

Student artwork to be featured at LTCC

Lake Tahoe Community College's annual student art exhibition opens May 20 in the commons area.

The opening receptions will be that Sunday from 2-5pm, with awards ceremony at 3:30pm.

There will be approximately 400 works of student art on display, ranging from digital art to printmaking and sculpture. All of the artwork displayed represents student production over the past year.

The work submitted for this exhibition will be juried for special honors in 18 categories. A first, second, and third prize, as well as honorable mentions, will be awarded in each category. A "best of show" recognition will also be awarded for the one work of art that is most outstanding according to the juror's opinion.

Selecting this year's special honors will be Sacramento-based artist and exhibition coordinator of the gallery at Blue Line Arts in Roseville, Tony Natsoulas.

Issues surround turning forests into fuel

By William Moomaw, The Conversation

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt recently told a group of forestry executives and students that

from now on the U.S. government would consider burning wood to generate electricity, commonly known as forest or woody biomass, to be “carbon neutral.”

The executives, who had gathered at an Earth Day celebration in Georgia, greeted the news with enthusiasm. But I did not.

Biomass does not introduce new carbon into the system, as its supporters point out. Yet it does transfer carbon from forests to the atmosphere, where it traps heat and contributes to climate change.

As a scientist and the coordinating lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on renewable energy, I have concluded from extensive scientific studies that converting forests into fuel is not carbon neutral. I have also been working with many other scientists to inform governments about the potential for forests to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and the climate perils of burning wood and forestry waste at an industrial scale for electric power.

Turning forests into fuel

Energy can be renewable. Or sustainable. Or carbon neutral. Or some combination. These terms are often used interchangeably, but they mean quite different things. Wind power and solar energy clearly have all three attributes. What about bioenergy – the heat released from burning wood and other plants?

Trees can eventually grow to replace those that were felled to produce wood pellets that are burned to produce electricity. That makes biomass very slowly renewable, if the replacement trees actually do grow enough to absorb all the carbon dioxide previously discharged.

Environmentalists generally oppose forest biomass because it contributes to climate change while disrupting important ecosystems and the biodiversity they support. They also object

to this source of energy because it appears that burning biomass releases pollutants that endanger public health.

The scientists who study climate change, the global carbon cycle and forest ecology tend to reject the notion of biomass carbon neutrality. Some forest economists and forestry scientists, however, support the notion of carbon neutrality, depending on the circumstances.

Carbon accounting

To settle this debate, many of my colleagues and I believe it is essential to accurately account for all the emissions from burning wood for electric power. This is more than an academic exercise as biomass already produces significant emissions and industry observers foresee a nearly seven-fold increase in its use by 2050 from 2013 levels.

Forests can, at least theoretically, be managed sustainably as long as annual harvesting doesn't exceed annual growth rates. Suppliers claim to use residues from timber harvesting, thinnings – trees growing too close to other trees to thrive – and sawdust for this purpose. However, large-scale biomass has led to clear-cutting and the harvesting of whole trees.

Also, experts see the carbon neutrality of forest biomass differently depending on the time frames they consider, and on their assumptions regarding the likelihood that saplings planted to replace burned trees grow sufficiently to offset all of the associated carbon emissions.

Carbon neutrality supporters

Bioenergy supporters say it's possible for replacement trees to eventually remove all the carbon emitted through biomass from the atmosphere.

But this would require growing trees and forests that are bigger than the ones already harvested and burned for fuel. In

addition to the emissions from combustion, carbon is released from forest soils when trees are felled. And it takes large amounts of energy to prepare wood pellets and transport them to where they are burned.

Some bioenergy advocates claim that the carbon dioxide emitted when utilities and industry burn wood for energy is removed instantaneously by other growing trees located elsewhere. As long as forests globally are removing more carbon dioxide than is being released from harvesting and burning them, they assert that bioenergy is carbon neutral until combustion emissions exceed the removal rate by live trees.

However, there do not appear to be any quantitative studies to support this concept.

Biomass critics

The scientists and other energy experts who argue that burning wood isn't carbon-neutral – including me – point out that bioenergy releases as much or more carbon dioxide per unit of thermal energy than coal or natural gas.

People are adding nearly twice as much carbon dioxide as natural systems can remove every year. If forests and soils were not continuously doing their job of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, concentrations would grow annually by 75 percent more than they do.

Like most bioenergy critics, I point out that this debate hinges on the choice of baselines for how and when one measures the net carbon impact of biomass emissions. Put another way, you can't count trees – and the carbon they would remove – before they grow.

And if the utilities now using biomass were to deploy solar energy instead, more carbon would remain stored in forests and less would be released into the atmosphere.

Growing trees takes time

Then there is the issue of time. Wood burns within minutes, releasing carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. But studies have determined that it takes about a century to remove the previously emitted carbon dioxide even if typical forest trees are replaced.

Many bioenergy advocates acknowledge that fact. They argue that a 100-year span is a reasonable time frame for achieving carbon neutrality, but over the following 50 years, some tree species can double in size to store twice as much carbon. Furthermore, according to scientific consensus, the world must begin reducing emissions by 2020 to meet the Paris climate agreement's goals to stave off disastrous global warming.

But waiting for full-replacement forest growth is a best-case scenario. The forestry industry usually harvests trees for timber, pulp and other products before they grow to their full potential. And there is no assurance that saplings planted to replace trees cut for biomass will grow enough to meet carbon removal goals before being lost to fire, pests, drought or wind – or that the land where they are planted won't be converted to agriculture, housing, office parks or parking lots.

Even using forest residues from harvesting, and thinnings from forest management aren't carbon-neutral. Only expanding forests and lengthening times between harvests reduce emissions.

Besides, the consequences of a changed climate, such as flooded coastal cities, irreversibly melted glaciers and sea ice, species extinction and more severe weather events like hurricanes is what really matters – not net carbon emissions. Eventual carbon neutrality does not assure climate neutrality. And even if tree regrowth were to counteract the carbon released through biomass, it would take decades. But the world

needs to stall emissions growth now.

And of course if that wood had not been burned, the vast majority of those surviving trees would have removed and stored carbon dioxide emitted from burning coal and other fossil fuels.

Government support

Yet many governments are making forest biomass a mainstay of their renewable energy policies, especially in the European Union – which declared all forms of bioenergy to be carbon-neutral in 2009.

The U.K. is replacing all of its coal-fired power plants with new facilities that burn wood pellets that are largely imported from southern states like North Carolina and Mississippi.

Producing electricity by burning wood now costs more than wind or solar power, making biomass only economically viable with large subsidies. It takes a significant environmental toll on local land, water and biodiversity while generating as much air pollution as coal, or even more, for some pollutants.

The evidence demonstrates that burning biomass worsens climate change. By contrast, protecting and restoring forests increases the removal and long-term storage of carbon from the atmosphere, a highly effective means for slowing global warming.

William Moomaw is professor emeritus of international environmental policy at Tufts University.

Tennis available for youth in Zephyr Cove



ZCTC pro Dave Nostrant helps Dylan Bradley learn to serve.
Photo/Provided

Zephyr Cove Tennis Club with second year head pro Dave Nostrant is putting a greater emphasis on getting kids onto the court.

The summer starts with a free session for ages 4-12 on June 9 from 11am-1pm. Registration information for this event will be available soon **online**.

For more intense instruction in June there will be two four-day camps divided into three age groups. It's possible to sign up for one or both sessions. Registration is **online**. July dates will be July 9-12, July 16-19 and July 23-25. Times, prices and registration will soon be posted on the club's website.

June sessions are:

- June 11-14 and June 18-21

Ages 4-5, 1:30-2:15pm, \$30 per four-day session

Ages 6-8, 3:30-4:30pm, \$40 per four-day session

Ages 9-12, 4:30-5:45pm, \$50 per four-day session.

Nostrant's philosophy is to impart the love of the sport into youngsters, while helping them achieve the basic understanding so they can then play on their own, and then to have more experienced players learn the nuances of the game.

Letter: Appreciation, stats from homeless coalition

To the community,

On behalf of Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, I would like to thank our community for its support during the third winter season of the South Lake Tahoe warm room project. Our organization received donations from over 150 individuals and businesses and benefited from 64 volunteers who provided over 675 volunteer hours in the warm room.

In its third winter, the warm room was open 98 nights, serving 109 individuals (81 men and 28 women stayed in the warm room, and two families with children were provided temporary shelter in motels) and providing 1,809 shelter-bed nights. On average, 19 guests (15 men and four women) stayed at the warm room per night. Service animals were provided with 15 shelter-bed nights. Thirteen veterans stayed in the warm

room, with two finding housing, one finding employment, and two reconnecting with out-of-state family to whom they chose to return. Twenty-seven percent of our guests were employed during their stay in the warm room. This season we were able to provide 250 showers and 25 haircuts to out guests.

Since inception, the warm room has been open 337 nights, providing 7,370 shelter bed-nights. Nineteen guests found long-term housing with TCH's support this winter, and only six individuals have used the warm room all three seasons. In 2017-18, the average stay was 14 nights.

This season, the warm room operated out of two locations. The warm room began the season at Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church, before moving to a space on Rufus Allen Boulevard owned by the city of South Lake Tahoe. I would like to thank Pastor Bob Kelley and the congregation of Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church for welcoming us into their facility over the holidays, as well as the city for leasing us the space on Rufus Allen and being a great partner at that location. In addition, I would thank our fantastic staff and volunteers – without their incredible dedication, we would not have a warm room.

Although the warm room is closed, I am pleased to announce that we have scheduled a staff member to engage with the homeless community year-round to assist with housing options and provide access to resources.

The success of this program is reliant on the collaboration of donations from our generous community. Special thanks to the El Dorado Community Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation, Reliapro Painters, Caesars Foundation, South Lake Tahoe Endowment, Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, American Century Golf, Knights of Columbus, South Shore Christian Assembly, Our Lady of Tahoe, St Theresa Catholic Church, and many more for their support. We are grateful for partnerships with the city of South Lake Tahoe City Council, Parks and

Recreation, and the South Lake Tahoe Police Department; Barton Health; Darke Marketing; El Dorado County Services; High Sierra Patrol, Live Violence Free; Only Kindness; Tahoe Youth & Family Services; Heavenly Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church; Hope Lutheran; Temple Bat Yam; and Unity at the Lake. Our supporters are too numerous to name but we do appreciate all of your support in opening and operating our area's first overnight emergency winter shelter.

Marissa Muscat, executive director Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The Kings Beach Center development team will host a public listening session on May 15 from 5 -7:30pm, offering community members a chance to learn about and weigh in on the proposed project. The meeting will be at North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.
- The Nickel Slots will be playing on the lawn at Valhalla on July 11 at 5pm. **Tickets** are \$16, \$12 for ages 12 and younger.
- Tahoe Donner will be hosting a community "friend-raiser" in partnership with Project MANA and tech start-up Kynbo on June 4 at the Alder Creek Adventure Center and Cafe. It is designed to raise awareness about food insecurity and hunger in the North Lake Tahoe and Truckee community. Doors open at 5:30pm, with buffet from 6-8pm. The \$25 tickets are available **online**.
- Managing Forests for Fire and Drought will be the subject of a May 31 talk by Malcom North, forest ecologist

with the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station. It will be at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village. Doors open at 5:30pm, talk starts at 6pm. Cost is \$5. Register **online**.

• Diamond Peak Ski Resort is now recognized for their sustainability initiatives as the first ski resort in Lake Tahoe to become STOKe certified. STOKe – Sustainable Tourism Operator's Kit for Evaluation – is the world's first sustainability certification body with standards built specifically for surf and ski tourism operators.

Opinion: Capitalism won't cure China's authoritarianism

By Stein Ringen

The decision by China's legislature to scrap the term limit of 10 years in the country's presidency pulls the curtain aside on Xi Jinping's radical transformation of the regime.

The world looks to China and sees an economic giant. But the China we ought to see is a political giant. Xi inherited a regime of pragmatic authoritarianism under collective leadership. Now that pragmatism has been superseded by ideological fervor, Xi's project is to make his totalitarian "China Dream" of national rejuvenation and greatness a reality. For that he needs a strong and growing economy, but in his project the economic is in the service of the political. What always comes first is the perpetuation of the regime itself.

China is an economic giant, and governments and corporations

obviously want to do business. But when you do, you should know that you are dealing with a dictatorship, inspired by nationalistic ideology, with a confident one-man supremo at the helm. By acting as if this kind of state is a cuddly teddy bear of benevolence, Europeans and other democratic governments have not learned much from history. Dictatorships can be soft or hard. China's dictatorship is getting ever harder. When democratic governments want to engage with China, they should do so in ways that halt the hardening of its dictatorship.

To understand how China's mission has changed in the last decade, look no further than Xi's career. Elevated to party boss in 2012, he has since tightened all the reins of dictatorship. Any semblance of opposition has been crushed—even small feminist groups that were organizing protest against sexual harassment on public transport. Their sin was not in their cause, but in the act of organizing outside of the party system. Human rights lawyers have been detained or put out of business en masse. Censorship and internet control are more penetrating than ever. Internally in the party, discipline is the mantra. All potential opposition has been silenced with the help of the anti-corruption campaign.

Xinjiang, the predominantly Muslim province in the west, has been turned into a surveillance state laboratory, with the deployment of the most advanced electronic tools of the trade. The political activist Yang Maodong was right when, in his trial in 2014, he defied the court with an eloquent defense statement in which he compared today's China "blow by blow" to the nightmare state of George Orwell's "1984." But there's no real need to reach for fiction to describe what's occurring: With both pragmatism and collective leadership gone, Xi stands on a pedestal of power previously occupied only by Mao.

In keeping with this transformation, China is no longer

engaging in balanced collaboration, but rather pursuing domination. It is undermining the rule of law in Hong Kong. It is threatening Taiwan with annexation, and thus taking the position that the will of the people of a democratic country is to count for nothing. It has de facto turned 3 million of the South China Sea's 3.5 million square kilometers into its own territorial waters, in contravention of international law and a ruling by the Tribunal of the Law of the Sea. Australia and New Zealand are on the forefront of China's purchase of influence abroad, through persistent interference in politics, media and universities, described in a recent Australian book as a "silent invasion."

Beijing may not be imposing its model on others, but it is imposing something else: silence. If you want to collaborate, be you a business, an organization, or a government, you are not allowed to say or do what the men in Beijing regard as unfriendly.

Recently, Mercedes-Benz happened to mention the Dalai Lama in promotional material outside of China, met criticism in China, and quick as a flash removed all reference to His Holiness and apologized for "hurting the feelings" of the people of China.

If you cross the regime, you will be in danger of retribution, such as exclusion from operations in China. Environmental NGOs like Greenpeace, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and Conservation International are silent on China's environmental destruction in the South China Sea.

To see how much norms have changed recently, consider what happened when China and Norway "normalized" relations last year. (Relations had been on ice for six years after the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the human rights activist Liu Xiaobo.) What Norway had to pay for "normalization" was a promise to undertake no action that could disturb the new harmony between the two governments. Since then, a Norwegian government whose global identity rests on its championship of

democracy and human rights, has had not a word to say about human rights abuses in China.

The problem this new China poses for democracies is not the standard one of a shift in world power. Instead, the problem is the character of the rising power—repressive towards its own population and hostile to others' liberty. A state that has annexed vast territorial waters and is threatening to annex a neighboring democracy is able to use its economic clout to buy silence on the part of countries that claim to live by democratic values and international law.

What to do? First, we must acknowledge that in China we are dealing with a totalitarian state with immense powers behind it. We must free ourselves from Western wishful thinking that, with economic growth and opening up, China will become more like us and more benevolent at home and collaboration abroad. That has not happened. Xi's regime is exercising totalitarianism with more strategic discretion than any before it—smart totalitarianism, I have called it—but totalitarian it is.

Secondly, the democratic governments of the world need a coherent strategy for meeting the challenge of China. The liberal democracies, says the German sinologist Kai Strittmatter, must find their voice against assertive autocracy. China deals as much as it can with each country on its own, in which case most countries are small fry next to the giant. We need a collective strategy. Currently, the hope, if distant, is for the European Union to mount such a strategy, since President Trump has placed America on the sideline.

This collective strategy should have three components: engagement, affirmation of human rights, and pushback against aggression.

First, democratic institutions should engage with China on all

levels, politically, economically, in science, and culturally. Non-engagement is impossible, and engagement gives some strategic leverage. There is not much other countries and outsiders can do to influence Chinese policies, but it does count that when Chinese institutions are pulled into an exchange, they are exposed to the influence of international law and standards of collaboration.

Second, we should speak up in clear language, to Chinese authorities and in public, against repression and breaches of human rights in China. This we should always do with reference to the Chinese State Constitution and to Chinese law, which are in these respects sound (although ineffective).

Third, we should speak up in clear language against Chinese aggression internationally, notably in its neighborhood, and against interference in politics and civil society in other countries. When we do this, we should refer to the many relevant international treaties and conventions that China has signed.

The sad truth is that China is and will remain a dictatorial state and that the democratic world can do nothing to prevent that. Democratization is, for the foreseeable future, not on the agenda. But we do have the capacity to hold the Chinese regime to account. The leaders are sensitive to how others criticize their regime. It is effective to stand up to the Chinese leadership with words. By holding the regime to account, we can halt or slow Xi's transition of the regime towards irreversible hardness. We can encourage the preservation of an element of pragmatism in the PRC dictatorship.

That may not seem like much but it matters to the many in China who live in fear of repression and to activists who engage in the struggle for some more openness in Chinese society.

Stein Ringen writes on democracy at ThatsDemocracy.com. He is visiting professor at King's College London and the author, most recently, of "The Perfect Dictatorship: China in the 21st Century."

Calif. marijuana tax collections lag below expectations

By Adam Ashton, Sacramento Bee

California probably won't get a windfall in tax revenue from its newly legal marijuana market this year.

The state collected \$34 million in cannabis taxes between January and March, according to an update released by the Legislative Analyst's Office on Tuesday.

[Read the whole story](#)

TRPA releases shore line environmental docs

Comment on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's draft environmental impact statement for the shore line will be taken until July 9.

The goal is for approval by the end of the year.

These regulations have not been substantially updated in three decades. TRPA tried to do before but was sued.

With new regulations for piers, buoys, boat ramps, and marinas, the proposed plan aims to improve public recreation access to the lake, protect the environment and the scenic beauty of Lake Tahoe's 72 miles of shoreline, provide new temporary strategies for shoreline structures to remain functional during low lake levels, and streamline shoreline permitting processes.

It would lift a decadelong moratorium on new shoreline structures at Lake Tahoe, authorizing up to two new public boat ramps and 10 new public piers, as well as up to 128 new private piers that would be permitted gradually with a priority for pier projects that serve multiple property owners or retire pier development potential on other lakefront properties. The proposed plan would authorize up to 1,430 new buoys for lakefront properties and homeowners associations and create a reserve pool of 630 buoys or boat slips for use by public agencies and marinas. The proposed shoreline plan would not authorize any new marinas but would allow marinas to expand or reconfigure their sites if they incorporate environmental improvements that reduce stormwater pollution, control aquatic invasive species, or reduce boat emissions.

The draft environmental impact statement is available for review **online**.

TRPA and shoreline planning partners will host two community workshops to share information and collect feedback about the plan, one at the TRPA offices from 5:30 to 7:30pm on June 4, and one at North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach from 5:30 to 7:30pm on June 6. Upcoming public hearings for the plan include May 23, TRPA Governing Board, 9:30am in Stateline and June 13 at 9:30am, TRPA Advisory Planning Commission in

LTCC expands its incarcerated program

The Incarcerated Student Program at Lake Tahoe Community College is partnering with the Sierra Conversation Center facility in Jamestown to provide students there with a transfer degree pathway.

ISP staff from the college visited the minimum and medium custody inmate facility last week to register 55 students, many of whom are continuing college students. ISP expects to have up to 100 students from the center registered by fall quarter.

All of these inmates will have the opportunity to earn an associate in arts degree for transfer in sociology – a broad-based program that when complete, gives them the option to pursue a bachelor's degree as a junior upon release or while incarcerated, with a partnering institution in California.

The Sierra Conservation Center is a parent facility that oversees 20 male inmate camps located from Central California to the Mexico border that serve as training facilities for firefighting techniques. Inmates at these facilities are routinely dispatched to help fight wildfires and other emergencies around the state, along with a variety of other community work projects.

LTCC's Incarcerated Student Program was first approved as a pilot program in 2015. The idea was to serve inmates in California's correctional facilities and promote their

educational success. LTCC's ISP has grown to serve seven prisons: High Desert State Prison, Folsom State Prison (men), Folsom Women's Facility, Folsom State Prison Minimum Support Facility, CSP Sacramento, the Growlersburg Conservation Camp, and now the Sierra Conservation Center.

Hazardous chemical spills into Carson River in Alpine County, closes highways, forces evacuations

By Kathryn Reed

Unknown amounts of a bleach-like chemical spilled into the Carson River on Wednesday near Woodfords.

Even though the tanker truck carrying the sodium hypochlorite crashed into a power pole about 10am May 9, no one had been allowed into the area as of 6pm because of the danger the chemical poses. Depending on the concentration it is dangerous to inhale or touch.

A one-square mile from the crash site was evacuated.

Hazmat crews from the Nevada National Guard were sent in to secure the site.

The chemical is a disinfectant similar to bleach. In fact, when it is combined with water it becomes bleach. It can cause pH in the water to increase.

"There are too many variables to speculate the impacts at this

point," Scott Ferguson with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Because his team and others have not been allowed into the discharge site it has not been determined how much of the chemical reached the west fork of the river. Also unknown is the concentration of the chemical. The river flow will be another factor.

Most of the users downstream are livestock and agriculture. Ferguson said without more facts he could not say if there is any danger or if the chemical could have dissipated.

He added that agencies from both states are cooperating.

According to an alert sent out by the California Office of Emergency Services the driver of the truck died. California Highway Patrol was not able to confirm this or to give out any information about the driver.

Traffic is not allowed to head west on Highway 88 at Picketts Junction. The road is also closed at the California/Nevada border. There is not estimation when it will be opened.