Today it’s near impossible to work your way through college

By Svati Kirsten Narula, Atlantic

A lot of Internet ink has been spilled over how lazy and entitled Millennials are, but when it comes to paying for a college education, work ethic isn’t the limiting factor. The economic cards are stacked such that today’s average college student, without support from financial aid and family resources, would need to complete 48 hours of minimum-wage work a week to pay for his courses — a feat that would require superhuman endurance, or maybe a time machine.

To take a close look at the tuition history of almost any institution of higher education in America is to confront an unfair reality: Each year’s crop of college seniors paid a little bit more than the class that graduated before. The tuition crunch never fails to provide new fodder for ongoing analysis of the myths and realities of the American Dream.

Last week, a graduate student named Randy Olson listened to his grandfather extol the virtues of putting oneself through college without family support. But paying for college without family support is a totally different proposition these days, Olson thought. It may have been feasible 30 years ago, or even 15 years ago, but it’s much harder now.

He later found some validation for these sentiments on Reddit, where one user had started a thread about the increasing cost per course at Michigan State University. MSU calculates tuition by the “credit hour,” the term for the number of hours spent in a classroom per week. By this metric, which is used at many U.S. colleges and universities, a course that’s worth three credit hours is a course that meets for three hours each week during the semester. If the semester is 15 weeks long,

that adds up to 45 total hours of a student’s time.

Read the whole story

Brown: ‘Promote tourism and clean industries’



Kevin Brown

Publisher’s note: ***Lake Tahoe News asked the six El Dorado County supervisor candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. The responses are being run in the order they were received by LTN. One candidate chose not to answer the questions.***

Name: Kevin Brown

Age: 50

Occupation: Business owner

Education: Graduated Del Mar High School, San Jose 1981, AS Degree in electronics, Condie Jr. College, Campbell 1989

What elected, civic, nonprofit boards or groups are or have you been affiliated with and in what capacity?:

• El Dorado Union High School District board of trustees, president 2013, 2014.

• El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce board 13 years, president 2006.

• El Dorado County Economic Development Advisory Committee, 2006-08.

• Pollock Pines Design and Review Committee 8 years, vice chair.

• MORE Board 2006-13.

• El Dorado County Child Abuse Prevention Council, vice chair.

• Placerville Economic Advisory Committee, chair.

• Cub Master Pack 104, 2002-06.

• Scout Master Troop 170, 2006-11.

• Big Brothers/Big Sisters volunteer.

• Prevention Works, volunteer.

• The Center for Violence Free Relationships, state certified volunteer.

• Kiwanis, Shriner.

* Partial list.

Traffic is horrible on Fridays and Sundays throughout the county. Will you commit to not voting for any big subdivisions unless there is a plan to widen Highway 50? Why or why not?: Highway 50 is a state highway and our TIM fees would be insufficient to cover such improvements. We'll need help from our state and federal officials, as well as regional governments to forge a solution for Highway 50. I would favor development plans that value businesses over rooftops and

believe development must pay its share of traffic mitigation.

What is your opinion on a proposed November initiative to control growth?: I don’t think a ballot-box moratorium is the right path. Instead we need to elect leaders with a commitment to support sensible policies that create jobs. The county needs revenue to provide the services our residents want and deserve like public safety, snow removal. Those costs continue to rise, so it is essential that El Dorado County encourage job-creating economic development.

What are your thoughts of making Lake Tahoe its own county?: I am not aware of a serious proposal to create a separate county and would not likely support a split. I recognize that SLT has been underrepresented by the county, but I would prefer to heal that divide rather than split the county. Many of the fiscal challenges facing counties are created by unfunded mandates from the state, and a big part of the county budget is spent administering state programs. Forming a separate county would result in diverting funds to pay for law enforcement (county jail), prosecution, fire, road maintenance, health and human services, and other services that would not be sustainable.

What entities would you not take money from?: I think everyone who gives money is a “special interest” and it is cynical to single out specific interests for political purposes. Instead, I have made my position clear – decisions will be based on my vision for El Dorado County. If you agree and want to contribute, you are investing in my vision; if you disagree, money won’t change my mind.

What would you do to boost the economy?: We need to promote tourism and clean industries like programming, entertainment and medical records management. I will fight for more TOT dollars be spent in the basin to increase tourism. I would use my experience in economic development to find businesses that fit the environment and culture of the basin to bring jobs and

tax revenue. We should be working with groups on infrastructure investments, like high-speed Internet that can spur technology investment in South Lake Tahoe.

What is the No. 1 issue facing District 5 and how do you propose to resolve it?: In the past, I would have said high unemployment. But after talking with many people I have found the biggest concern is that South Lake Tahoe feels isolated by and from the county. Some feel that regardless of whom they elect, their needs are not heard or met in Placerville. "Resolve" makes it sound like a one-time fix; but I think it takes an ongoing commitment. I will use relationships I have built over the past 15 years to ensure SLT issues are heard, I will fight to unite our communities so we can work to solve problems that many of us share and I will maintain a supervisor's office in South Lake (even if I need to raise the funds to pay for it) and hold regular office hours. The basin will be heard and represented.

Supervisors meet only once a year in Lake Tahoe. Do you believe this is fair representation? Why or why not?: Absolutely not. I would fight for a more equitable arrangement – and would require hearings in SLT on issues that impact SLT.

Would you have voted for Red Hawk to be built and to divert Caltrans funds for interchanges? Those decisions are still negatively affecting the South Shore. Is there anything you would do to change the status quo?: The funding and the approval are separate issues. The county did not have the authority to block Red Hawk. The issue was whether to resist or work cooperatively with them to resolve as many concerns as possible. Either way the casino would have been built, so a no vote would have achieved nothing. In terms of the interchanges, money was not diverted, the casino dedicated about $110 million over time to pay for the interchange and Highway 50 improvements, however if they were not built, traffic to the casino would have been forced onto Grassy Run Road, Rolling Rock Road and Reservation Road – narrow rural

roads with many homes that would have been impacted. In terms of changing the status quo, we need to work better regionally to prioritize transportation funding, focus on job-creating business growth, and expanding tourism dollars.

Would you support having more tax dollars from the county coming to the South Shore? Currently, more dollars leave the basin than come back.: That is simply not fair, and I would work to for equitable distribution.

The county and city of South Lake Tahoe have a long history of not getting along. How would you propose to improve the relationship?: I have a record of bringing people together and working with others to solve problems. Part of better communication is "showing up" – that is why I will maintain a supervisor's office in SLT and hold regular office hours. I will sit down with the city to forge plans to together, find our common ground and build a new, better relationship between South Lake Tahoe and the county.

What is your vision for Meyers and how will you make it a reality?: I believe Meyers residents want the current Area Plan reverted to be more like the '93 zoning plan. From what I have learned and heard, they oppose major developments in the Town Center area. They want more input into in the planning process and assurances that the Catalyst Project is dead. I will involve more people in the planning and implementation of the changes and final plan. I believe we can better inform the public of meetings and critical issues. As supervisor, I'll push for better notification and efforts to engage the community.

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: I have spent the last 15 years helping solve problems. I have run a business, improved student performance as a school board member, helped create a better plan for creating jobs, and built a foundation of trust and respect throughout the entire West Slope. I will tap those relationships to ensure Tahoe

gets the attention and respect it deserves. My relationships with the county, nonprofits and the private sector give me the best chance to unite our communities and bring South Lake Tahoe and the county together.

You have received financial assistance in your prior campaign from Serrano Construction. How do you like their two projects that are before the county?: First, we should correct the perception – I was featured in joint mailer with another school board candidate paid for by Serrano and Associates Home Owners Association, not the construction company. There were a group of homeowners with children who went to school together from kindergarten to the 8th grade, they played in the same soccer and Little League games – they grew up together. An arbitrary boundary meant some of them would be forced to leave their friends and go to a high school well outside of their neighborhood. I don't care much about the politics – that is just wrong. I proposed a transfer policy that would allow these students to attend the same high school as their lifelong friends. Despite some misconceptions, the policy has no effect on development. The projects you refer to are proposed by Parker Development, who built Serrano. My priority for construction is to focus on long-term, good paying jobs over sprawling development in our rural lands that impacts not only our traffic but our beauty and existing residents.

What do you do for fun?: My wife and I love to hike. We take day hikes often throughout the area. Enjoying our beautiful scenic treasures we call home, El Dorado County.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know: In March of 2007 I was invited by a friend to play in a Texas Hold'em Tournament at Harrah's Reno. Other than friendly games with my friends I had never played poker, much less in a tournament. Surprising everyone (including myself), I won and went on to play in the World Series of Poker Main Event in Las Vegas in July 2007. I outlasted poker legends like Daniel Negreanu, Mike Matusow, Phil Ivey and Men "The Master" Nguyen,

but did not place in the money. It was exciting, and literally a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Letters: Library users say ‘yes’ to Measure L

To the community,

As library users, we ask the community of voters to support Measure L to keep our South Lake Tahoe library open as many hours as possible during the week. We really enjoy borrowing many books from the young adult and graphic novel section.

Some of us who are home schooled use the library for research for history projects. We also have enjoyed Nanowrimo Writing Club. All of us have enjoyed the seasonal reading clubs and especially the summer programs, music, magic, wild animals and the Mexican culture.

Even as teens, we still come to the Lego Block Parties. We are all members of the World Explorers Pen Pal Club and we use the library for our meetings where we learn about different cultures, world geography and share our pen pal letters.

Sincerely,

Anthony Pedigo, Jessie Brown, Christian DeMichiel, Dylan DeMichiel, Jestina Pirhofer, Nick Fiegel and Alex James

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Caltrans working on Hwy. 50 in Pollock Pines

Caltrans is closing a ramp and lanes this week on Highway 50 in Pollock Pines.

Beginning Monday tonight, there will be on-ramp and off-ramp closures at Sly Park Road from 7pm-4pm

Ramps won’t be closed concurrently, nor will they be closed the entire window of time approved. When the ramps are closed, highway message signs will be used to alert motorists in advance.

A contractor is installing K-rail, water blasting and restriping lanes in preparation for replacing the bridge over Sly Park Road.

The $7.67 million project also includes building new curbs, ramps and sidewalks. The work is scheduled to be complete by the end of this year.

Eastbound motorists can also expect alternating lane closures from Sly Park Road to Bullion Bend Road from 6am-8pm Monday through Friday for median work. Westbound motorists can expect alternating lane closures from Bullion Bend Road to Sly Park Road Monday and Tuesday from 7am to midnight and the No. 1 lane closed from 6am Wednesday to 5pm Friday.

Milk isn’t just about what comes from cows

By Dana Sullivan Kilroy, Los Angeles Times

Not milk? Choosing milk for your morning cereal or coffee used to be pretty simple: skim, low-fat or whole. These days, though, market shelves and refrigerators are crowded with an array of alternatives: soy, almond, rice, hemp and more.

While some people opt for these beverages because they’re vegan, they have allergies or because they’re lactose intolerant, the beverages are increasingly popular for another reason too. “We’re all being encouraged to eat a more plant-based diet, and some of these products fit that category,” says Andrea Giancoli, a spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and a policy analyst at the Beach Cities Health District Blue Zones Project in Hermosa Beach, an initiative to develop healthier communities.

They’re all slightly different in terms of nutrients – some are low in carbs and fat and others not so much – but Giancoli recommends choosing the unsweetened versions and those that also are fortified with calcium, vitamin D and, ideally, B12.

Read the whole story

Meeks Bay, NTFPD create stronger bond



John Pang

Meeks Bay and North Tahoe fire departments have entered an agreement to provide emergency services as well as increased public safety by adding additional management resources and combined response of both districts.

This comes as John Pang, fire chief at Meeks Bay, retired April 4.

Meeks Bay and North Tahoe Fire have a history of working together. The agreement expands their mutual aid partnership.

“There will be extensive cross training involving both departments and the opportunity to evaluate best practices of each,” NTFPD Fire Chief Michael Schwartz said in a press release.

K’s Kitchen: Transforming

asparagus into soup

By Kathryn Reed

Asparagus has a tremendous amount of health benefits and it can be cooked in so many different ways.

And now is the time to be eating it, although it has a long growing season in California. The first harvest – January-April – is in the southern desert valleys. Then February-May is when the San Joaquin Valley and Delta regions are picking the spears. The Central Coast harvest is from March to mid-June.

It is rich in vitamins B and C, as well as calcium and iron.

"As a result of its very strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant nutrient composition, we would definitely expect to see a food like asparagus showing up as a risk reducer for certain cancers. Chronic, excessive inflammation and chronic oxidative stress are risk factors for a variety of cancer types, and both unwanted phenomena are related to deficient dietary intake of anti-inflammatory and antioxidant nutrients – exactly the kind of nutrients that are especially plentiful in asparagus," according to the World's Healthiest Foods website.

Despite it being so healthy, I turned it into a rich, somewhat unhealthy soup. While it tasted OK without the sour cream, it did seem like it was missing something. I would start with less sour cream and keep adding until you get the flavor you like.

If I were to serve this for guests I would put a garnish on top – maybe chopped chives. Even a few grinds of pepper will spruce it up a bit.



Creamy Asparagus Soup

1 T butter

1 leek, chopped

2 small-medium red potatoes, chopped

1 pound (bunch) asparagus, chopped

4 C vegetable broth

½ tsp lavender salt

8 ounces low fat sour cream

Pepper, to taste

Melt butter in soup pot. Add leek, cook about 5 minutes. Add potato, cook about 5 minutes. Add asparagus and stir all veggies together. Add broth and bring to boil.

Let mixture cool a bit. Then puree batches in a blender. Return to pot. Add sour cream. Stir. Season with salt and pepper to your liking. Serve hot.

TRPA wins Regional Plan lawsuit vs. Sierra Club

By Kathryn Reed

A judge on Monday sided with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency in a lawsuit that would have unraveled the bi-state regulatory agency's Regional Plan that was adopted in December 2012.

In February 2013, the Sierra Club and Friends of the West Shore filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Sacramento to stop the Regional Plan from taking effect in its entirety.

U.S. District Court Judge John Mendez on April 7 said the agency could keep the document in place. In June he had handed TRPA a partial victory by saying the Regional Plan update does not violate California law by allowing local jurisdictions to have more authority. That was one of the items in the lawsuit.

Total maximum daily load, concentrated coverage, soil conservation, best management practices and the ozone threshold were the main issues the two groups have problems with in the latest Regional Plan. In each case the judge sided with the TRPA, saying the agency was adequately addressing the concerns.

No one from the Tahoe Area Sierra Club was available for comment.

"We respect the concerns of our colleagues at the Sierra Club, Friends of West Shore and Earthjustice about the new Regional Plan. It is not a perfect plan, but the League to Save Lake Tahoe also recognizes that it has the potential to help Tahoe's environment through multiple safeguards that require restoration and environmental improvements with any new development or redevelopment," Darcie Goodman Collins,

executive director of the League, said in a statement.

In the past the League and Sierra Club have been lockstep in challenging the TRPA. Not so in this case.

“It will give investors more confidence and homeowners more confidence,” Jeff Cowen with TRPA told *Lake Tahoe News* of the judge’s decision.

With the Lake Tahoe Basin being one of the more litigious oriented areas in the country, as well as overregulated, some investors are said to have shied away from doing business here.

TRPA had been operating as though the Regional Plan update was the law of the land because no injunction had been imposed. This is proven by the adoption of two area plans at the lake in the 16 months since the plan was ratifeid. These are planning documents that are now required by TRPA by jurisdictions in the basin to create.

Calif. groundwater depletion could be catastrophic

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

LOS BANOS – Flat as a tabletop, the furrowed, brown farm fields east of this San Joaquin Valley town are some of the most productive on Earth.

Every spring, they are planted with a smorgasbord of crops that in one form or another are trucked to grocery stores across America, from fresh juicy tomatoes to freeze-dried onion flakes, honeydew melons to tortilla chips.

Now that bounty is threatened by a crisis of geological proportions: The land is sinking – crippling the region's irrigation and flood control infrastructure and damaging aquifers that are buffers against climate change.

Nature, though, is not to blame. This problem is self-inflicted, driven by the frontier-style exploitation of the last unregulated resource in California: groundwater.

"We are looking at a material impact of a magnitude that is potentially catastrophic," said Cannon Michael, a sixth-generation farmer who grows tomatoes, onions and other crops near Los Banos.

Today's drama is only the latest chapter in a long-running saga of sinking. Three generations ago, so much groundwater was pumped from aquifers that half the valley sank like a giant pie crust, sagging 28 feet near Mendota and inflicting damage to irrigation canals, pipelines, bridges, roads and other infrastructure.

What stopped it were two massive government-funded irrigation efforts – the federal Central Valley Project and California State Water Project – that flooded the region with water from distant California mountains, relieving pressure on the area's natural underground water supply. But the fix was temporary. Today, drought, climate change and other forces have unleashed a new era of groundwater pumping, triggering some of the worst land subsidence ever seen in California. Near Michael's farm, the valley is predicted to drop 17 feet by 2060.

Read the whole story

Motorcyclist dies nears Virginia City



A Fallon man died April 6 in a motorcycle accident. Photo/Provided

A Fallon man died Sunday when the motorcycle he was riding stuck a guardrail.

Nevada Highway Patrol troopers said James Edward Cooper, 67, was on Highway 341 near Virginia City on April 6 at 12:50pm when he failed to make a turn and hit the rail.

“Mr. Cooper was ejected from the motorcycle where he received critical injuries,” troopers said in a press release.

He was taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno where he died.

Witnesses or anyone with additional information are asked to call 775.689.4623 or email dhildebrand@dps.state.nv.us.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report