Endorsement: LTN says Sass, Conner are best choice for South Lake Tahoe City Council



Publisher's note: ***The following endorsement is from Lake Tahoe News after a team of six community members gathered to hash out who the two best people in the field of five are to lead South Lake Tahoe on the City Council for the next four years.***

We believe Austin Sass and JoAnn Conner will best represent South Lake Tahoe on the City Council for the next four years. We believe they are stronger as a team – though they aren't running as that – than individuals. This is because of what each brings to the table.

Sass has the corporate-world experience this town needs. We need someone who can speak the language of big business. Like it or not, there are a ton of corporate entities in town and more are coming – from grocery stores, to department stores, to ski resorts, to hoteliers.

Sass has experience with big budgets. Multimillion-dollar budgets. A budget like the city of South Lake Tahoe has.

The incumbents believe borrowing from reserves and satisfying the state requirement of passing a balanced budget each year means the city has a balanced budget. City Manager Nancy Kerry last month told *Lake Tahoe News* the city is likely to face more than a $1 million deficit in the next fiscal year – 2013-14. Neither of the incumbents is addressing this reality.

Sass comes from a tourism-marketing background where he worked for Vail Resorts and Aramark. We have a tourism-based economy. We need someone on the council with that background.

On the other side of the spectrum, Conner has a perspective no one else brings. She has lived the non-privileged life of Lake Tahoe. She talks about the whole community. She talks about the people no one else is talking about – the people living check-to-check, small business owners, their employees – the people who truly make this a community.

When *Lake Tahoe News* put out a call to the power structure to show up at Bread & Broth to mix with those who may only get one hot meal a week, she was there that night. She was sitting beside, talking to and breaking bread with a segment of the population the other four candidates don't acknowledge. And, yet, with 60 percent of Lake Tahoe Unified School District's students receiving free or reduced lunches, clearly poverty with a view is a reality for so many.

Conner is the only candidate on the campaign trail advocating for more jobs in this town. She wants this area to have more than a tourist economy and recognizes that a simple thing like broadband would help inspire companies or those working remotely to move to South Lake Tahoe.

She also runs a small events company, so she gets that people want to do more than look at a lake or walk in the woods.



JoAnn Conner



Austin Sass

It may be disconcerting to some that Sass has received money from out of town interests or larger entities. But $5,000 of his donations came from the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association. This group *only* represents hotels in South Lake Tahoe. It costs money to get your name in front of voters. He already had to replace signs – and he's not the only one – because people vandalized them. While $5,000 is a lot of money in some ways, we don't believe it's enough to sway any candidate. After all, it's not like it went into his private bank account.

Combined, Conner and Sass will bring the big and small perspectives to the table that this town and basin need. We need an eclectic mix on the council to move this city forward. We like that both want to promote recreation and both are active.

We can't re-elect someone who when asked at the Oct. 10 Soroptimist candidate forum what vote he would change he said pot dispensaries instead of anything about the hole in the ground. It is partially Cole's Hole. After all, Hal Cole is the one who has said there is no such thing as a performance bond.

And we can't re-elect the other incumbent – a man who seems so incredibly out of touch with the residents of South Lake Tahoe. The depth of Bruce Grego is questionable. Nothing substantive comes out of his mouth.

Clinton Schue doesn't seem to take running for office

seriously, so how can anyone believe he would take the office itself seriously?

While we know Sass and Conner can come across as arrogant, even abrasive, we also know it takes people who are self-confident, a bit opinionated, and definitely self-starters to be successful councilmembers. We also believe the Sass-Conner combo will work well with the remaining councilmembers.

On Nov. 6 (or earlier via by mail) mark your ballots for Austin Sass and JoAnn Conner for South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Raley's says it has made final offer to grocery union

By Melissa Wiese, Sacramento Business Journal

Raley's Inc. says it has handed over its final offer to the union covering its workers.

The West Sacramento-based grocery chain has been in negotiations with the United Food and Commercial Workers for 14 months, according to a Raley's spokesman.

The proposal includes a health care plan that's almost the same as the one offered to other Raley's employees, including store directors, according to the store. And the offer doesn't get rid of paid vacation and holidays, unlike a union agreement recently made with Modesto-based Save Mart.

“We simply do not feel it is right to take away paid vacation and holiday time from our hardworking employees in order to reduce our expenses,” John Seagale, spokesman for Raley’s, said in a statement.

Despite Raley’s statement of a final offer, the union isn’t buying it.

“This proposal is inferior to what was already rejected by Raley’s members during voting that also authorized a strike, if necessary,” Jacques Loveall, UFCW Local 5 president, said in a statement on the union’s website. He said mediators want to talk with the union and the grocery chain.

Raley’s recently announced it would temporarily halt store closures as it moves to save money through cutting expenses and increasing sales. However, it also said the chain needed an “immediate resolution on the union contract.”

Barton: Fungal meningitis not a threat locally

Barton Health officials are reporting there is no threat to patients of the South Lake Tahoe hospital to contract fungal meningitis.

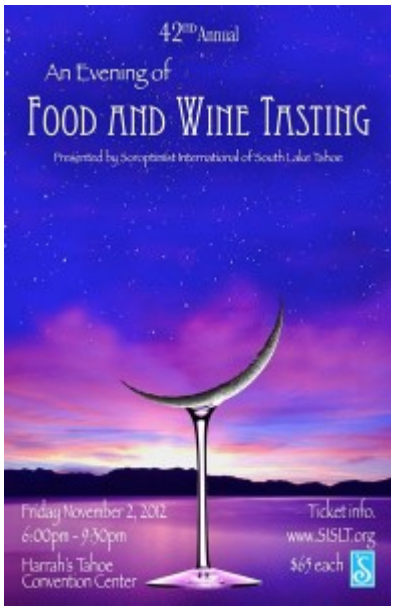
“Barton Memorial Hospital does not purchase any drugs from NECC nor, for the nine-years that I have been the director of pharmacy, has the hospital ever purchased any drugs from that company,” Barry Keil stated in a memo. “The epidural steroids provided by the hospital pharmacy and used at Barton Hospital, come directly from the drug manufacturer and are not pre-prepared by an outside compounding pharmacy [such as the

NECC].”

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported 137 people with fungal meningitis linked to epidural steroid injections of the steroid, methylprednisolone and 12 related deaths. The contamination of these epidural injections was the result of contamination by a single compounding pharmacy in Massachusetts, New England Compounding Center.

The CDC is coordinating a multistate investigation of fungal meningitis among patients who received an epidural steroid injection with a potentially contaminated product.

LTN has 2 Soroptimist wine tasting tickets to give away



Lake Tahoe News in cooperation with Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe is giving away two tickets to the annual wine tasting.

The event is Nov. 2, 6-9:30pm at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe. It will showcase more than 18 area restaurants and 30 vintners.

To be in the running for the pair of tickets you must be part

of *Lake Tahoe News'* NEWS Team. To be part of the team, just fill out the paid subscriber form. Then, write a comment below describing your best experience with wine – but keep it G rated.

Winners will be announced the week of the event.

If you don't win the freebies, tickets are $65 each and may be purchased from any SISLT member or online.

State sanctions auditing firm used by TRPA, TTD

The auditing firm that Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Tahoe Transportation District use has been sanctioned by the state because of its involvement with the city of Bell.

It had been recommended that Mayer, Hoffman and McCann have its license suspended for six months. That recommendation was stayed. The auditing firm per the state Board of Accountancy must pay a $300,000 fine and is on probation for two years.

"After the Bell story broke, we performed a review of MHM's audit and were confident in the quality of performance by our MHM partner and his team," Kristi Boosman, spokeswoman for TRPA, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Our partner from MHM is Marc Davis who will be here conducting our audit later this week. … he and his team were not connected with the Bell audit."

Lake Tahoe News first wrote about TRPA using this auditing firm in September 2011.

"If you will remember, the state controller alleged that the

audit of the city of Bell was not performed in accordance with the majority of government auditing standards and he identified numerous deficiencies. He referred the matter to the state board," Davis said in an email to Boosman that she forwarded to *Lake Tahoe News*. "We disagreed strongly with the state controller's findings. In response, the state board conducted its own investigation and identified only eight areas where the audit documentation for the city of Bell could have been improved."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Court decision on Stateline's Sierra Colina project favors League to Save Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has sided with the League to Save Lake Tahoe regarding one of five claims it made to stop the Sierra Colina project in Stateline. But that one aspect could derail the project.

The court in its Oct. 11 ruling will not allow the developers to use coverage in the way they wanted to, which involves bike trails. Plans called for conveying a public easement over a shared driveway for pedestrian and bicycle access and emergency ingress and egress for the neighborhood.

The League challenged that component of the project. The TRPA has limits on how much of a parcel may be covered. It all has

to do with erosion and sediment that reaches Lake Tahoe. However, in the updated Regional Plan that is expected to be voted on by the end of the year, the designation of bike paths as coverage is supposed to be altered. How that change plays into this project remains to be seen.



The Sierra Colina project is in orange.

Sierra Colina is the name of the project Steve Kenninger and Gail Jaquish are trying to develop on the 18-acre bare parcel between the Lake Village housing area and the old Nugget building on the south side of Highway 50 and across the street from Rabe Meadow.

In a statement Kenninger gave to *Lake Tahoe News* he said, “The court’s opinion is an abuse of discretion of the highest order, and a complete disregard of the court’s authority and obligations under applicable law.”

A press release from Kenninger further says, “The League and the Ninth Circuit shattered this collaborative public/private partnership in the basin, at the expense of the general public.”

The League had sued the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency because the bi-state agency is the entity that issued the permits in June 2009 granting the coverage, along with allowing the whole project to proceed.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency officials said they are reviewing the decision and did not have further comment Thursday afternoon.

“The League to Save Lake Tahoe is pleased that the Sierra Colina dispute has come to a close and that concerns over the extent of paving and roadways in this project will be addressed as the development goes forward. We are gratified that the court has endorsed existing protections on road building and removed the possibility of a precedent-setting relaxation of those protections,” the League said in a press release.

It is not known what the Sierra Colina proponents will do now that the decision by the court has come down.

However, environmental improvements have already been taking place in a cooperative effort with the property owners, Douglas County and U.S. Forest Service.

Sierra Colina was to be a LEED certified, 50-home, multi-family residential project that included nine moderate-income deed restricted homes, a network of public trails, with more than 10 acres of dedicated open space.

Letter: Democrats are the ones creating gridlock, not McClintock

To the community,

Urs Schuler of Placerville [Voices, Oct. 10], makes one of the most peculiar arguments I've seen. He describes the trillion-dollar deficits and excessive spending during this administration, but then suggests that we replace Tom McClintock, one of the leading voices in Congress for fiscal sanity, with Jack Uppal who promises to support even more spending.

Schuler accuses McClintock of "creating gridlock". Really?

McClintock was one of the budget leaders with Paul Ryan in the House who produced two consecutive plans to balance the budget and retire the debt. The gridlock is from Democrats in the Senate who killed both plans while refusing to pass a budget of there own in more than three years.

Schuler's letter is a prime example of empty rhetoric and blind partisanship that we're seeing from Democratic partisans this year.

Given their record, I guess I can't blame them.

John Stelzmiller, Twin Bridges and Placerville

LTCC board cuts number of meetings in half

Lake Tahoe Community College is changing its board meeting to once a month.



The board will meet the second Tuesday of the month. Special study sessions or workshops will be on the fourth Tuesday if needed. This will be done a six-month trial basis.

“Most business items each month should be able to be addressed in the one meeting and it will be more efficient and save staff time to prepare and disseminate the agendas and packets for the one meeting instead of two,” board President Molly Blann told *Lake Tahoe News*.

One board meeting a month also reduces the number of other meetings associated with it. This also means less staff time devoted to meetings.

“We are doing this because we are experiencing budget reductions and we are trying to streamline our operations to accommodate reduced staff,” LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Some of our streamlining initiatives are one board meeting a month, electronic board packages, and focused study sessions on topics where the board can really have good discussion about students, learning, and educational initiatives.”

There is a strategic planning session Oct. 12 from 8:30am-1pm in the board room. There are likely to be no other LTCC board meetings this month.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Young professionals planning variety of events

Tahoe Regional Young Professionals is having a mixer at the Beacon restaurant at Camp Richardson on Oct. 17 from 6:30–9pm.

The cost for non-members is a $5, while TRYP members are free. Becoming a member costs $40 annually, effective for one year from the purchase date.

TRYP will also be volunteering, handing out candy and networking at the Halloween Cove at Timber Cove Lodge on Oct. 31 from 4–8pm.

The 2nd annual Winter White Holiday party is Nov. 10 at Riva Grill from 7-10pm.

More information is online.

Placer County next to receive fire fee bill

More fire prevention fee bills are on their way to the region.

“This week the state is mailing nearly 58,000 fire tax bills to Placer County residents – the largest single county billing to date,” George Runner, with the state Board of Equalization, said in a press release. “I think many people will be shocked to discover they must pay this illegal and unfair tax.”

Last month the state mailed 51,897 bills to El Dorado County

property owners.

Runner noted that according to the latest Board of Equalization statistics, tens of thousands of Californians are already at risk of being subject to penalties and interest for not paying their bills on time. He reminded Californians that payments and appeals must be filed within 30 days of the date on the bill.

The following statistics, released by Runner, show the status of fire tax billings as of Oct.5:

County *(click for map)*	**Mailing Date**	**Number of Bills**
PLACER	Oct. 9-15	57,549
PLUMAS	Oct. 15-16	10,991
RIVERSIDE	Oct. 16-22	33,843
SACRAMENTO	Oct. 22	1,199
SAN BENITO	Oct. 22	2,239
SAN BERNARDINO	Oct. 22-30	65,637
SAN DIEGO	Oct. 30-Nov. 8	100,814
SAN JOAQUIN	Nov. 8	57,549

The state has mailed 330,785 bills – roughly 40 percent of those slated to go out by December.

Of the 119,426 bills to come due so far (30 days after the billing date): 72,288 (61 percent) were paid in full, 1,717 were partially paid, and 45,421 (38 percent) were unpaid and overdue.