Letter: CTC continues to do good work

To the community,

Tahoe captured my heart as a young man. I raised my family here because I can’t imagine a better place to live. Thirty years ago I helped create the California Tahoe Conservancy. Today, the Conservancy leads California’s efforts to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural and recreational resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin.



Larry Sevison

As a founding board member, I am proud of the Conservancy’s role as a valued partner, a respected landowner and the funder of hundreds of water quality, restoration, public access and habitat enhancement projects.

This year, with the help of my fellow board members, passionate staff and dedicated partners we completed the Lower Blackwood Creek Restoration Project and the adjacent Eagle Rock Trails to one of the most spectacular views in Lake Tahoe. We also saw the completion of the Lakeside Bike Trail in Tahoe City, a collaborative project which links 22 miles of trail along the Truckee River and Tahoe’s West Shore.

Our work is not done. The challenges of restoring the Upper Truckee River and other high priority watersheds, completing a comprehensive bike trail network and continuing to proactively

manage our lands remain in front of us. In 2013 we authorized $2,300,000 for new project investments to reach these collaborative goals.

I hope you will take a look at the Conservancy's Annual Report to learn more. Thank you for your continued support.

Wishing you happy holidays and a wonderful 2014.

Sincerely,

Larry Sevison, board chairman of the California Tahoe Conservancy

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Multigenerational households more in vogue

By Constance Rosenblum, New York Times

Khadija Benmakhlouf, wearing pink corduroys and a crimson shirt, is perched on a stool poring over her kindergarten math homework. Her grandmother, Tupper Thomas, who is curled up in a nearby armchair, offers encouraging shout-outs from the sidelines.

Around 5 o'clock, Khadija's mother, Phaedra Thomas, bustles in from her job as a community development consultant in Red Hook with her son, Teddy, 3, whom she has picked up from day care. Within minutes the kitchen is flooded with an intoxicating aroma as lamb chops from the halal butcher down the street sizzle in the oven.

The two women moved into the two-family house in February, dodging workers as their contractor, the M&H Art General Construction Corporation, transformed the century-old home into a dwelling suitable for a 21st-century family.

“I’m a big believer in this sort of arrangement, maybe because it never happened for me when I was a parent,” said Tupper Thomas, a longtime resident of Park Slope who retired three years ago from a three-decade career as the president of the Prospect Park Alliance. “I didn’t have that mom person around.”

With several generations in residence, the Thomas household represents a housing model that social scientists are paying a lot of attention to these days, one that grows out of a phenomenon that economists call “shrinking households” or “missing households.” The terms refer to an arrangement not uncommon today among some ethnic groups and viewed as an encouraging throwback to the way many families lived decades ago.

Read the whole story

Guldemond top U.S. boarder in slopestyle

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. -– X Games gold medalist Chas Guldemond (Reno) finished fifth and secured the top U.S. spot in the first-ever slopestyle snowboarding Olympic qualifier at the Dew Tour on Sunday.

Top-qualifier and favored U.S. athlete Shaun White (Carlsbad) sat out the event because of a sprained ankle he reaggravated during the halfpipe final on Saturday.

Both ride for Northstar.

Guldemond takes 1,000 qualification points into the second of five qualification events, the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix at Copper Mountain Dec. 21-22.

Sage Kotsenburg (Park City) and Brandon Davis (Mammoth Lakes) finished sixth and seventh in the final, but went to second and third in the U.S. Olympic qualifications standings.

The final produced some of the most progressive tricks ever performed in competition, with Canadian Mark McMorris stomping a triple cork 1440 and winning with a score of 97.80. McMorris posted a 95.00 in the first round—a full four points above the rest of the riders—so he had nothing to lose when he threw down the triple cork.

Guldemond's first and highest-scoring run: Front board 180 out, half cab onto the wall ride 180 out, switch backside 900, double back rodeo, half cab on to the box, back lip on the rainbow rail, cab double cork 1260, backside double cork 1080.

Nev. mental health patients bused and crimes followed

By Cynthia Hubert and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

Six months after he was discharged to a Greyhound bus and

shipped out of Las Vegas, one former patient of Nevada's primary hospital for mentally ill people stabbed a man to death in Iowa.

Another former patient, responding to voices in his head, set off explosions in a grocery store and a doughnut shop in Tennessee just a month after Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital in Las Vegas gave him a one-way ticket to Knoxville in July 2012.

Nevada bused yet another Rawson-Neal patient, a convicted child molester, to San Diego in 2011, even as he faced criminal charges in Las Vegas for failing to register as a sex offender. He also failed to register in San Diego, where he disappeared into the streets and soon became the target of a citywide manhunt.

Yet another former Rawson-Neal patient was found dead, his body floating in the American River near a homeless camp, seven months after he received a Greyhound ticket to Sacramento courtesy of the state of Nevada.

Even as Nevada's embattled state mental hospital works to revamp operations, the fallout from its aggressive busing policies continues to resonate from California to Florida.

Read the whole story

Doctors' ties to drug companies scrutinized

By Leana Wen, NPR

Last month, the American Heart Association and the American

College of Cardiology issued new guidelines that could double the number of people taking cholesterol-lowering drugs.

The organizations receive financial support from drug companies, and many of the experts who worked on the guidelines have industry ties.

The groups' response to ethical concerns raised about the advice is, in large measure, that a final decision about what you should do to manage your health is between you and your doctor.

Unfortunately, doctors have biases, too. A 2007 study in The New England Journal of Medicine found that the vast majority of doctors have some kind of relationship with with a pharmaceutical or medical-device company. Most of the time, the ties involved free food or drug samples. Dozens of studies have demonstrated that even innocuous-seeming inducements like these can influence doctors' prescription practices.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Cauliflower gaining in popularity

By Kathryn Reed

While the holidays are steeped in tradition, there's nothing wrong with starting new ones.

My sister, Jann, is a true believer in doing this. Preparing new sides for Thanksgiving is a tradition unto itself at her house. And this year it was a family affair. It's not unusual for my brother-in-law, Lester, to be in charge of the turkey

and dressing. But this was the first time in nine years that my nieces and nephew were home together for Thanksgiving. And, they too, were given jobs to do in the kitchen.



One of the new dishes at the Turkey Day table is the recipe below. For some reason I didn't tear out this recipe from the latest *Bon Appétit* magazine. It was super yummy.

And cauliflower is the new "it" food; seeming to have replaced Brussels sprouts on so many restaurant menus. While I have not actually made the recipe, I'm thinking it might be the side dish I'm tasked with bringing to a party later this month.

Roasted Cauliflower with Lemon-Parsley Dressing (Serves 4)

1 head cauliflower (about 2 lbs.), cut into florets, including tender leaves

6 T olive oil, divided

Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

1 C fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves

½ tsp finely grated lemon zest

2 T fresh lemon juice

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Toss cauliflower and 4 T oil on a rimmed baking sheet; season with salt and pepper. Roast, tossing occasionally, until tender and golden brown, 25-30 minutes.

Meanwhile, pulse parsley, lemon juice, and remaining 2 T oil in a food processor until very finely chopped; season with salt and pepper. Toss cauliflower with lemon-parsley mixture and top with lemon zest.

Lemon-parsley mixture can be made 4 hours ahead. Cover and chill.

Naso’s Reno properties may be used to pay for his public defender

By Gary Klien, Marin Independent Journal

A judge ordered serial killer Joseph Naso to reimburse Marin County more than $170,000 for legal services in his case, possibly through liens on his property in Reno.

But Naso apparently managed to unload $300,000 or more in liquid assets while he was awaiting trial, and it was unclear whether it could ever be recovered for victim restitution, county lawyers said.

County Counsel Jack Govi and a deputy, Ed Kiernan, said Naso drained his bank accounts and divested a $30,000 coin collection during his time in custody. They said there is evidence he gave the money to a son who is now living outside the country, possibly in the Philippines.

Read the whole story

Alarms sounding over resistance to antibotics

By Indre Viskontas and Chris Mooney, Center for Investigative Reporting

It’s flu season. And we’re all about to crisscross the country to exchange hugs, kisses and germs. We’re going to get sick. And when we do, many of us will run to our doctors and, hoping to get better, demand antibiotics.

And that’s the problem: Antibiotics don’t cure the flu (which is viral, not bacterial), but the overprescription of antibiotics imperils us all by driving antibiotic resistance. This threat is growing, so much so that in a recent widely read Medium article, Wired science blogger and self-described “scary disease girl” Maryn McKenna painted a disturbingly plausible picture of a world in which antibiotics have become markedly less effective.

“For 85 years,” McKenna explains, antibiotics “have been solving the problem of infectious disease in a way that’s really unique in human history. And people assume those antibiotics are always going to be there. And unfortunately, they’re wrong.”

Here are some disturbing facts about the growing problem of antibiotic resistance:

1. In the United States, 2 million people each year contract serious antibiotic-resistant infections, and 23,000 die from them.

These figures come from a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report on antibiotic resistance that, for the first time, uses a blunt classification scheme to identify “urgent,” “serious” and “concerning” threats from drug-resistant

bacteria. The CDC currently lists three urgent threats: drug-resistant gonorrhea; drug-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, such as E. coli; and Clostridium difficile, which causes life-threatening diarrhea and often is acquired in hospitals. C. difficile kills at least 14,000 people each year.

2. We've been warned about antibiotic resistance since at least 1945. We just haven't been listening.

From the first discovery of antibiotics, scientists have known that resistance is a danger. Alexander Fleming himself, credited with the discovery of penicillin, warned us as early as 1945 that antibiotics could lose their effectiveness.

His eerily prescient Nobel Prize speech cautions that "there may be a danger, though, in underdosage (of penicillin). It is not difficult to make microbes resistant to penicillin in the laboratory by exposing them to concentrations not sufficient to kill them, and the same thing has occasionally happened in the body. The time may come when penicillin can be bought by anyone in the shops. Then there is the danger that the ignorant man may easily underdose himself and by exposing his microbes to nonlethal quantities of the drug make them resistant."

3. Antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria are on the rise.

Clearly, antibiotic resistance is not a new phenomenon. Nonetheless, the frequency of these "antibiotic resistance events" is increasing. For example, from 1980 to 1987, cases of penicillin-resistant Streptococcus pneumoniae (the bacteria that causes pneumonia) remained steady at about 5 percent of all strains. By 1997, 44 percent of strains were showing resistance. Similarly, Enterococci bacteria can cause urinary tract infections and meningitis (among other diseases), and in 1989, fewer than 0.5 percent of strains found in hospitals were resistant to antibiotics. Four years later, though, that number was at 7.9 percent; by 1998, some hospitals reported

levels as high as 30 to 50 percent.

“The more antibiotics are used, the more quickly bacteria develop resistance,” the CDC says.

4. There has been a steady decline in Food and Drug Administration approvals for new antibiotics.

And even as more bacteria are becoming resistant and our treatments are becoming less effective, we’re also producing fewer new drugs to combat infections. There has been a clear downtrend in FDA approvals for antibiotics that began in the 1980s.

Why has this happened? “There’s a kind of curve to antibiotic development,” McKenna says, noting that there was a boom in the 1950s, when Eli Lilly collected samples of biological materials from all over the world to capture antibiotic properties in natural substances. By the 1980s, though, much of the low-hanging antibiotic fruit had been harvested. Now, the development of new treatments is becoming increasingly difficult and costly, even as pharmaceutical companies are cutting research and development budgets and outsourcing drug discovery more and more.

“The faucet from which (antibiotics) come has been turned down and down and down, and now it’s just a drip,” McKenna says.

5. As many as half of all antibiotic prescriptions either aren’t needed or are “not optimally effective.”

A huge part of our problem is that we’re misusing and abusing antibiotics.

“Resistance is a natural process,” McKenna says, but “we made resistance worse by the cavalier way that we used antibiotics, and still use them.”

Sick patients pressure their doctors for drugs, and doctors too often yield and dash off a script. Indeed, a recent study

found that doctors prescribed antibiotics 73 percent of the time for acute bronchitis, even though, as Mother Jones' Kiera Butler reports, "antibiotics are not recommended at all" for this condition.

Adding to the evidence of misuse: According to the CDC, almost 1 in 5 ER visits resulting from adverse drug events are caused by antibiotics. Children are the most likely victims. Despite the fact that antibiotics generally are safe, they can cause allergic reactions and interact with other drugs, harming patients who are vulnerable because they already suffer from other medical conditions. If we stopped overprescribing antibiotics, we'd not only head off resistance, but we'd also lessen adverse drug effects.

6. And it's not just human medical misuse — a large volume of antibiotics is inappropriately used in livestock.

Antibiotics also often are used in the agricultural industry; in fact, there is reason to think that more antibiotics are used to treat animals than to treat people. And these livestock drugs are not just used to fight off infections, but are often fed to animals in smaller doses to encourage weight gain and growth — a practice, the CDC says, that is "not necessary" and "should be phased out." A recent draft document from the FDA similarly states that "in light of the risk that antimicrobial resistance poses to public health, the use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in food-producing animals for production purposes does not represent a judicious use of these drugs." For now, though, the FDA's approach to curbing this threat has been limited to issuing voluntary guidelines.

7. Before antibiotics, death rates were much higher from common occurrences like skin infections, pneumonia and childbirth.

In her Medium article, McKenna gives some disturbing stats.

Giving birth could be deadly: Five out of every 1,000 women who had a baby died. Pneumonia killed 30 percent of its victims. And “one out of nine people who got a skin infection died, even from something as simple as a scrape or an insect bite.” If we run out of antibiotics, our future looks rather bleak.

8. The next major global pandemic might involve an antibiotic-resistant superbug.

For millennia, infectious diseases have reshaped civilization, culled our species and spread fear, superstition and death. But over the last century, we haven’t seen anything as devastating as the 1918 flu pandemic, which killed some 50 million people around the world.

But with drug-resistant bacteria, the threat rises. “Plagues still really have power, and almost a hundred years later, we shouldn’t think that we’re immune to them, because we’re not,” McKenna warns. For instance, tuberculosis kills more than 1 million people a year, and it is becoming increasingly drug resistant, according to the World Health Organization.

Meanwhile, though the 1918 flu was caused by a virus rather than a bacterium, recent research suggests that most victims actually died from bacterial pneumonia. Viruses can weaken our immune systems just enough to allow bacteria to take hold, and often, death results from secondary bacterial infections that, at least until recently, largely were curbed by effective antibiotics.

So are we doomed to recede back into a time when infections were the most significant health threat our species faced?

According to McKenna, it is not clear that we can fully curb antibiotic overuse. So the better approach is to get drug industry research engine firing again. “There’s a really active discourse around what’s the best way to get pharmaceutical companies back into manufacturing antibiotics,”

she says.

Our future, then, once again lies in the hands of scientists, whose quest to find new treatments for drug-resistant bacteria is now of the utmost importance.

This story from the Climate Desk, a journalistic collaboration among the Atlantic, CIR, Grist, the Guardian, Mother Jones, Slate, Wired and PBS.

Tahoe man resurrects skateboarding-snowboarding magazine

By Chris Macias, Sacramento Bee

Just like the rockers who've regrouped to capture their glory days, the recent resurrection of Heckler magazine sounds something like this: *Dudes, we're getting the mag back together!*

Heckler was one of Sacramento's magazine success stories, a homegrown publication that chronicled skateboarding, snowboarding and music for an international readership. But as it goes with good times on a board or playing with a band, they rarely do last. Heckler wound down in 2002, with its staff splintering toward new projects and careers.

More than 20 years after its earnest but scrappy debut, Heckler is reborn. Heckler now takes on a distinctly 21st century feel, continuing as an online magazine with embedded

video ads, story-sharing features for social media and other digital bells and whistles.

“We’re telling the story of skateboarding, snowboarding and music as seen through the eyes of Heckler,” said JP Lagos, Heckler’s publisher. “Competing with other publications isn’t what we’re trying to do. We’re just here to show the lifestyles we lead and the people we admire.”

Lagos, 34, embodies Heckler’s traditional go-with-the-flow attitude. He oversees the multimedia magazine from his North Lake Tahoe home, where no winter day is complete without a gnarly snowboard session, and he basically runs Heckler as a labor of love. Lagos covers his bills and his lift tickets as a Web designer and software developer.

Read the whole story

Mancuso looking better in GS competition

By USSA

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland – Olympic champion Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) made another leap toward her champion-level form Sunday with an encouraging 12th in the St. Moritz giant slalom to lead the U.S. Ski Team. This was her best World Cup finish this season.

Reigning NorAm overall champion Megan McJames (Park City) landed her first Audi FIS Alpine World Cup points of the season with 23rd. Slalom World Champion Mikaela Shiffrin (Eagle-Vail, Colo.), who scored the first World Cup giant

slalom podium of her career two weeks ago in Beaver Creek, started bib one in the opening run and slid off course over a roll and did not finish.

Tessa Worley of France and Beaver Creek winner Jessica Lindell-Vikarby of Sweden went 1-2 on the sun-soaked 2017 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships venue.