lots, we built our bee-friendly environment. We designed an apiary with two hives and garden beds, where we planted pesticide-free, pollinator-friendly native plants, vegetables, fruit trees and berry bushes so the bees would have a variety of food sources. Flowers bloomed, the pollinators arrived, and our beehives began to produce honey. Every season, the Living Proposal became more established, with strong and healthy hives. It became part of a bigger movement of urban beekeeping, committed to rebuilding the dwindling bee population. Scientists have found surprisingly high numbers of bee species in cities that are absent in nearby rural lands. According to St. Louis University's Sustainability Science Lab, St. Louis is currently providing habitat for a third of Missouri's bees.

As the bees flourished in the sanctuary, it became time to incorporate our human neighbors into the hive. We developed the Young Honey Crew, a summer youth program that teaches students the importance of bees to our health. The students wear bee suits to inspect the hives, maintain the garden from seed to harvest, follow recipes to prepare food from the garden for lunch, and create artwork celebrating their connectedness to bees, the environment and each other. The Young Honey Crew became especially meaningful in 2014 after the death of Michael Brown, the unarmed teenager who was killed by police in nearby Ferguson. With overwhelming tension and protests throughout the city, our students sought space to

think, create, and talk. The Living Proposal became their sanctuary, a place for constructive contemplation.

From that point forward, our workshops focused more on community and collective thinking. In 2015 we invited our North St. Louis neighbor, Paulette, to initiate a senior women's support group, the Wise Women. These queen bees of the community gather weekly to share a meal, support and celebrate each other. Last year, with backing from Artpace San Antonio, we built the "Honey Trailer," a vintage trailer designed for bee advocacy, health education, and job training. Starting this summer, the Honey Trailer—which is outfitted with solar panels, a grow room, a small kitchen a flat screen TV to provide information about bees, cooking, and our program—will visit schools, parks, festivals and farmers' markets around St. Louis and other cities.

Back in 2009, soon after I first started venturing into the abandoned forest, I made a sculpture, stacking defunct beehives to create a scaled-down version of a Pruitt-Igoe building. There were pheromone residues in the hive boxes, and they started to attract new bees. I was surrounded by the time the sculpture was completed. Not wearing any protective clothing I moved with hesitation, but my nervousness dissipated as the bees became less curious about my activity and more focused on the sculpture itself.

I saw the bees work as a group, build a haven, and use ideas to make honey: the alchemy of the studio within an ecosystem. The experience led directly to building the bee sanctuary. By creating a healthier environment for bees, we're making a better environment for ourselves and our neighborhoods.

Juan William Chávez is an artist and cultural activist who creates and shares space in the built and natural environment to address community-identified issues. He lives in St. Louis.

Deceased in Placer officer involved shooting ID'd

A Colorado man has been identified as the suspect who was killed last week by a Placer County sheriff's deputy after he held a hostage at gunpoint.

Jose Gonzales Lera, 27, of Lakewood, Colo., was killed Feb. 3 near Squaw Valley. He led deputies and California Highway Patrol officers on a chase on the North Shore. They then put down spikes on Highway 89 to stop him.

Lera got out of his vehicle with a gun pointed at his female passenger and then pointed it at officers. A deputy then fatally shot him.

The name of the officer involved in the shooting has not been released.

The investigation is ongoing.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Dissecting wage gap in Nev. and elsewhere

By Julie Ann Formoso, Las Vegas Sun

Seventy-nine cents to the dollar. You've probably heard that

statistic on the gender pay gap, a longtime wedge issue and soapbox topic for politicians, feminists and celebrities.

Some say the gap – a simple Census Bureau ratio of the difference in median earnings – is a myth, or at least misleading. The *Washington Post*'s Fact Checker emphasizes the significant effect of life choices tied to gender, and the fact that the gap narrows going from median to weekly wages, or that women on average have less work experience than men and favor flexible hours over higher pay. So, while public figures and pundits on both sides of the issue make definitive pronouncements about what's true, economic experts continue to examine questions of gender circumstance as well as gender bias.

Compared with the 79-cent national figure, Nevada looks progressive. With women making about 85 cents for every dollar earned by men, the state is among those with the narrowest gaps (alongside New York, Maryland and Hawaii), according to a 2016 report by the U.S. Joint Economic Committee.

Numbers from the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation align with the wage gap at its widest among professionals and utility workers, though women do earn more than their male counterparts in wholesale trade.

Read the whole story

Why the wolf OR7 is a celebrity

By Emma Marris, High Country News

Night is falling in the Wood River Valley, a broad, flat expanse of southern Oregon, just south of Crater Lake National Park. John Stephenson, a gray-haired, lantern-jawed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, is building a campfire on this chilly late October evening. He is here to be a human – to move around and make noise and generally discourage a nearby wolf pack from coming out of the dark timbered hills.

These wolves have killed four yearling cattle in this particular pasture already. And this isn't any old wolf pack; it was the first to settle in southern Oregon, and the family of a legendary lupine wanderer known as OR7.

This is Stephenson's fourth night in this field. In a few days, the cows will be rounded up and shipped to California for the winter. Once they're gone, he'll be able to more or less relax until the cattle return in the spring.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- South Lake Tahoe's roller derby team the Tahoe Derby Dames has disbanded.
- Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village is hosting a free science expo March 15 from 4-6pm for ages 6-12. This year's theme is Earth & Space Science. Challenger Planetarium shows require an **RSVP**.
- Free sand bags are available at Truckee Fire Station 92 located at 11473 Donner Pass Road as well as the U.S. Forest Service Building on Stevens Lane.
- What is Autism? What Causes Autism? Can Autism be

Treated? Those questions will be answered at a May 18, 6pm lecture at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. Cost is \$5. RSVP **online**.

• The Desert Research Institute first female president, Kristen Averyt, starts July 1. She is currently at the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder.

EDC creates online map with updated road conditions

El Dorado County has created a feature on its website to monitor road, park and trail status.

The map can be found on the county's main website through a button located on the right side of the page. The map will show the status of roads, parks, and trails through sign icons. By clicking on the sign icons, individuals can get information about the status of the roads, parks or trails in El Dorado County.

The map has information from inside and outside of the county from Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol.

To help make the map the most current, report damage that you see to the county to 530.642.4909 or 530.621.5360.

Future of USFS, BLM law enforcement threatened

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Federal law enforcement agents who combat illegal dumping, conduct wildland fire investigations and eradicate environmentally damaging illicit marijuana growing operations would lose their jobs under a proposal by seven western lawmakers.

A bill by Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, seeks to eliminate the law enforcement branches of the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

The bill, which includes Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., among co-sponsors, would shift their duties to sheriff's departments which would receive block grants to pay for the extra work. Lawmakers have introduced similar measures in past years, to no avail.

Read the whole story

Winter Film Series concludes with Ballinger, Richards

Alpenglow Sports' fourth and final installment of the 11th annual Winter Film Series will be Feb. 23 at 7pm at Squaw Valley's Olympic Village Lodge.

Adrian Ballinger and Cory Richards will present Everest No Filter: Success and Failure Climbing Without Oxygen to the

Roof of the World. In May 2016, Ballinger and Richards embarked on an oxygen-less ascent of the world's tallest peak, 29, 320-foot Mt. Everest. Their story, documented in real time on the social media platform Snapchat, is a tale of success, failure and personal growth.

Ballinger, owner of Alpenglow Expeditions, initially achieved high-altitude mountain-fame as the only American to ski two 8,000-meter peaks. He is also the first person to summit three 8,000-meter peaks within a three-week period. Richards, a climber and visual storyteller, was named *National Geographic* Adventurer of the Year in 2012.

Railroad museum showcases Sierra snowplowing

By Robin Opsahl, Sacramento Bee

Dealing with winter in the Sierra Nevada isn't easy, but a new exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum shows visitors how the railroads have kept trains moving year-round.

"Clearing the Way," which is on display through March, features a 251,000-pound rotary snowplow – a trainlike machine with a large set of circular blades that cuts through snow and blows it up and away from the tracks. The snowplow on display was built in 1920 and was donated to the museum by Union Pacific in 2008.

[Read the whole story](#)