Seeking literary compassion

Dear Reader,

With the return of winter, we decided it was time to put out a call for guerrilla acts of literary compassion.

Please take a few minutes to read about it, copy your favorite works, and make the world a less lonely place – the power of the written word in action!

Kim Wyatt, Bona Fide Books publisher

EDC supervisors make appointments

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday filled a number of vacancies on boards throughout the county.

Jennifer Thornton and Mike Craft were appointed to the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District. Thornton is new to the board. Craft is an incumbent who has had issues with the Riches, who have been running the concessionaire.

John and Ruth Rich have had the contract to operate at the South Shore lake for 14 years. Some board members want them out. The concessionaire is in a state of limbo. It has been the subject of heated debates all fall that *Lake Tahoe News* has covered.

Other appointments by the supervisors include Debbie Henderson to the Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District; Stephen Hyde and Bruce Massie to the Meeks Bay Fire Protection

District; and George Wheelon to the El Dorado Irrigation District.

Lakeview Commons struggles to be a reality

By Kathryn Reed

It was hard to know on Tuesday that the Lakeview Commons project in the center of South Lake Tahoe was not before the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors for the first time.

This was the fourth time in three years.



Dirt at El Dorado Beach would be replaced with paving stones if Lakeview Commons comes to fruition.

The long discussion about the 56-acre project that encompasses El Dorado Beach and Campground by the Lake sounded at times like a petty rivalry between the county and the city.

Supervisor Jim Sweeney made it known, “I believe my grandfather was part of the group that got the Board of Supervisor to buy this property.”

He has several issues with the project, though he did repeatedly say he supports the renovation of the area, if only for environmental reasons.

The five-member board made its once annual trek to Lake Tahoe on Nov. 10. Most of the issues facing the elected body related to the eastside of the county.

At times the questions asked by the board members – four represent the West Slope, one Lake Tahoe – made it obvious Lake Tahoe is not a regular stop for them.

Supervisor Ray Nutting didn’t understand how Lakeview Commons could be referred to as the “center of town” as project manager Deb Vreeland called it in her presentation.

The board had no comprehension of how well used the El Dorado Beach area is or how dilapidated it is.

Ron Briggs, chairman of the board, questioned Supervisor Norma Santiago’s allegiance to the county at one point when he asked, “Who’s the community?” in reference to one of her comments. Santiago is the lone voice on the board for the Lake Tahoe community. Her answer to the question was, “El Dorado County.” Briggs implied her loyalties might be with South Lake Tahoe, where she lives.

South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County officials have long squabbled like children. This project – particularly the land involved, Lake Tahoe Airport, the government center on Johnson Boulevard – they are issues that crop up every so often without resolution. Listening to the elected officials it’s hard to know this is one county and not two divided by a wall of granite.

The bitterness and childlike behavior between the government entities that are supposed to represent all residents carries on no matter who is in office.

Considering $1.5 million has been spent on planning the project that will transform the lakefront area, it seemed like it may go down the drain Tuesday.

Sweeney kept talking policy issues – which is his job. But one has to wonder where he has been. In a three-year period, 28 community meetings were conducted in South Lake Tahoe about the project. Lakeview Commons, aka the 56-acre project, had been before the Board of Supervisors three times before Tuesday and three times before the South Lake Tahoe City Council. This gave plenty of time for policy issues to be hashed out.

The project has been talked about for seven years.

On Tuesday, Sweeney kept harping on how he needed to see a real plan.

What Vreeland presented apparently didn't qualify.

Another bone of contention was the name of the project – Lakeview Commons. Most of the West Slope supervisors took issue with the name – wanting El Dorado to be part of the mix.

Those in South Lake Tahoe – agency and city reps – said the name could be changed.

Another issue Tuesday morning was the lease South Lake Tahoe has on the property owned by El Dorado County. It expires in 13 years. The California Tahoe Conservancy, which will fund the renovation on the lakeside of Highway 50, needs a 20-year agreement in place that states who will maintain the property so grants can be secured.

Officials close to the project thought it was going to be a slam dunk for the board to approve an extension on the lease.

Not so.

Finally, a compromise was met.

The issue will be brought up at the Dec. 8 supervisors' meeting for the lakefront part of the project to be separated from the rest of the plan on the other side of Highway 50.

This will allow the city to proceed the same day with entertaining a motion to go forward with the bid process so construction could begin next spring.

The board toured the site after lunch, which was provided by the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce.

In other board action:

- Supervisors made the Happy Homestead Cemetery District a five-member board. John Poel and Joe Tillson were appointed to terms that expire in January 2013. The three current board members are seated until January 2011.
- Lahontan Water Board's presentation was postponed to Dec. 8 when the supervisors are back in Placerville. Water board representatives will also be before the South Lake Tahoe City Council that day.

Lark resigns as DCSD superintendent

By Kathryn Reed

Douglas County School District needs a superintendent.

Just months after the board extended her contract, Carol Lark,

tendered her resignation at Tuesdayâ€™s board meeting.



Carol Lark

Neither Lark nor board President Cindy Trigg was available for comment Tuesday night. In recognition of Veterans Day, district offices are closed today so comments may be days away.

The board unanimously accepted Larkâ€™s resignation, agreeing to pay her $135,000 plus $17,500 in vacation in January pursuant to her agreeing not to the sue the district.

The agenda for the meeting in Minden said, â€œThe Board will discuss and may take action regarding the terms of a potential agreement with Superintendent Lark relating to her possible voluntary separation from employment with the District and the termination of her employment contract.â€

The district is expected to figure out a plan this month for a temporary replacement for Lark, with a permanent hire not likely to be on board for months.

Lark, 64, has not been liked at the lake by parents who continually questioned her leadership and perceived lack of understanding of the differences between the lake and valley.

Her handling of the radon issue at Zephyr Cove Elementary was one of many issues parents took issue with since she was hired in 2006.

Lark inherited a district with consistent declining enrollment. She came on board with the decision to close Kingsbury Middle School already made â€“ though the issue was

still a heated battle in her first year. Like most districts in the country, budget cutbacks were the norm in her brief tenure.

Larkâ€™s contract was to have expired in July 2011. That agreement was hard fought by the seven-member board which has often been at odds with Lark. At many board meetings, Lark seldom spoke – an uncommon occurrence by a person running a school district.

Before coming to the district that straddles Lake Tahoe and the Carson Valley, Lark spent two years as assistant regional assistant superintendent of Clark County School District in Las Vegas overseeing 27 schools; immediately preceding her move north she spent a few months as acting regional superintendent in charge of 61 schools.

Feliciano brings his Latin roots to Harrah’s Tahoe

Harrahâ€™s Lake Tahoe brings singer, guitarist and songwriter JosÃ© Feliciano, to the South Shore Room Nov. 14.

Feliciano is an eight-time Grammy Award winner and recipient of Billboard Magazineâ€™s Lifetime Achievement Award.

Felicianoâ€™s musical career spans four decades. Born blind to humble beginnings in Lares, Puerto Rico, he began his love affair with music at the age of 3 when he first tapped on a tin cracker can to accompany his musician uncle. After immigrating to New York City at 5, Feliciano learned to play the concertina using a handful of records as a teacher. Wanting to expand his musical talent, he taught himself to

play and then master the guitar with a gritty determination that surprised everyone.

At age 17, Feliciano began to play coffee houses in Greenwich Village to help out with his familyâ€™s finances. That same year he played his first professional engagement in Detroit.

His first major break occurred in 1966 in the Spanish music market after an amazing performance at the Mar del Plata Festival in Argentina. RCA executives encouraged Feliciano to stay in South America and record an album of Spanish music. The first single from that album, â€œPoquita Fe,â€ was a smash hit. Feliciano had taken long-established standards and made them brand new.

By the age of 23, Feliciano had earned five Grammy Award nominations and won two Grammy awards for his revival of The Doors hit â€œLight My Fire,â€ which rose to No. 1 on the pop charts in the U.S. and around the world. The second Grammy that year was for the best performance by a male vocalist.

This same year, 1968, Feliciano surprised American TV and radio audiences when he performed a â€œstylizedâ€ version of the national anthem at the fifth game of the World Series.

Feliciano earned his sixth Grammy Award in 1991 and is the only performer who has won Pop Music Awards in two language categories.Â In 1997 Felicianoâ€™s *Americano* album was nominated for a Grammy, marking his fifteenth nomination and in 1998, the *Senor Bolero* album earned him his sixteenth nomination. His love for the art shines through in his 2004 release with passionate and resonant vocals on *Senor Bolero 2*, the follow-up to his popular collection of Latin torch songs. The hit single â€œLo Que Yo Contingoâ€ (What I Had With You) made Billboardâ€™s Top 40 in 2003.

His 2007 release, *The Soundtrax of My Life*, is completely self-penned and offers a totally unique recording of original material.Â Recorded over a five year period, the album

demonstrates why Feliciano is heralded as a legendary songwriter.Â Feliciano won both a Grammy Award and a Latin Grammy in 2009 for the CD,_*SeÃ±or Bachata*.

Fully embracing the digital age, Feliciano released two new English-language albums for digital download only from his personal websites, one dedicated to “American Classics,” including songs made famous by Frank Sinatra, and the other an instrumental homage to jazz guitar legend Django Reinhardt, who inspired him, and features Feliciano’s song “Djangoisms.”

JosÃ© Feliciano is on stage in the legendary South Shore Room at 7:30pm; tickets are $45 plus fees. For more information and reservations, call 800.786.8208 or go to www.SouthShoreRoom.com.

Nov. 3 results final in EDC

Results from the Nov. 3 election in El Dorado County were certified by recorder/clerk Bill Schultz on Tuesday afternoon. No results changed from what were initially reported. Click election to see the final numbers.

Nevada casinos still feeling recession

September marked the 21st straight month Nevada casinos posted a decline in winnings from gamblers.

Stateline casinoâ€™s $21.8 million take was 10.8 percent less than a year ago.

Statewide, casinos won $911 million, which is 9 percent less than 2008.

The silver lining is the decline is not a double digit. This is the second consecutive month for that to be the case. Part of this may have to do with the entire Labor Day weekend falling in September.

Permits to cut holiday trees on USFS land

Beginning Nov. 23, the U.S. Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will offer permits for the public to select and cut holiday trees in the Tahoe Basin.

Permits cost $10 each (cash or check only), and there will be a limit of two permits per family, valid through Dec. 24.

Permit holders may choose from varieties of pine, fir or cedar, in designated cutting areas, and must abide by specific permit conditions for proper and responsible collection.

Permit sales will be available at:

On the South Shore, the LTBMU Forest Supervisorâ€™s Office at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, Monday-Saturday, 8am-4:30pm.

On the North Shore, at the Forest Service office at 3080 N. Lake Blvd., Tahoe City, Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-3:30pm.

For more information, callÂ (530) 543.2694.

Valhalla Holiday Faire

The 14th annual Valhalla Holiday Faire is Nov. 20-22.

It is in the Valhalla Grand Hall located on the Tallac Historic Site just past Camp Richardson Resort on Highway 89. The faire will feature the original creations of the best artists and crafts persons selected from the many who applied.

The hall will be decorated with a Christmas tree, holly and lights. There will be a welcoming fire in the fireplace, holiday music and Father Christmas.

Times: Nov 20 – 5:30-8:30pm; Nov. 21-22 – 10am-5pm.

Parking is limited at the Valhalla site. Shuttle transportation will be provided from the former Mikasa parking lot at the northeast corner of the Y and from the Kiva Beach parking lot to Valhalla, courtesy of Woodwind Cruises, every half hour.

Mission Mountain Wood Band returning to Tahoe

The Mission Mountain Wood Band will return to Tahoe on Nov. 27 â€“ the night after Thanksgiving. Booked into the Harrahâ€™s Tahoe South Shore Room, MMWB will bring its inimitable blend

of bluegrass, rock, country and whatever else the band may blend in that night.

In their old days of touring, the boys from Mission Mountain covered the country many times, traveling to more than 300 gigs each year. In the decade they were originally together, the band



Mission Mountain Wood Band is coming to Harrah's Tahoe. Photo/Bruce Young

opened for The Allman Brothers, The Grateful Dead, Bonnie Raitt, Jimmy Buffet and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, to list just a few.

Mission Mountain Wood Band currently consists of four original band members, who met circa 1970 while at the University of Montana. Rob Quist is on guitar and banjo, Greg Reichenberg is the longtime drummer, Steve Riddle plays bass and Christian Johnson is the multi-instrument whiz â€“ switching deftly and often from electric guitar, mandolin and fiddle.

In 1987, the fifth original player â€“ Terry Robinson â€“ was killed in a plane crash with his then-current group, The Montana Band.

Lately, his place on stage-left has been filled by another

Montanan, singer/songwriter Tim Ryan.

Ryan, who has penned songs for many top Nashville acts, has written four new tunes that Mission Mountain has been adding to their line up.

Tickets are $25; 800-786-8208.