

Letter: Heavenly gang helps serve dinner

To the community,

Bread & Broth provides its Monday meal at St. Theresa Grace Hall thanks to the generous sponsors who host an Adopt A Day of Nourishment by donating \$250, which feeds anywhere from 75 to 110 hungry folks who come for a nourishing dinner.

B&B's Adopt A Day program was established in 2009 and is a way for individuals, organizations, churches and businesses to not only donate funding for the food, utilities and dinner supplies, but provide hands on participation volunteering at the sponsorship's designated dinner.

On Oct. 24th, thanks to Vail EpicPromise Grant funds, Heavenly Mountain Resort was the AAD sponsor for the evening. Representing Heavenly were Adam Turner, Liz Seki, Cassim Andrews and Nicole Alexandrovich, all employees from Heavenly's Vail Resorts retail division. These four helpful and caring sponsor volunteers assisted B&B's volunteer crew from 3-6pm, helping with packing food giveaway bags, serving dinner, drinks and desserts and helping with the dining hall and kitchen cleanup.

Since the AAD program inception, Vail's EpicPromise Grant has been funding 12 dinners annually. Initially, the sponsor crews all came from Heavenly Mountain Resort, but in the past two years, Kirkwood Mountain Resort has been alternating monthly sponsorships. B&B truly values our partnership with our local Vail resorts and it is always a special treat to have sponsor crews from Heavenly and Kirkwood Mountain Resorts join in helping to serve the folks in need who live in our community.

For more B&B information, contact me at 530.542-2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Star Guide: Telescope tips for the experienced

By Tony Berendsen

Through all the years of my interest in telescopes and astronomy I've met many amateur astronomers who have progressed from novice to advanced. The usual progression involves purchasing larger and larger apertures to see fainter and fainter objects through the eyepiece. I call this the search for the largest light bucket.

I have to say that I understand that journey. But telescope systems today offer much more than aperture. It's not just about the light bucket anymore.

A couple decades ago I would have never ever thought of purchasing a computerized telescope. I was completely abhorred with the idea of doing anything less than pulling out my Norton Star Atlas and star hopping through the cosmos for hours, guided by paper charts. I, too, was on the light bucket path, until I bought a computerized Celestron telescope, and the cosmos became bigger than ever, even with a modest size aperture.

Computerized telescopes not only offer a built in catalog of thousands of objects to pick from, they can take you on a computer automated tour of the night sky, providing information about what you are seeing through the eyepiece, and even suggesting interesting objects near to where the scope is pointing. I had no idea what I had been missing.

So for this Christmas, for someone with a solid intermediate interest in observing, I'd suggest purchasing a **Nexstar telescope**. For a modest price the Nexstar mount is very solid, and 6 inches of aperture will give good views of the best deep sky objects. If you add a **SkyPortal Module**, the scope can be operated with a smartphone using the SkyPortal app enabling celestial navigation by touching a digital star map.



Telescopes help the experienced star gazer see better. Photo/Celestron

For the advanced interest in observing, I recommend the scope that changed my mind about owning a computerized telescope, the **CPC 1100 Deluxe HD**. I purchased a CPC 1100 about 10 years ago and it has accompanied me flawlessly to share views of the cosmos to thousands of people. From snow laden slopes of 18 degrees to warm summer temps on the shore of Lake Tahoe the scope has been rock solid. Its aperture of 11 inches offers about 1,600 eyeballs of light gathering power, and since its

optical tube and mount are one piece, it is amazingly simple to setup. It's not the 16-inch light bucket I'd been dreaming of having some day, but it is the scope that exponentially expanded my knowledge of our galaxy and beyond.

Finally, don't under value the need for a quality telescope mount, for if a telescope's optical tube is its eye, the mount is its mind and body. It's not just for steady and accurate pointing for visual viewing, but for successful astrophotography. Celestron has fulfilled that need this year with a re-engineered German Equatorial Mount, the CGX.

Here's what Celestron's product manager Bryan Cogdell had to say about their new mount: "For me the best thing about the mount overall is the load capacity to weight ratio of the mount. That was a key design goal. In other words, for its size, it holds a lot more telescope than other mounts of this size range. The ergonomics are my second favorite part of the mount. From the carry handles to the new polar alignment adjustment that can be made with a full instrument load on the mount, I find it easier to setup and align the CGX than other mounts of this size, and on the performance side, the smoother drive system, with belt driven worms, the mount slews smoothly and more confidently even if the telescope is unbalanced."

So, if you are looking to put something under the tree this holiday for an astronomy enthusiast, think about a telescope, or a new mount. Also, be prepared to be amazed with views of the cosmos with your proud backyard astronomer.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775. 232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Veterans Day will be celebrated Nov. 11 at 11am at the American Legion Hall in South Lake Tahoe.
 - Punk rockers Guttermouth with guests Get Dead & the Cryptics will be at Whiskey Dick's in South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 13. Doors open at 9pm. Cover is \$15.
 - Jim Antti, who has been with the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District for 24 years, has been promoted to assistant chief.
 - Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows will celebrate the inaugural Merry Days & Holly Nights, two weeks of spirited events and activities Dec. 17-31.
 - Richard Blair, singer-songwriter and Truckee resident for 30 years, has created a dinner and show performance about Truckee' in the late 1800s. For more info, go **online**.
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Study: Nev. pension costs cut into ed funding

By Amelia Pak-Harvey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Jennifer Phillips has seen her salary from the Clark County School District decrease three times over the past few years.

That's not because of a demotion. It's because Phillips, an accounts payable employee, is paying a higher contribution to the Public Employee Retirement System, the pension fund for Nevada's public employees.

A study argues that increasing pension costs are eating up education funding for students.

Nevada is one of only eight states that experienced both declining per-pupil expenditures and growing pension contributions, according to the study from the conservative Manhattan Institute think tank.

Read the whole story

Tahoe-Truckee expand economy beyond tourism

By Kathryn Reed

There is a movement under way in the Tahoe-Truckee area to build an economy independent of snow and gaming.

Benefits include higher wages in non-tourism industries and year-round jobs.

Two obstacles are the shallow talent pool and regulations. The lack of qualified workers can be solved by importing people from the Bay Area or elsewhere. Regulations – like the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s coverage and commodities rules – will take longer to change.

“This is an affordable place relative to a lot of other tech places,” Chris McNamara, owner of Outdoor Gear Lab in South Lake Tahoe, said.

McNamara was one of three speakers Nov. 9 talking about the region’s new economy. Rachel Arst McCullough with Tahoe Silicon Mountain in Truckee and Jamie Orr of Tahoe Mountain

Lab in South Lake Tahoe were also on the panel. More than 30 people came to Lake Tahoe Community College to hear how business is different today compared to just a few years ago.



Rachel Arst McCullough, from left, Chris McNamara and Jamie Orr talk Nov. 9 about the region's changing economy. Photo/LTN

People in the Bay Area are realizing their job is not dependent that they be there. They are exchanging long commutes for bike rides and hikes. It's about living the Tahoe dream – immersing oneself in the natural environment, while still maintaining a career.

These “new” workers are also bringing a sense of community to the area.

“The new Tahoe economy is about breaking down silos. What do we want the community to look like as a whole?” Orr said.

She runs a shared workspace (which is completely full). Entrepreneurs, small businesses, nonprofits – they are working under one roof. Some resources are shared, while some enterprises have four walls unto themselves.

These people are then brainstorming among themselves to help each other. It's a different type of networking – beyond the

traditional service club or chamber mixer. And as such, they bring others into the fold. In some ways today's work world is like the shared economies Airbnb and Uber have excelled at in their respective specialties only this is about independent contractors creating a niche for themselves.

By creating this new workforce it could help normalize the economy because these jobs aren't dependent on tourists and therefore can provide stable employment. They aren't going to hire and fire based on the weather.

One thing McCullough pointed out is "if you want year-round jobs, you need year-round housing." Truckee, like the South Shore, has a shortage of long-term rentals.

One of the success stories in Truckee is the makers space where artists are working under one roof, much like how the businesspeople are operating at Tahoe Mountain Lab. Creating something similar is being talked about for the South Shore.

Opinion: Expanded broadband key to Tahoe's future

By Chris Fajkos

When it comes to having access to broadband Internet, in this day and age it's absolutely essential in order for the Tahoe basin to flourish. Unfortunately for the Tahoe basin there are still pockets all around the lake that are either unserved or underserved. These underserved areas have download speeds under 6 Mbps and 1.5 Mbps upload, as per the California Public Utilities Commission's definition of minimum speeds.

To put things into context, the average broadband speeds in San Francisco are 75.92 Mbps down and 25.70 Mbps up. This deficiency presents a huge problem for the region because without access to broadband Internet our local businesses, schools, hospitals, and local government agencies are placed at a disadvantage, jeopardizing economic development, public safety, and overall regional prosperity.

The dangers that come with not having access to broadband Internet are extensive and all facets of our society are impacted. Public safety is placed at risk when they are unable to share critical emergency management information quickly and securely. Schools suffer because teachers and students are unable to use the online resources they need. Hospitals and medical offices require fast and secure access to broadband in order to send and receive medical files and other medical information. Economic growth slows to a crawl as local businesses struggle to remain competitive if their Point of Sale swipers don't work.

Understanding that a "digital divide" exists in the basin, the Tahoe Prosperity Center applied for and received a grant from the California Public Utilities Commission to help carry out their Connected Tahoe Project. The funds received from CPUC's California Advanced Services Fund went toward the collection of local Internet speed data, assisting broadband infrastructure providers with applying for CPUC grants, and convening with applicable stakeholders to identify opportunities for broadband expansion in the Tahoe basin.

The information obtained from Tahoe Prosperity Center's initial work painted a disappointing picture for the region in terms of broadband coverage and service. Speed test results that were completed by basin residents clearly identified numerous problem areas, indicating that the problem is basinwide.

The next step in the Connected Tahoe Project will aim to

facilitate broadband infrastructure projects in those problem areas. This will be done, primarily, by working with the CPUC to identify Internet service providers (ISPs) that are ready, able, and willing to provide infrastructure, as well as through TPC's push for a basinwide "Dig Once Policy."

The Dig Once Policy essentially means that when there's a public improvement project happening somewhere in the basin, such as a bike path improvement; then conduit for broadband fiber would be included in the project. This way there is no need to dig the same area up again later to install conduit.

The Tahoe Prosperity Center is the only organization focused on this issue for the benefit of Tahoe's residents and businesses and will stay focused on our Connected Tahoe Project. We hope that basin residents continue to speak up and draw attention to this issue.

Chris Fajkos is the project manager for Tahoe Prosperity Center.

Placer County votes down sales tax hike

Placer County voters said no to a sales tax increase.

Known as Measure M, it was designed to generate \$1.6 billion over 30 years that would have been spent on transit.

Two-thirds of the voters were needed to up the sales tax by one-half cent. It failed with only 63.71 percent saying yes.

Voters overwhelmingly – 79.39 percent – agreed that in the future the North Tahoe Public Utility District members should

be elected at-large instead of by district.

Placer County is divided into three Assembly districts. Frank Bigelow retained his seat in District 5 and Brian Dahle did the same for District 1. Beth Gaines is giving up her District 6 seat. It is going to another Republican – Kevin Kiley. (Gaines lost her bid to be a supervisor in El Dorado County.)

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Douglas County says no to 2 tax proposals

Douglas County had the highest voter turnout of any Nevada county on Tuesday at more than 94 percent.

Voters resoundingly said no to the fuel indexing and sales taxes measures, with both going down with more than 60 percent of the vote.

Question 1 would have raised the gas tax in the county, with the money collected going to road improvements. Question 2 was a sales and use tax. The money would have gone toward improving facilities in Douglas County School District.

Term limits meant there would be two new members on the Douglas County School District board. The lake – Area 3 – will be represented by **Keith Byer**, while Area 5 will have Linda Gilkerson.

Assemblyman Jim Wheeler ran unopposed in District 39, so he will continue to represent the lake in the Nevada Legislature.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

EDC gets new supe; no surprises for Tahoe reps

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County's newest supervisor is John Hidahl.

Hidahl, who recently retired after 40 years in the aerospace industry, soundly defeated Beth Gaines. He had nearly 58 percent of the vote on Nov. 8, while she had just more than 42 percent.

Hidahl replaces Ron Mikulaco in District 1. Mikulaco was running for a seat on the board of the El Dorado Hills County Water-Fire district. He came in third out of four candidates, with the top two winning a seat.

Gaines is the representative for the 6th Assembly District, which encompasses the western edge of El Dorado and Placer counties. She has already declared her intentions to run for her husband's state Senate seat in two years. Ted and Beth Gaines have a history of changing statewide seats and moving to accommodate vacancies.

On Tuesday, in the race to replace Gaines for the Assembly seat, it was Republican Kevin Kiley who prevailed over Democrat Brain Caples, 63.9 percent to 36.1 percent.

Ted Gaines easily retained his Senate seat by beating challenger Rob Rowen, 53.15 percent to 36.85 percent.

In the Assembly District 5 race Republican Frank Bigelow keeps his job. The district includes the South Shore, most of El Dorado County and goes south along the Nevada border to include Mammoth. He garnered 64.3 percent of the vote compared

to Democrat Robert Carabas' 35.7 percent

In Congress, the California side of Lake Tahoe will continue to be represented by Republican Tom McClintock.

Not all former El Dorado County supervisors failed at their next election. John Knight is now going to be on the Los Rios Community College District board.

Opinion: Finding hope after Tuesday's election

By Kathryn Reed

Why. It's one of my favorite words. And it has served me well as a journalist; sometimes much to the frustration of those I'm interviewing.

After Tuesday's presidential election many are left asking – Why did people vote for Trump? It's time to listen to the answers because we weren't listening during the campaign. We were too busy criticizing Donald Trump to understand that for millions he represented something we didn't want to accept – that people are disenfranchised, they don't want the status quo, they wanted someone who talks like they do, looks like they do and isn't conventional.

I didn't want Trump because he scares me. His words and actions scare me. To want to deport Muslims, build walls to stop immigrants, to disband gay marriage, to say sexually assaulting women is his privilege – well, it's just mindboggling to me people can stand behind someone like that. His world views are opposite mine. His business ethics are

opposite mine. I don't know if there is anything about him I like or agree with.

I readily admit my dislike for this man stopped me from listening to those who supported him because I had already made my mind up who I was voting for – or was it voting against?

I didn't want Hillary Clinton either. But she scared me less and I didn't believe she would unravel our country. I also didn't think she would make it great again or better than it is. I liked her experience and trusted she would do more good than harm.

I liked when Clinton on Wednesday said, "Our campaign was never about one person or even one election. It was about the country we love and building an America that is hopeful, inclusive and big hearted."

I want to remain hopeful, have tried and will try harder to be inclusive, and will strive to be big hearted.

Clearly, the country is divided. But I'm of the belief that most of us want the same basic things, but we just have a different idea about how to get there. That's my idealism kicking in. We aren't always going to agree on everything – which is a good thing. If we did, it would be a pretty boring world.

I would like to think we can agree about some basics – that we should all be treated equal no matter gender, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or who our significant other is.

Most agree the health care system needs more reforms. Most agree our infrastructure is aging and needs to be rebuilt. Most agree people should be treated with respect. Most agree we want to leave the world a better place than we found it. Most agree we want the next generation to be better off than we are.

We have choices. What are yours going to be? Let's be a country that learns to say yes, works together, and compromises.

Let's start a conversation about how to get what we want instead of digging our heels in and saying we won't work together. Congress – are you listening? American people – are you listening?

Eight years ago so many people said “that man is not my president” in regards to Barack Obama. Now the other side is saying the same thing – after chastising those who said the same thing eight years ago. You can't have it both ways. That divide only grew in the last eight years. Are we going to let the chasm get even larger in the next four years?

Trump will be our president in January. The public has spoken. Protests won't change that. And protesters, where were you before the election? Do something constructive for a change.

If you don't like the Trumps and Clintons of the world, now is the time to start doing something about it. Now is the time to get engaged so in four years you are not enraged.

For those who are feeling a bit lost in the post-election malaise, grieving is a process. Take the time to do so. But do it fast – the country needs you to re-engage. The last stage is acceptance – of course you have to work through denial-isolation, anger, bargaining and depression to get there.

And to those who sat out and didn't vote for a presidential candidate: shame on you. This is one of the greatest gifts we have in this country – the right to vote. As citizens we don't have that many things we must do. But I adamantly believe one of our obligations is to be civically involved – at all levels.

As Clinton said today in her concession speech, “Our constitutional democracy demands our participation not just

every four years, but all the time."