Opinion: League's mission should involve using facts

By Patrick Enright

The city of South Lake Tahoe understands the League to Save Lake Tahoe has filed suit against the city for adopting a General Plan update as required by state law. The League's actions once again demonstrate their willingness to mislead the public and now the courts in a way that redirects the public's very limited resources defending legal complaints rather than spending resources on improving the infrastructure that is in fact contributing to lake clarity degradation.

The League is well aware and fully informed that the City's General Plan does not contain provisions to build six-story buildings over 100 acres, yet they have knowingly released several statements to the contrary and those misleading statements remain on their website. The League is fully informed that the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has never required a municipality to submit their General Plan for formal approval, yet argues in their complaint to the contrary. In their lawsuit, the League included unsubstantiated statements that the city's General Plan update will harm lake clarity without evidence to support such claims.



Patrick Enright

The League is fully aware and has heard directly from the South Lake Tahoe City Council of the city's intent to modify its General Plan in the event there is a conflict with the TRPA's updated Regional Plan, which is expected to be completed in December 2012. In the meantime, where the General Plan is inconsistent with the TRPA's Regional Plan, the Regional Plan will prevail. The city could have simply removed sections where there was inconsistency, but that would have resulted in incomplete General Plan, which is not consistent with state law.

More important, the city's General Plan is the public's plan. It was developed over several years with input from many community members who spent countless hours pouring over neighborhood maps, visioning their future and deciding what their community should look like and how it could best meet environmental goals.

We need solutions. We need collaboration. We need to improve the built environment because it is destroying the natural environment. We need to improve Highway 50, local streets and infrastructure because that is where the majority of the solution lies. The city's General Plan update provides the road map to implementing solutions, but it is just a plan, it is not an actual project even if one argues it meets the definition of a TRPA project. The General Plan update by itself does not approve a single project. Every project will still be required to follow the ordinary course for approval and obtain the required permits. Not a single project can be built without appropriate regional and local approvals.

While the League's modus operandi is to file lawsuits, which gains them publicity and donations, their lawsuits do not help improve water quality or lake clarity. They would be more effective at preserving Lake Tahoe if they dedicated funds to do just that, improve, redevelop, remodel and restore the lake and there are plenty of opportunities for the League to do so. The League could put its resources to improving the roads,

which have been estimated at a cost of several million dollars per mile to achieve the premium environmental thresholds. The total cost to restore the City's roadways is estimated at $300 million (the city is accepting donations). The League could fund and dedicate several miles of roadway "on behalf of the League." The League could contribute to erosion control projects to control and runoff, most projects cost many millions. One or two dedicated by the League would make a difference in lake clarity far more than one or two more lawsuits do. The city offered to meet with the League and its entire board of directors to resolve issues and discuss ideas to work together on these and other solutions, but the League declined. The mayor and mayor pro tem offered repeatedly to meet with the League's representatives, but the League declined multiple offers to meet.

The TRPA Compact was written to provide local communities the opportunity to decide for themselves under their form of government what their community should look like. The Compact provides that, "Whenever possible without diminishing the effectiveness of the Regional Plan, the ordinances, rules, regulations and policies shall be confined to matters which are general and regional in application, leaving to the jurisdiction of the respective States, counties and cities the enactment of specific and local ordinances, and rules, regulations and policies which conform to the regional plan." (Article VI). In its lawsuit before the federal courts, the League will need to prove how the city's General Plan diminishes the effectiveness of the Regional Plan. The League will need to prove how the General Plan by itself harms the lake. The League will need to prove how TRPA's Compact and regional approach is undermined by the city's local approach to land use regulations.

We, who live here at the lake work very hard to protect water quality and lake clarity. We need to improve the built environment, fix Highway 50 and restore the natural

environment now. We need partners, not combatants. We need a cohesive and clear vision, not murky accusations. We need solutions, not roadblocks. We ask the League to Save Lake Tahoe to help the community save the lake and save our community by working with us and other agencies rather than against us.

Patrick Enright is city attorney for South Lake Tahoe.

K's Kitchen: Stuffed bell peppers

By Kathryn Reed

Warm weather and the Tuesday farmers' market have propelled me out of my food funk. I had been in such a rut and uninspired in the kitchen. Not only was I ready for the outdoors to change seasons, but I was ready for what was on my plate to change, too.



The ingredients I found at last week's South Lake Tahoe market inspired the recipe below. (The market is open from 8am-1pm at the American Legion parking lot on Highway 50.)

Though I don't always practice what I preach, I am a firm believer in eating what is in season. Mother Nature tells us what we should be eating. If only we listened better.

Instead, we buy tomatoes and cantaloupe in the winter. Where did it come from? How many miles did it travel? What kinds of

chemicals were applied?

Without thinking, most us shop at grocery stores year-round for what we want, not what fruits and vegetables are in season. This is bad for the environment and more important, bad for our bodies. Our bodies know what they need – they need what is in season. It's up to us to listen to our bodies and not what grocery store marketing types tell us to buy.

For the Tahoe area, most farmers' markets started this month. Those living in more temperate climates get to have markets year-round.

All the ingredients for the peppers were bought at the market last week. As veggies at markets change, just use what appeals to you.

The peppers were bought at Costco. I like buying the six-pack of red, yellow, orange peppers there because of the price. (See, I don't always follow my buy in season, buy local rule. They came from Mexico.)

Peppers will be available at the markets later in the summer.

I prefer not to stuff green bell peppers because they are more bitter than the other colors – which all are much sweeter.

For the quantities like a bunch listed below – it's based on how they sell the produce at the market. And for the onions, I actually used a few small ones. I had olive oil at home, but it, too, is available at the Tuesday market in South Tahoe.

Farmers' Market Stuffed Peppers

4 bell peppers, preferably not green

Olive oil

1 medium red union, chopped

5+ cloves garlic, minced

1 bunch spinach

1 C yellow and green squash, chopped

½ bunch asparagus, chopped in ¼-inch pieces

2 T fresh sage, minced

1½ T fresh rosemary, minced

Cheese, optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Coat bottom of pan with olive oil. On high heat, sauté onion and garlic until opaque. Add spinach, reducing heat to medium. Stir until spinach is completely wilted.

Add squash. Cook about 2 minutes. Add asparagus. Cook another 2 minutes.

Add herbs.

Add salt and pepper to taste.

Cook until asparagus is done.

Cut off tops of peppers. Try to make a small hole; don’t lop off whole top; cut just where the stem is. Rinse peppers to get seeds out.

Stuff peppers with veggie mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. In the last five minutes add cheese if using it.

Pet food available for those in need; donations being sought

The Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe's Pet Pantry is a "no questions asked" program that distributes donated pet food to anyone who can't afford to feed their pets.

The tough economic times continue to affect some Truckee-Tahoe residents and their pets, forcing some families to give up their beloved companions due to financial hardship. To help prevent this, the HSTT has implemented the Pet Pantry Program.

"It's heartbreaking to see people have to leave their pets with us," Stephanie Jensen, executive director of the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe, said in a statement. "Our shelter is filling up with pets that cannot be cared for due to their owners' financial situations."

Under the slogan "Give what you can, take what you need," the nonprofit collects pet food and distributes it to needy families with pets in the Truckee-Tahoe area. Extra pet food or donations may be dropped off at collection barrels in Truckee at Pet Station and Scraps Dog Bakery.

The HSTT will also be collecting food at events throughout the summer, including the Tail & Ale Microbrew Fest on July 8 at the Biltmore and at the Village at Squaw during Brews, Jazz, and Funk Fest on Aug. 13-14 and Peaks and Paws on Aug. 27-28.

Anyone in need of pet food may pick it up at the kennel at 10720 Riverview Drive in Truckee. The kennel is open Monday through Saturday from 9am–5pm, closed from noon-1pm.

South Lake Tahoe looking for volunteers

South Lake Tahoe is launching its Volunteer Corps.

The city will try to match people’s interests and talents to the needs in the community.

Opportunities include:

● Explore Tahoe docent/greeter

● Fingerprinting at police department

● Senior Center (office aide, painting, many opportunities)

● Code enforcement ranger

● Snow helpers

● Adopt-a-Drain

● Partners in parks

● Other (Let us know what your interests are and we’ll find a volunteer opportunity suited just for you.)

Call (530) 542.6093 or email tfranklin@cityofslt.us for information or to volunteer.

Groundwater depletion detected from space

By Felicity Barringer, New York Times

IRVINE – Scientists have been using small variations in the Earth's gravity to identify trouble spots around the globe where people are making unsustainable demands on groundwater, one of the planet's main sources of fresh water.

They found problems in places as disparate as North Africa, northern India, northeastern China and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley in California, heartland of that state's $30 billion agricultural industry.

Jay S. Famiglietti, director of the University of California's Center for Hydrologic Modeling here, said the center's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment, known as Grace, relies on the interplay of two nine-year-old twin satellites that monitor each other while orbiting the Earth, thereby producing some of the most precise data ever on the planet's gravitational variations. The results are redefining the field of hydrology, which itself has grown more critical as climate change and population growth draw down the world's fresh water supplies.

Grace sees "all of the change in ice, all of the change in snow and water storage, all of the surface water, all of the soil moisture, all of the groundwater," Dr. Famiglietti explained.

Yet even as the data signals looming shortages, policy makers have been relatively wary of embracing the findings. California water managers, for example, have been somewhat skeptical of a recent finding by Dr. Famiglietti that from October 2003 to March 2010, aquifers under the state's Central Valley were drawn down by 25 million acre-feet – almost enough to fill Lake Mead, the nation's largest reservoir.

Read the whole story

Cycling firm spends time building trails in Truckee

Global sporting goods and bicycle product leader Shimano partnered with Gooddirtyfun, a joint trail maintenance program by the Truckee Donner Land Trust and Truckee Trails Foundation, to improve multi-use trails in Truckee as part of the company's weeklong visit to the area . Shimano has made advocacy a priority while in the Lake Tahoe area for a mountain bike-related event by harnessing the manpower from its group totaling 70 global media, professional athletes, and company staff to help improve trails along with Land Trust staff.

"We selected Lake Tahoe as our location for its incredible bike trails, and we are thrilled to be leaving local trails in better condition than we found them," Dustin Brady, of Shimano



Mountain bike journalist Richard Cunningham, left, and Shimano PR

Manager Devin Walton move lumber as part of their group's June 19 trail work at Waddle Ranch in Truckee. Photo/Sterling Lorence

American Corporation, said in a press release. "Advocacy is in line with our company credo and it's also part of the outdoor and adventure experience we wanted to create for our group in the Lake Tahoe area."

The Shimano and Gooddirtyfun group worked on trails in Waddle Ranch Preserve, a 1,462-acre, $23.5 million acquisition that was initially slated to be residences and a golf course, but became one of the Sierra Nevada's largest and most complicated conservation efforts in recent history. The Truckee Donner Land Trust has expanded trails and picnic sites at Waddle Ranch Preserve for hikers, bikers, and wildlife watchers.

The Gooddirtyfun and Shimano group helped bring portions of Erika's Trail to IMBA and U.S. Forest Service standards of being constructed sustainably with full-bench construction. Erika's Trail was developed and already "roughed in" in fall 2010 by Gooddirtyfun.

Cadre of volunteers keeps Lake Tahoe history alive

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Museums are more relevant today in this high-tech world because they offer people something tangible, concrete and tactile.

At least that's how curators and volunteers think.

"Nothing has changed, and yet everything has," is how Diane Johnson, who runs the Lake Tahoe Historical Society, describes life at the lake.



Lake Tahoe Museum is open Wednesday-Monday from 11am-3pm. Photos/Kathryn Reed

It seems a bit prophetic Johnson would one day run the 43-year-old historical society. After all, when she first moved to the South Shore she and her husband lived into one of the oldest brick buildings in town.

Their 550-square-foot cottage in the Al Tahoe area was part of the Globin compound.

Johnson learned about the history of their house at the time (they are in a larger place now) from Betty Mitchell at the Lake Tahoe Museum. Mitchell, who is the woman to call for all things historical as they relate to South Lake Tahoe, introduced Johnson as the keynote speaker at last week's Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe meeting at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

Johnson read a letter from Snowshoe Thompson dated March 7, 1872, to his wife – which he addressed "Dear Wife."

"The first time I realized who wrote it, it brought chills to me," Johnson said.

It's those kinds of artifacts that are housed in the South Tahoe museum – letters like this from a man who for years delivered the mail on skis between Placerville and Tahoe and barely received payment for it.

The Thompsons are buried in Genoa. Many towns in the region share in the Snowshoe Thompson lore.

Outside the Lake Tahoe Museum is the oldest structure left standing in the basin – the 150-plus-year-old Osgood's Toll House. Yes, Tahoe used to have toll roads.



Osgood's Toll House

A log cabin from the 1930s is also on the museum site.

"We hope the cabin plays more of a role in school visits," Johnson said of groups of local third-graders who visit the

museum as part of their lesson on California history.

The inside of the museum was completely overhauled two years ago, with much of the credit going to members of the local carpenters union. Volunteers is what keeps the museum and historical society running.

While what the historical society deals with is all things old, the work is never done. Two volunteers recently spent hours photographing every article of clothing the museum has so there is a record of it.

“What we do today and how we do it will preserve these artifacts,” Johnson said.

Old photographs are for sale and what isn’t out on display may be special ordered.

A long-term goal is to have the archives available to the public.

Something the society plans to continue is the Chautauqua-style performances at the Camp Richardson Lodge.

The museum and society are funded by donations, store sales and grants. The annual summer garden tour is the main fundraiser.

Things to know:

• Lake Tahoe Museum is at 3058 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

• Phone number: (530) 541.5458.

• The 2011 Garden Tour is July 31 from 10am-4pm. Tickets are $20 and may be purchased after July 1 at the museum, Aspen Hollow, Nel’s Garden Center, Sun Basin and Tahoe Outdoor Living.

Lake Valley firefighters working Arizona blaze

Lake Valley Fire Protection District's Angora Peak Crew is in Arizona on the Wallow Fire.

The crew was deployed June 5 and is expected to return this week.

The crew provides fuel reduction services for properties in Lake Valley's jurisdiction when they are not on fires. Their funding comes from grant sources, which will run out at the end of this year.

Services affected by the lack of funding will include fuels reduction, chipping, defensible space inspections and tree marking.

– Leona Allen, Lake Valley Fire PIO



Lake Valley firefighters work the night shift in Arizona. Photos/Provided



Lake Valley crews are tasked with lighting a back fire.

Beer and bluegrass at Northstar

Northstar-at-Tahoe’s Beerfest & Bluegrass Festival is July 2 from 2-7:30pm, featuring the Dead Winter Carpenters along with beer tasting from more than 30 breweries. Tickets are $38/adult.

Array of reading programs at S. Tahoe library

The South Lake Tahoe Library is hosting a number of programs this summer.

They include:

· **Children’s Reading Club, ages 0-14, June 21 to July 30** – Get prizes for reading. Sign up at the library and get a time card to keep track. For every five hours of reading, children can come in for a prize. When they finish the card, children will be entered into a weekly drawing for a large prize.

· **Teen Reading Club, ages 12-18, June 21 to July 30** – Sign up at the front desk for a chance to win prizes. Participants should submit a review on each book they read. Their names will be entered into the weekly drawing for each review. There is no limit to the reviews participants can submit. There will also be the grand prize drawing for and iPod Touch on Aug. 2.

· **Adult Reading Club, ages 18 and older, through July 30** – Win a gift certificate to one of four local businesses. Pick up a passport at the front desk of the library. Enter the title and author of each book and drop it in the drawing jar when it is completely filled out. Participants can turn in as many passports as they like. The drawing will be at 10am Aug. 2.

The library is located at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd. and is open from 10am to 8pm Tuesday and Wednesday, and 10am to 5pm Thursday through Saturday