Editorial: California GOP needs more than new packaging

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the March 5, 2013, Sacramento Bee.***

There were two key questions coming into the California Republican Convention in Sacramento last weekend: Would party leaders acknowledge that the GOP needs to shift on certain issues to have a chance of regaining power in California? Or would they take a Madison Avenue approach, and attempt to put new packaging on an old product?

Based on certain comments by party leaders, it appears that Madison Avenue is winning.

Speaking to the Northwest Regional caucus, incoming California GOP chairman Jim Brulte blamed outside groups for suggestions that the party should have an internal discussion about policy positions.

"I refuse to buy into this Democratic plan, which is perpetrated by the media, which is that we ought to spend the next six months arguing with ourselves about what we believe," Brulte was quoted as saying by the Calbuzz blog, written by a pair of veteran newspaper journalists.

"We're Republicans – we know what we believe," said Brulte. "We're the party of Abraham Lincoln, we're the party of Ronald Reagan. We're the party that believes in individual liberty and greater personal freedom and individual rights. We believe in smaller government and lower taxes and greater parental control and more local control."

In other words, no need for the party to shift positions on immigration, reproductive rights, gay marriage, voting access or other issues that have alienated Latinos, women, gays and

lesbians, African Americans and younger voters. All the party needs to do – the thinking goes – is improve the messaging, taking it directly to voters instead of filtered through the media.

To their credit, many California Republicans recognize that new packaging alone won't sell their product. Former Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado told the Bee that many Latinos "want people to fight for them to allow their grandpa and grandma to have the opportunity to become a legal resident."

Meg Whitman, who supported Proposition 8 when she ran a losing race for governor against Jerry Brown, has now signed a legal brief stating that gays have the constitutional right to marry.

Republicans are also trying to build a "farm team" by electing libertarian-leaning Republicans to local offices. These are candidates who are more consistent in getting government out of people's lives when it comes to abortion, same-sex marriage, medical marijuana and other issues.

The small-government theme is a winner for Republicans, but only up to a point. Voters want California Republicans to succeed partly because they want a check on Democrats – always eager to enhance benefits for public employees and help other favored constituencies. But voters don't want the party of Abraham Lincoln to stop investing in universities, transportation systems, flood-control levees and other public works. Lincoln was a big advocate of public infrastructure – think transcontinental railroad – a fact that Brulte and other Republicans forget as they seek to attach the modern GOP to Lincoln's legacy.

We think that, despite their internal divisions, Republicans have an opportunity to win back voters in droves. But if their leaders fall back on old sound bites and conspiratorial excuses instead of taking an honest look at their policies,

they will only dig themselves a deeper hole. They need to stop digging.

Bay Area man going to prison for Stateline casino beating

By CBS-San Francisco

A Bay Area man has been sentenced to 32 months in prison for beating two women at a Lake Tahoe casino so severely that one victim suffered a miscarriage.

Douglas County District Judge Tod Young imposed the sentence last week on 27-year-old Huy Phan of Fremont.



Huy Phan

Phan pleaded guilty in December to battery causing substantial bodily harm, which carried a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Phan is accused of beating the two women in a Stateline casino hallway on Jan. 8, 2012, while he was with his sister and four men.

The other victim has undergone multiple surgeries for facial injuries after being knocked unconscious.

Neither victim knew the others or what prompted the attack. They're close friends.

Phan claims he was trying to protect his sister.

Nevada considers erecting war memorial

By Ed Vogel, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – A Nevada War Memorial honoring all fallen Nevadan soldiers since statehood would be added to Capitol Complex under a bill introduced Monday in the state Senate.

The move to establish a memorial for fallen veterans came from Brad Williams, a South Lake Tahoe police officer, whose son, Army Pfc. Brandon Williams, 21, of Gardnerville, was killed in Iraq in 2006.



Brandon Williams

Under Senate Bill 230, introduced by Sen. David Parks, D-Las Vegas, the inclusive memorial for all fallen armed forces members would be constructed only through donations to the state Public Works Division, not with tax money.

It is estimated to cost several million dollars, said Caleb Cage, executive director of the Office of Veterans Services.

The memorial, envisioned as more than 200 feet with benches, a pavilion and a wall of names, would be an addition to others on Capitol grounds.

Nevada already has a State Veterans Memorial; a memorial for the sailors who died on the USS Nevada battleship at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941; statues for mining; Abraham Curry, the founder of Carson City; Kit Carson; and fallen police officers.

Landing gear folds up on plane in Minden



Pilot survives scare at Minden Tahoe Airport. Photo/Provided

The pilot of a plane that landed without its landing gear down

was not injured.

Alfred Asti, 77, landed his Piper Camanche 400 at Minden Tahoe Airport about 12:28pm March 12.

Asti told Douglas County sheriff's deputies that his approach was high and as the plane came into contact with the ground, the plane bounced. When it bounced a second time the landing gear folded up and the plane collapsed to the ground sliding off the runway.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Free tickets to concert in Crystal Bay

Win two tickets to see Conspirator on March 16 at the Crystal Bay Casino Ballroom.

To enter, send an email with your name and phone number to contests@theconfluencegroup.com by noon March 15 with "Lake Tahoe News and Conspirator" in the subject line. The winner will be chosen by 5pm on March 15.

Conspirator latest album is "Unleashed" – it includes their hit single "PowWow".

Letter: Loop road will help South Lake Tahoe

Publisher's note: ***The author of this letter first sent this to the South Lake Tahoe City Council and he asked for it to be reprinted here.***

Dear Council Members,

Unfortunately I am not able to attend the Special Council Meeting on March 12, 2013, at 6pm, but I would graciously request that you read this letter during the discussion and make it publicly available.

As the owner of Basecamp Hotel, South Lake Tahoe, I am a small business owner in the community and wish to make a public comment regarding the Highway 50 Re-alignment project.

I believe we are all in agreement that the current situation of high unemployment, a blighted tourist core area, and an economy in decline is not acceptable as a vision for our community. It is clear that we need to re-invent our core to keep South Lake Tahoe as a major tourist destination while maintaining and creating jobs and opportunities for our residents who depend on our main industry for their livelihoods. A vibrant, walk-able core is vital to create an inviting environment for the visitors, reduce car trips and abate pollution that is contributing to the long-term decline in clarity of our most important asset; our lake.

Our biggest asset is our natural environment from the mountains to the lake, so the current situation of a four-lane highway dividing the mountains from the lake in our core tourist area with dangerous traffic, noise and pollution is not an environment that is attractive to visitors who come to Tahoe to experience nature and get away from their car. Other mountain destinations from Aspen to Whistler have been

stealing away our visitors with their superior, walkable environment. In fact, I would challenge you to find another successful outdoor-focused mountain resort that has a four lane highway separating its bed base from its main attractions, shops and restaurants.

Change is always tough, and whenever cities are required to make bold decisions, there are always people who will be affected, as well as people who are resistant to change in any form.

Bold changes however are necessary to transform the future of any community, which is why we should not shy away from change here in South Lake Tahoe.

Imagine San Francisco's Embarcadero if they still had a double-decker freeway running along the waterfront. The bold decision by the Board of Supervisors to remove eight-lanes of highway, against the will of a very vocal opposition, was not initially popular, but ended up transforming the waterfront in San Francisco from a wasteland of blight, high crime and drugs into the most vibrant part of the city, a haven for runners, hikers, bikers, restaurant goers and shoppers.

Unquestionably the decision to remove the freeway in 1982 is the main reason why San Francisco is able to host the America's Cup in 2013.

While we are not San Francisco, nor do we want to be, the Embarcadero is an example of what can be achieved when leaders have an open mind and make the types of bold decisions that are necessary to map out a vision for the future of their city, our city.

As a City Council I believe that it is your job not only to listen to the various voices in the community, but also to create a vision and sell the community on the full potential of our city. Great leadership is not about trying to please everybody, it's about doing what is right for your city, even

if it means that you'll upset some constituents for the greater good of the city. As civic leaders you will be acutely aware that there is no decision that doesn't have some vocal opposition.

As a business owner on the "wrong (lake and project 3) side of the tracks (highway)", I send my guests to go eat, shop and play at the wonderful businesses within walking distance (and as such within walking distance of 5,700 hotel rooms in my immediate vicinity) such as Basecamp Pizza (no relation), Driftwood Café, Lucky Beaver or Naked Fish Sushi that are in our tourist core. When it comes to asking whether they can walk, my inclination is to say yes, but I frequently have guests who come back saying that they were not comfortable crossing a poorly lit highway, especially at night and with their children, can you blame them? The next time they go out they take their car and drive despite being within walking distance, hardly a good solution for a destination that prides itself on its natural environment. I'm sure my colleagues on the mountain side of the freeway have the same issue when sending people to go see the wonderful lake.

I have read the Economic and Planning Systems Inc. report date March 1, 2013, entitled "Economic Analysis of the US50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project," and I find it to be a compelling argument for the need to create a "compelling main street." While it is clear that there is still much work to do to find the best alternative, I would urge the City Council to:

1. Continue on the path of exploring alternatives that would re-align a four-lane highway away from our tourist core.

2. Create a better non-motorized connection from the mountains to the lake.

3. Create a walkable tourist core with vibrant retail and entertainment that encourages guests to leave their cars

parked and use alternative methods of transport to explore the area.

4. Make bold decisions for the future of South Lake Tahoe in five, 25, and 50 years, without being overly focused on 2013-2018 when there will be inevitable disruption and discontent.

5. Fairly compensate those who will be directly and adversely affected by whatever plan is chosen without being held hostage by the vocal minority.

I wish I could have been at the meeting to voice my points in person, but I hope that you find the time to read my letter and perhaps take in some of my thoughts. Now is not the time to stick our heads in the sand, now is the time to map a vibrant future for South Lake Tahoe, and the evaluation of re-alignment alternatives is a great first step.

Respectfully yours,

Christian Strobel, founder Basecamp Hotels

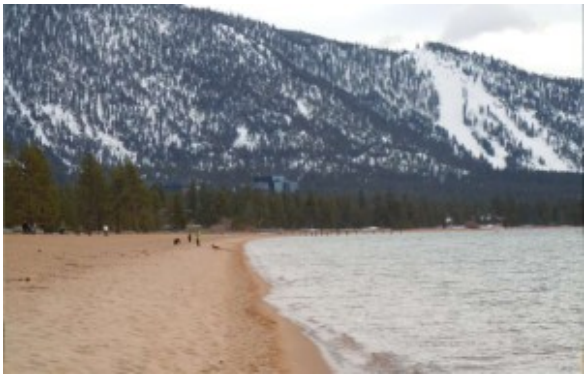
Nevada bill would keep state in TRPA Compact

By Sandra Chereb, AP

CARSON CITY – A bill that would rescind Nevada's threat to leave the decades-old Lake Tahoe Compact over a rift with California was introduced Monday in the state Senate.

SB229 seeks to repeal a law passed by lawmakers in 2011 and signed by Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval. The law would allow

Nevada to leave the Compact and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency that has governed development and environmental controls in the scenic Lake Tahoe Basin since 1969.



Politicians see a state line, but Lake Tahoe is only one lake. Photo/LTN file

Two years ago, Nevada lawmakers blamed their counterparts in California for favoring tough environmental standards that they said were hindering development and the economy. Among other things, they cited a regional plan that hadn't been updated since the late 1980s.

That hurdle was cleared in December, when TRPA's Governing Board approved a plan giving more development control to local governments. The plan was viewed by most as far from perfect, but a necessary compromise that wouldn't hinder environmental programs designed to protect Tahoe's famed blue waters.

Monday's bill was hailed by conservationists.

"We're excited to see the bill introduced today and we're optimistic we can get it passed this session so Nevada can recommit to the future of Lake Tahoe," said Kyle Davis with the Nevada Conservation League.

Assemblyman David Bobzien, D-Reno, agreed, saying that now that Tahoe's Regional Plan has been updated, "it's time to come back together."

But a Republican senator who testified in favor of Nevada pulling out of TRPA said the same issues that forced Nevada's hand in 2011 remain.

Sen. James Settelmeyer, R-Minden, noted a lawsuit has already been filed challenging the new Regional Plan.

The lawsuit was filed in February in U.S. District Court in Sacramento. In it, the Sierra Club and Friends of the West Shore claim the rules that TRPA adopted in December will erode environmental protection of the mountain lake by allowing denser development and giving more control to local governments.

"Obviously to me the lawsuit proved that SB271 still needs to be in play," Settelmeyer said.

Bobzien, however, said there was nothing in the original law that conditioned Nevada's staying in the Compact on whether others file lawsuits.

"People have a right to litigate," he said.

Workshop focuses on how to deal with change

Business owners, managers and individuals who need the tools and language to cope and to inspire themselves or their teams to move forward during changing times are invited to attend Taking Charge of Change, Business as Unusual on March 20 from 9am to noon at the Cedar House Sports Hotel, 10918 Brockway Road in Truckee.

At this seminar sponsored by the North Lake Tahoe and Truckee Donner Chambers of Commerce in partnership with the Sierra Human Resources Association, participants will navigate the Three Phases of Change, discover the “20-50-30 rule” and adopt 13 New Work Habits for a Rapidly Changing World.

The speaker is Laura Moriarty, a seasoned HR executive, nationally known corporate trainer and frequent presenter of Sierra Human Resources Association workshops.

Whether change is happening at work or at home, participants will take away tools to help them accept ambiguity and uncertainty and take ownership of the future.

Register and pay online before March 20: $39 for SHRM members, $49 for chamber members, $59 for non-members. Beverages and snacks will be provided at 8:30am.

For more information about the workshop, call Laura Moriarty at (530) 573.0224.

Ski report: Drink lots of water



More warm weather is on tap. Stay hydrated.

Here is the March 12 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Message from LTN publisher

Dear LTN readers,

On March 11, the server that hosts *Lake Tahoe News* and other sites went down for several hours. This has resulted in the loss of some stories as we had to restore the database. There is a gap where some stories were not saved.

If there is a story missing that you know of that does not show up by noon March 12, please email info@LakeTahoeNews.net and we'll do our best to resurrect it.

We will not be able to revive lost comments, so you may want to repost the comment if it was that important to you.

We are sorry for the inconvenience.

Thank you for continuing to read and support *LTN*.

Kathryn Reed, LTN publisher