

Gamesmanship impacts SLT Knights Inn project

By Kathryn Reed

The animosity between the California Tahoe Conservancy and city of South Lake Tahoe was palpable last week at the state agency's board meeting.

Tom Davis, who is the city's rep on the CTC board, said it's time to clarify what the staff can do and what should come to the board.

The acrimony is about the CTC staff, Executive Director Patrick Wright in particular, deciding without the board weighing in to pull funding for a city project on Highway 50 near Ski Run Boulevard.

At the **March CTC board meeting**, the state put \$4 million aside for the project that in some circles is known as Bijou Park Creek Watershed and SEZ restoration project, to some it's the Knights Inn project and to others it is the Whole Foods project. It was to be on the September agenda. Instead, the agenda item was a \$397,900 planning grant to study an even larger swath of land beyond the Knights Inn parcel.

While the CTC board approved it, the City Council could turn it down.

Razing the Knights Inn, bringing the stream that is piped underground to the surface, and other improvements paired with work at the neighboring parcel at Highway 50 and Ski Run would prohibit about 11,000 pounds of sediment a year from reaching Lake Tahoe.

While City Manager Nancy Kerry gave the CTC board a fast, detailed rundown of the last six months, Wright stared in the

opposite direction at the screen that showed the text for the item the board would vote on. Then while City Councilman Austin Sass spoke, Wright stared at him intently. The hostility was evident from everyone.

The hang-up appears to be over bonus units, which is yet **another commodity** the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has created. The bi-state regulatory agency allocates extra tourist accommodation units (TAUs) when stream environmental zones are restored. These TAUs have value – and the city and CTC each have a pot. They can be sold; and Placer County is an eager buyer because it has so few TAUs.

While Wright's written report to the board questioned whether Proposition 1 money would be appropriate for this project, this is just the sort of thing Prop. 1 dollars have been used for in the past. And in March it was all but a done deal; the exact dollar amount was more of the question than whether a check would ever be written.

In August, Wright would not return phone calls to *Lake Tahoe News* to talk about the project and board Chair Larry Sevison had no idea what was going on. Last week Sevison said maybe something could be worked out at the December meeting. Otherwise the board was silent.

After everyone spoke Sept. 15, Wright said, "We will do everything we can to make this work." This was also after Kerry and Sass had left the room, and Davis had made his statement.

The city intends to go forward with the development. What remains to be seen is if Pradip Patel, who owns the Knights Inn, will abide by the tentative agreement or keep asking for more money. It's Halferty Development out of Southern California that wants to buy both parcels and essentially do one project.

A private developer, though, is under no obligation to do the

environmental upgrades. That is why government dollars were being sought – to make this not just an economic project, but also an environmental one.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• South Lake Tahoe took time last week to recognize members of the South Shore law enforcement community. Entities singled out included: South Lake Tahoe Police Department, Nevada Highway Patrol, California Highway Patrol, Douglas County Sheriff's Office, El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, search and rescue, STAR, probation, SLEDNET, and U.S. Forest Service.

• According to the latest figures, El Dorado County unemployment is at 5.6 percent and South Lake Tahoe's is 6.1 percent. There was a time not so long ago that SLT's topped 17 percent.

• South Tahoe High School and the Squaw Valley Academy **made the list** of most beautiful high school campuses in California.

• Sherry Rupert, an American Indian of Paiute and Washoe heritage and a native Nevadan, will speak on preserving the Stewart Indian School on Sept. 24. The free talk starts at 10am at Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park in Minden.

Donations sought to stock Baron Lake with fish

The Meyers Community Foundation has started a Fish Fund for the stocking of fish in Baron Lake.

The fund was started with donations from locals including Dick Mullinix, Pete Nelligan, Eric Mohr, Mel Smothers and a \$1,000 grant from the MCF. This money was used for two stockings of trout this summer.

The goal is to stock Baron Lake four or five times a season with enough trout to make for a great fishing opportunity for kids and families so they don't have to drive long distances to go trout fishing.

MCF is a nonprofit, so donations are tax deductible. To donate to the Fish Fund, contact Victor Babbitt at 530.545.0193 or info@tahoeeflyfishing.com.

Nevada's best contemporary art hangs in one room

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Whether it comes to sports or outdoors or style, there always seems to be a line drawn in the sand between Nevada's North and South.

When it comes to art, however, that line is beginning to fade.

The Reno-based Nevada Museum of Art in the past year has made it clear that it is the state art museum, not just reserved for Northern Nevada. In August, the museum opened its Nevada-proud exhibition, "Tilting the Basin," a collection of contemporary work created by in-state artists from either end. The exhibition, co-curated with Las Vegas-based art adviser Michele Quinn, lasts through Oct. 23.

Read the whole story

Mammoth area fire brings smoke to Tahoe-Truckee

Smoke filling the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee areas is from the Owens River Fire burning near Mammoth.

More than 200 people are fighting the blaze that started Sept. 17. While no cause has been given, officials say it was human caused.

It remains at about 6,000 acres and 20 percent containment.

A surge if mid-level moisture is in the forecast for late Tuesday through Wednesday which could result in thunderstorms. While the rain would be good, the threat of lightning strikes is not.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Loneliest road in America suits Nev. residents just fine

By John M. Glionna, Las Vegas Review-Journal

BAKER — In 1977, when Highway 50 was still the road less traveled, just another anonymous stretch of asphalt traversing the American West, Denys Koyle's life took an unpredictable turn.

At age 28, she moved her young family from Huntington Beach, California, to this windblown frontier town on the state line between Nevada and Utah. She founded the Border Inn and scratched out a living tending to the occasional motorist who passed her ramshackle spread that baked under a relentless sun amid skittering lizards and prickly desert scrub brush.

To squeeze out the day's last dollar, she would stand on the empty roadway well after dark, gazing up a 19-mile grade east into Utah: If she saw headlights descending, she'd stay open. Most times she closed.

That was before Highway 50 became famous.

It was an unlikely stroke of luck for Koyle and countless merchants along this meandering two-lane road that bisects Nevada's midsection like an unadorned cowboy belt: In 1986 — three decades ago this year — the old highway became known as "The Loneliest Road in America."

Read the whole story

Road Beat: Elantra mpg beats hybrids



Hyundai Elantra Eco may be the best value is a new car today. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Let's get right to the main point of the new Hyundai Elantra Eco, 53 miles to the gallon. I could stop this Road Beat right now, but there is so much more to write about. Yes, 53 miles per gallon was recorded on a level two-way mileage run with the cruise control set at 70 mph. During the run it even crept up to 56 mpg. And this Elantra Eco is not a hybrid.

What did Hyundai do? They installed in the great looking Elantra body a new conventional powertrain, a 1.4L, turbocharged, DOHC, 16 valve direct injected inline four-cylinder engine connected to the second half of this innovative powertrain, a seven-speed dual clutch automated manual transmission driving the front wheels. This tranny is

extremely smooth and super-efficient. The combination creates an incredible high level of efficiency, including its high (for a turbo engine) 10:1 compression ratio.

EPA rates the fuel economy at 32/40/35 mpg, but the Elantra Eco did much better in my 500-mile test. First, in overall driving it averaged 42 mpg. In a two-way run from Placerville to South Lake Tahoe and back the Eco averaged exactly 50 mpg. It averaged 35.2 mpg to SLT and 64.8 mpg on the return trip. Imagine going from SLT to Placerville on a gallon of gas. Hybrids can't do that, but I will try this week in a Prius. I don't know where the EPA got its ratings for the ECO, but it easily averaged 8 mpg better (maybe they left the emergency brake on). And there is so much more to talk about.

Performance with that little 128 hp at 5,500 rpm and 156 pounds of twist engine from 1,400-3,700 rpm engine is astounding. No it's not a dragster, but it out performed a regular Elantra with a 2.0L, 147 hp engine by a full second to 60 mph with a run of 7.85 seconds. And that's with a bit of turbo lag. Passing performance is also near the top of its class with a 50-70 mph time 4.71 seconds and the same run up a six percent grade slowing that time to a very good 6.69 seconds. This Eco really scoots while returning hybrid fuel economy. The slowest thing about the Eco is the downward movement of the fuel gauge indicator.



Specifications

Price \$17,150 to \$27,710

Engine

1.4L 16 valve, DOHC,
turbocharged inline four 128
hp @ 5,200 rpm, 156 lb.-ft.
of torque at 1,400-3,700 rpm

Transmission

Seven speed dual clutch
automated manual

Configuration

Transverse mounted front
engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.3 inches

Length 179.9 inches

Width 70.9 inches

Height 56.5 inches

Track (f/r) 61.5/61.9 inches

Ground clearance 5.3 inches

Fuel capacity 14.0 gallons

Trunk capacity 14.4 cubic
feet

Passenger cabin volume 95.8
cubic feet

Weight 2,857 pounds

GVWR 3,880

Steering lock to lock 2.7
turns

Turning circle 34.8 feet

Wheels 15 inch alloys

Tires 195/65/15

Coefficient of drag 0.27

Performance

0-60 mph 7.85 seconds

50-70 mph 4.71 seconds

50-70 uphill 6.69 seconds

Top speed Well into triple
digits

Fuel economy EPA rated at
32/40/35 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 40-42 mpg in rural
country driving with some
stop and go. 50 plus mpg on
the highway at legal speeds.

Using the same underpinnings as the standard Elantra, meaning MacPherson struts up front and a semi-independent torsion beam in the rear, an electric power rack providing quick steering of 2.7 turns lock to lock, a more rigid chassis using advanced high strength steel and coils and gas shocks in all our corners, this most economical of Elantras will not disappoint in changing directs. It also has a curb weight of just 2,857 pounds combined with a GVWR of 3,880 giving the new Eco a payload of over 1,000 pounds.

While given nimble credentials, don't expect the Eco to be a sports car as it comes with standard 15 inch wheels and skinnier and taller 195/65/15-inch rubber. There should be options to improve those to 16 or 17 inches and 215mm width tires. But notwithstanding its small and minor deficiencies, the Eco is still an adept handler and changes directions as well as other compacts in its class.

Now to more good stuff. This Eco is extremely smooth and quiet. It was noticeable on my first drive, that's how apparent it is. Even with that small engine, it still runs at a low 2,200 rpm at 70 mph. There is no road and/or wind noise. The benefit of those taller tires is a quality ride absorbing the smallest of road imperfections along with the biggest bumps with no float. This car is amazing.

Safety is also not compromised. Braking is strong even with standard 11-inch ventilated discs in front and 8-inch drums in the rear. Many manufacturers of lighter compacts also come standard with small rear drum brakes as the front brakes do 80

percent of the stopping. An alphabet soup of safety acronyms is standard such as ABS, ESC, TC, EBD and more. Seven airbags are standard and things like blind spot detection, rear cross traffic alert (standard), lane departure warning, lane keep assist and more are available.

Inside is a comfortable interior with good seats and a clear instrument panel with a big tach and speedo separated by a center information center/trip computer so you can see your astounding fuel economy for yourself. The center stack is intuitive and easy to operate. No college degree required. It has the same mid-size car interior as all the other Elantra models, big. And don't think everything on the inside is hard plastic, it's not. Soft touch does abound and the seating materials are quite nice. Nothing cheap about this car.

Now for the *piece d'resistance*, the sticker price of this Eco was just \$20,650 plus \$835 for the train ride from Montgomery, Ala. My tester had no options except for the obligatory floor mats for \$125 (my tester's total was \$21,610). But there are plenty of packages available including all the safety stuff mentioned above. But standard equipment on this \$21K Elantra Eco includes blind spot detection, rear cross traffic alert, rearview camera and even heated front seats. The base Eco is very well equipped making it a real deal (power windows, mirrors, great radio SiriusXM, etc., all standard). It is not a cheap car, but a cheap price. The Eco is a much more sensible purchase than any hybrid and has substantially better performance, almost the same fuel economy and costs substantially less. It may be the best value is a new car today. And then there is the standard 10-year/100,000-mile warranty.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Reno-bound flight rolls off Denver runway

By Mike Higdon, Reno Gazette-Journal

On the way home from Denver on Sunday, my airplane made an unscheduled departure from the runway. No one was injured, according Denver International Airport.

The brakes of an United Airlines' Airbus 319 failed as the airplane taxied toward the runway, said the pilot of Flight 296. The pilot announced he reversed engines to slow the airplane. The plane, heading to Reno from the Denver airport, came to rest intact with rear wheels on the tarmac and front wheels on the surrounding grass.

When the pilot first explained the sudden roaring engines and abrupt stop, many people laughed. Passengers remained jovial and light hearted during the incident.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Tonya

Tonya is a 1-year-old Papillon mix who weighs about 9 pounds. She is great with other dogs and cats, and is house trained if she gets let out often enough. Tonya is a bit subdued in the shelter, but she is very affectionate and her personality would shine in a new home.

Tonya is spayed, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Riddle: Preparing for this his whole life

Publisher's note: *Lake Tahoe News asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.*



Trey Riddle is running for one of two seats on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Name: Harold "Trey" Thomas Riddle III

Age: 38

Job/profession: Bar manager

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: My wife and I have spent the last few years settling into South Lake Tahoe after moving here

from Hermosa Beach, where we were small business owners and active members of the Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Why are you running for City Council?: We can do better.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: Voters shouldn't vote for me over another candidate. A voter should vote for me because they feel my views as a whole align with theirs and that I would be their voice on the City Council.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I've always naturally gravitated toward leadership roles. From team sports to work environments, I have vast experience as a leader. I lead by example, and I believe a true leader is there to serve others. Others are not there to serve the leader.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: I think we should investigate the possibility of merging some of the many agencies in Tahoe and ensure that all meetings held by these agencies are open to the public.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: The largest revenue sources for the general fund are property taxes and transient occupancy taxes (TOT), both being at 19 percent. I like that a strong portion of the city's budget comes from outside the city. I would like to keep it that way, and look for ways to increase that percentage (Measure P, if it passes, is a special use tax so it won't go into the General Fund. If it fails to pass, I would consider amending it for the next ballot so that it goes into the general fund and only requires a simple majority for approval).

Nearly two-thirds of our city's general fund is spent on personnel; salaries, pensions, health care and other benefit costs. Police services comprise the largest share of the costs

at 25 percent of the annual budget. Fire safety is a distant second at almost half of that. I believe we can reduce those costs and create more money for other community improvement projects by reducing overtime for police personnel and increasing volunteer patrols such as the STAR program.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage?

Please explain: Yes. In fact I believe the minimum wage for South Lake Tahoe residents should always be 20 percent more than whatever the California minimum wage is at any given moment. I feel this way because we are a town that runs on tourism, which makes us unlike other towns. We're not just moving money back and forth between our own residents; we have a large influx of money from outside of our city. The people who bring this money in also put a heavier burden on our infrastructure which our residents must pay for, and they also force businesses to hire more people in the busy seasons than they can support in the off season, so our residents face layoffs and reduced hours in the shoulder seasons. A lot of businesses are all too happy to charge higher than average prices for this destination location, but they don't bother sharing that money with the people who make this town function. We can do better than the California bare minimum.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: No. Higher income taxes are not the answer. When a government is irresponsible with the money it's been given, you don't respond by giving it more money.

Describe three attributes for a successful council: Open ears, open minds, and the willingness to compromise.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: I wish every worker, public or private, could retire at 50 and receive 3 percent of their salary for every year they've worked, but that's not sustainable. I think we should honor the agreement we've already made with the current public employees and make some adjustments for new employees.

Please explain your position regarding contracting out work normally done by staff: People should do the jobs they've been hired to do.

What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?: I would like to see the revitalization of South Lake Tahoe, with fresher, more homogeneous building facades and a well thought out and completed infrastructure that encourages an active and healthy lifestyle among its residents and guests alike.

What one vote in the last four years that the current council made do you disagree with and why?: One of the most recent votes, and that was the one to eliminate VHRs on multi-unit properties. Whether we like it or not, VHRs are vital to the success of this city. VHR owners contribute to the largest sources of revenue for the city's general fund. Those are property taxes and TOT. Together they comprise 38 percent of the General Fund revenue. You can read more about my opinion on VHR's below and how we should treat them in relation to other property types. The reason I disagree with City Council's decision to ban any new VHRs on multi-unit properties specifically is because this is the only way some people can afford to own their own home. They live in one unit and have to vacation rent the other side. The City Council talks about affordable housing and then in the same breath turns around and eliminates the only chance some families have at owning their own place and maybe even gaining a little financial independence. It's hypocritical.

How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?: I watch all of the City Council meetings online and I encourage every resident to do the same if they can't make it there in person. Just go to www.cityofslt.us and roll over the government tab, then roll over City Council in the drop down box and click on Watch Council Meetings. There you can watch all of the council meetings as far back as 2007.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and

goals of the city?: You don't have to read beyond the first sentence of the strategic plan to know all you need to know about it. It refers to the residents of South Lake Tahoe as the city's "customers." The City needs to get one thing straight; in business parlance the residents of South Lake Tahoe are not "customers." The residents of South Lake Tahoe are "the boss."

Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: I'll compromise where I can. Where I can't, I won't.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?: The residents of South Lake Tahoe should always be the main priority, meaning we should take care of our neighborhoods first, then invest money in the tourist areas. Second, City Council should foster positive growth by making it easier for the private sector to grow South Lake Tahoe, then fill in the gaps with government funded improvements. Third we should investigate merging some of the many agencies in Tahoe to cut down on all of the red tape that has been preventing positive growth.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?: I've been preparing for this my whole life.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: None, directly. There's a lot of chatter about affordable housing. When I hear "affordable housing," I hear "let's round up all the poor people and stick them in one spot." The only role the government should play in housing is making sure that local residents are paid a fair wage and can afford housing that already exists. Then we wouldn't be spending tax dollars on housing projects and residents would be able to buy more luxury items thereby generating more revenue for the city in sales tax dollars instead of costing the city money in project housing.

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: That's something that needs to take place in the home. The city can monitor test scores and evaluate teacher performance, but if parents aren't teaching their kids the importance of education, none of that really matters.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: We need to refine the whole process when it comes to entrepreneurs trying to start a new business. All of the rules and regulations that have been put in place to try to improve the South Shore have had the opposite effect and they're choking the life out of our city. Everything is so cost prohibitive that people can't afford to create their own startups here. So, our highway is littered with old outdated motels and dilapidated buildings instead of fresh new job-creating businesses.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in blurring the state line, why don't you?: We are one city divided by a state line. We share common interests. We're neighbors. It's important for us to work together as such. But, I also feel we need to get our own affairs in order before we start meddling in our neighbor's business.

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: I feel that a person's house is their domain. When someone purchases a home it comes with what's known as a homeowner's bundle of rights. One of those rights is the right of disposition. This means that the owner has the right to sell or rent their property at will.

I am aware that some residents take issue with vacation home rentals (VHRs), and the issues can sometimes stem from real problems, but I don't believe it's fair to say all VHRs cause problems or that it's solely VHRs that cause problems in our

neighborhoods. We all have neighbors that are long-term renters or even homeowner occupied that generate as much if not more noise, more trash or more parking issues than the VHR's.

City Council should not be singling out VHRs when it comes to policymaking. If a VHRs spa jets are loud after 10pm are long-term renters' and homeowner occupied spa jets not equally loud? If a long-term renter or homeowner occupied unit has three cars in the yard and two illegally parked on the street is it not equally if not more burdensome than a VHR that's typically occupied only 25% of the time?

If City Council is going to regulate these issues, they need to do it equally for all homeowners and hold everyone accountable for violations, not just VHRs.

I believe we can make our neighborhoods more pleasant with increased STAR patrols and stiffer penalties for infractions by VHRs, long-term renters, and homeowner occupied units alike, without singling out any one type of homeowner.

b: Loop road: I support democracy. Let the residents decide.

c: City streets: They're not safe for pedestrians or cyclists. Addressing this will be my number one priority on the council.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: Interagency cooperation is essential to progress.

e: Recreation: I love recreation. I recreate as much as possible. We should encourage more people to do it. I feel making our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists is a great way to do that.

f. TRPA defined commodities: TRPA defined commodities are just one more thing getting in the way of positive growth.

g. Transient occupancy tax measure: I am voting yes on the transient tax increase. I feel tourists should share more of

the burden they place on our infrastructure. The only thing I would have done differently is to have it go into the General Fund instead of being designated solely for recreation.

h. Sales tax measure: I am 100 percent against a sales tax increase. Sales taxes are a regressive tax that take a larger percentage from low-income individuals than high-income individuals, so it hits lower-income people harder. Here we are going on about affordable housing, then we turn around and try to raise taxes on the lowest-income people in the city. We can do better.

i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?:
N/A

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:
Anyone who knows me knows I'm a new dad. Even if we just met. I can't stop talking about my 6-week-old son, Hank. He's by far the coolest thing I've ever done with my life.

Something people may not know about me though is my first brush with Tahoe. In college I was captain of the cross country team, and president of the student government and Herodotus Society, but I couldn't help but feel there was something missing. Then my counselor suggested I join one of the school's community service organizations. So I did, and immediately became more fulfilled. In 2001 I had the honor of riding my bike with the Journey of Hope team over 4,000 miles from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., to raise funds and awareness for children with disabilities. On one night of our 72-day adventure we stayed at Kirkwood after a full day of climbing. It was without a doubt one of the toughest legs of the journey. I grabbed a Kirkwood sticker and put it on my bike frame as if it were a trophy. It was one of the two stickers that I put on it throughout the whole trip. The other was from Roswell, N.M., of course. I still ride that same road bike with my trophy Kirkwood sticker on it. When I put that sticker on there, I had no clue I would wind up some day

living in Tahoe and riding Kirkwood on my snowboard every winter. It's funny how things happen like that, almost like it was fate.