Letter: Heavenly provides cheer at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Decked in Santa Claus hats and reindeer antlers, the volunteer crew from Heavenly Mountain Resort brought holiday cheer and served a hot and hearty meal to the dinner guests at Bread & Broth's Dec. 16 evening meal. "Volunteering with B&B is a humbling experience while giving back to our community, especially during the holidays. Santa sent us to spread joy and cheer and we did!" said Wren Buxton, Heavenly's dispatch supervisor.

Joining Buxton in spreading the spirit of the Christmas season were her fellow base operations teammates Gary Silva, dispatcher; Jessie Sota, dispatcher; Shaneen Murdock, administrative Assistant; and Tom Fortune, Director of Base Operations. This fun group of sponsor volunteers exemplified the holiday spirit and were willing to help the B&B volunteers wherever they were needed.

With funding provided by Vail's Echo Foundation, Heavenly/Kirkwood Resorts sponsored their 12th Adopt A Day of Nourishment event for the year 2013. Bread & Broth would like to salute Heavenly Mountain Resorts for their participating in and sponsoring services for the people of the south shore community. Buxton summed up Heavenly's involvement in B&B's program, "It's always a pleasure and we look forward to serving with B&B in the future."

For more information about B&B's programs, check our website or friend us on Facebook.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: Donations made for a Merry Christmas

To the community,

Tahoe Community Church Food Pantry would like to say thank you to the community as we feed the hungry in our community.

This Thanksgiving we fed 183 households a turkey and bag of all the fixings. We are feeding record numbers each Friday afternoon at the Food Pantry, and have fed over 7,500 people this year.

Our thanks to American Century for their generous donation which helps us to give a generous amount of food each week to those in need.

Thanks to the Salvation Army for the 100 turkeys, and to MontBleu and its employees for turkeys, fixings, and pies. Thanks to Harrah's-Harveys for the use of their freezer to store our turkeys. Thanks to the Cub Scout Troop 592 for their service in helping to carry the Thanksgiving Dinner Bags to the cars of our clients. A special thanks to all our volunteers.

Thank you to the 4H Club for the donated produce and to Heavenly resort for the cases of hoagie rolls.

Thank you to the Whittell High School students for donating the 1,500 canned and boxed non-perishable foods from their Food Drive just before Christmas. They also donated coats and warm clothing, and toys for the children which we were able to distribute before Christmas. Thank you to the Tahoe Douglas Christian Preschool for the 90 canned and boxed non-perishable

foods also donated just in time for Christmas. Our shelves were filled.

This community partnership is very important to us as we feed the those in need in this community.

Thank you!

Kathy Pavich, Tahoe Community Church Food Pantry

Websites try to control nasty comments

By Barbara Ortutay, AP

NEW YORK – Mix blatant bigotry with poor spelling. Add a dash of ALL CAPS. Top it off with a violent threat. And there you have it: A recipe for the worst of online comments, scourge of the Internet.

Blame anonymity, blame politicians, blame human nature. But a growing number of websites are reining in the Wild West of online commentary. Companies including Google and the Huffington Post are trying everything from deploying moderators to forcing people to use their real names in order to restore civil discourse. Some sites, such as Popular Science, are banning comments altogether.

The efforts put sites in a delicate position. User comments add a lively, fresh feel to videos, stories and music. And, of course, the longer visitors stay to read the posts, and the more they come back, the more a site can charge for

advertising.

What websites don't want is the kind of off-putting nastiness that spewed forth under a recent CNN.com article about the Affordable Care Act.

"If it were up to me, you progressive libs destroying this country would be hanging from the gallows for treason. People are awakening though. If I were you, I'd be very afraid," wrote someone using the name "JBlaze."

YouTube, which is owned by Google, has long been home to some of the Internet's most juvenile and grammatically incorrect comments. The site caused a stir last month when it began requiring people to log into Google Plus to write a comment. Besides herding users to Google's unified network, the company says the move is designed to raise the level of discourse in the conversations that play out under YouTube videos.

One such video, a Cheerios commercial featuring an interracial family, met with such a barrage of racist responses on YouTube in May that General Mills shut down comments on it altogether.

"Starting this week, when you're watching a video on YouTube, you'll see comments sorted by people you care about first," wrote YouTube product manager Nundu Janakiram and principal engineer Yonatan Zunger in a blog post announcing the changes. "If you post videos on your channel, you also have more tools to moderate welcome and unwelcome conversations. This way, YouTube comments will become conversations that matter to you."

Anonymity has always been a major appeal of online life. Two decades ago, the *New Yorker* magazine ran a cartoon with a dog sitting in front of a computer, one paw on the keyboard. The caption read: "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog." At its best, anonymity allows people to speak freely without repercussions. It allows whistle blowers and protesters to espouse unpopular opinions. At its worst, it allows people to

spout off without repercussions. It gives trolls and bullies license to pick arguments, threaten and abuse.

But anonymity has been eroding in recent years. On the Internet, many people may know not only your name, but also your latest musings, the songs you've listened to, your job history, who your friends are and even the brand of soap you prefer.

"It's not so much that our offline lives are going online, it's that our offline and online lives are more integrated," says Mark Lashley, a professor of communications at La Salle University in Philadelphia. Facebook, which requires people to use their real names, played a big part in the seismic shift.

"The way the Web was developed, it was unique in that the avatar and the handle were always these things people used to go by. It did develop into a Wild West situation," he says, adding that it's no surprise that Google and other companies are going this route. "As more people go online and we put more of our lives online, we should be held accountable for things we say."

Nearly three-quarters of teens and young adults think people are more likely to use discriminatory language online or in text messages than in face to face conversations, according to a recent poll from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and MTV. The poll didn't distinguish between anonymous comments and those with real identities attached.

The Huffington Post is also clamping down on vicious comments. In addition to employing 40 human moderators who sift through readers' posts for racism, homophobia, hate speech and the like, the AOL-owned news site is also chipping away at anonymous commenting. Previously, anyone could respond to an article posted on the site by creating an account, without tying it to an email address. This fall, HuffPo began requiring people to verify their identity by connecting their

accounts to an email address.

“We are reaching a place where the Internet is growing up,” says Jimmy Soni, managing editor of HuffPo. “These changes represent a maturing (online) environment.”

This doesn’t mean that people have to use their names when commenting. But Soni says the changes have already made a difference in the quality of the comments. The lack of total anonymity, while not a failsafe method, offers people a “gut check moment,” he says. There have been “significantly fewer things that we would not be able to share with our mothers,” in the HuffPo comments section since the change, Soni says.

Newspapers are also turning toward regulated comments. Of the largest 137 U.S. newspapers – those with daily circulation above 50,000 – nearly 49 percent ban anonymous commenting, according to Arthur Santana, assistant communications professor at the University of Houston. Nearly 42 percent allow anonymity, while 9 percent do not have comments at all.

Curbing anonymity doesn’t always help. Plenty of people are fine attaching their names and Facebook profiles to poorly spelled outbursts that live on long after their fury has passed.

In some cases, sites have gone further. *Popular Science*, the 141-year-old science and technology magazine, stopped allowing comments of any kind on its news articles in September.

While highlighting responses to articles about climate change and abortion, *Popular Science* online editor Suzanne LaBarre announced the change and explained in a blog post that comments can be “bad for science.”

Because “comments sections tend to be a grotesque reflection of the media culture surrounding them, the cynical work of undermining bedrock scientific doctrine is now being done beneath our own stories,” wrote LaBarre.

We can’t wait to see the response to this story.

UC changing how it offers online classes

By Larry Gordon, Los Angeles Times

UC Riverside senior Matthew Emeterio was worried that he might be short of degree credits and have to delay graduation past next spring. But thanks to a soon-to-debut online program linking far-flung UC campuses, he expects to finish on time.

Starting next month, the political science major will be enrolled in a UC Davis course on climate change that he will be able to take via his computer mainly at night and on weekends, in addition to a full daytime load of traditional in-person courses at UC Riverside. He will be among the pioneers in an effort encouraging UC students to tap into faculty brainpower and curricula across the UC system while also exploring emerging online education.

The new “cross campus enrollment” is a change for a university system criticized for being too slow in adopting online courses and too Balkanized among its nine undergraduate campuses to significantly share teachers and classes.

Read the whole story

Detectives looking for men with ties to Incline death

Detectives with the Washoe County Sheriff's Office want to talk to three men who may be able to provide information regarding the Dec. 22 death of Christopher Elliott.

Elliott, 46, was found dead on his front porch on Northwood Boulevard at 4am Dec. 22. The cause of death is pending an autopsy.

They are not suspects in this case, however they may be able to provide information useful to the investigation, deputies said.

They are described as three white males, were occupants of a dark-colored SUV that was parked in front of the 7-Eleven at Tahoe and Village boulevards shortly after 11pm Dec. 21. Detectives believe these individuals provided transportation for an additional person of interest in the investigation, described as a white male wearing a gray hoodie and shorts, from the 7-Eleven to a location on College Drive.

The individuals in question, or persons with information about the identification and location of these individuals, are asked to call (775) 328.3320.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Is an erasable Internet a

good idea?

By Farhad Manjoo, Wall Street Journal

This is going to sound silly, but I think Snapchat was the most important technology of 2013.

It sounds silly because Snapchat is just an app. What's more, it's an app used primarily by teens and college students, and wasn't I telling you just a few weeks ago that young people aren't good predictors of tech success?

Snapchat sends so-called ephemeral messages, photos and captions that disappear a few seconds after the recipient opens them. Self-destructing photos sound like a recipe for mischief. When people first hear about Snapchat, they likely picture acts by a certain disgraced former congressman.

If the Snapchat model takes off – if other sites and services began to promote the idea of erasability as a competitive feature – the Internet would look very different from the Internet of today. It would be a more private network, one without the constant worry of every ill-considered picture or thought being held up for ridicule by the whole world, forever. But it also might be a less useful Internet, a network on which you couldn't look up an old photo every time you felt nostalgic, or where computers wouldn't always feed you suggestions based on your history, since your history wouldn't be complete.

Read the whole story

Professionals to ski with masses at Squaw, Alpine

JT Holmes, Jonny Moseley and Jeremy Jones – all of whom call Squaw Valley home – will be signing autographs and skiing and snowboarding with guests at Squaw and Alpine Meadows through Jan. 2.

At Alpine, skiers and riders should meet at the base of Alpine's Summit Express. At Squaw, skiers and riders should meet at the Gold Coast Demo center.

It is free to ski or ride with the pros, however, a lift ticket is required for lift access.

Go online for exact dates and times, go online.

Gaines moves outside Senate district boundaries

By Jim Miller, Sacramento Bee

State Sen. Ted Gaines is going home but leaving his 1st Senate District constituents behind, at least temporarily.

Gaines, who represents Lake Tahoe, recently told recipients of his district's email newsletter that he and his family are leaving Rocklin after deciding to "temporarily move back into our long-time home in Roseville."

In an interview, Gaines said the renters of the family's house in southeast Roseville had recently moved out. Attempts to

sell the house or find new tenants were unsuccessful, he said, and it was too expensive to continue renting the family's Rocklin home while paying the mortgage on the empty Roseville house.



State Sen. Ted Gaines no longer in lives in the district he represents. Photo/LTN file

The district starts about a mile east of the Gaines' Roseville home and runs all the way to the state's northeast corner.

While a candidate has to live in the district where he or she is a candidate, lawmakers can move out of the districts they represent between elections, said Los Angeles attorney Fredric Woocher, an election-law expert.

Read the whole story

World hunger decreasing, but

it’s not all good news

By Christopher Joyce, NPR

Among the things to celebrate this holiday season is the fact that there are fewer hungry people in the world. Just how many? Well, since 1965, researchers in Europe have been tracking the world’s food supply and where it’s going.

The good news is: The percentage of the world’s population getting what the researchers say is a sufficient diet has grown from 30 percent to 61 percent.

In 1965, a majority of the world survived on less than 2,000 calories a day per person. This was especially true in parts of the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, China and Southeast Asia. Now, 61 percent of the world has access to 2,500 or more calories a day.

But one thing the scientists discovered is that the countries that have a history of food insufficiency didn’t just up and start growing lots more food. Instead, for the most part they’re increasing supply by importing food from abroad.

Read the whole story

Panel at Squaw to debate merits of fracking

Squaw Valley Institute is sponsoring a panel discussion Jan. 16 about fracking.

California has the largest underground supply of natural gas

in the country and is currently under the microscope to handle these resources responsibly.

The night will start with a background presentation followed by a moderated panel debating the potential positive and negative impact of hydraulic fracking on energy independence, environment and economy. Panelists include Catherine Reheis Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association; Abrahm Lustgarten, environmental reporter with ProPublica; and David Baker, business reporter with the San Francisco Chronicle.

The cocktail reception is at 6:30pm and discussion at 7pm at PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn. Tickets are available online.