Library closes campaign book with resounding win

By Susan Wood

South Lake Tahoe voters spoke loudly when they turned funding support of the El Dorado County Library into a no brainer during Tuesday's primary election.

With its funding to operate teetering, citizens overwhelmingly passed the $20-to-$28 a year parcel fee with 2,552 votes at 78.52 percent. Measure L needed two thirds of the vote to pass.



Measure L supporters celebrate election night. Photo/Susan Wood

Friends of the Library and the institution's staff reminded themselves at a gathering Tuesday night that this isn't the first time the library dodged a bullet to keep the doors open and services offered. In 1995 and 2005, library supporters have gone to the voters to keep the operation intact.

And what a necessary component these votes have been. At least 83 percent of the library's budget comes from taxes raised.

"I've long felt what makes our community special is the library and the (Lake Tahoe Community) college," said John

Henderson at a gathering to watch and talk about election results at his home with Kay. (Kay Henderson is president of Friends of the Library.) Within earshot, founding college board member Roberta Mason listened.

The Hendersons erected a retractable television behind the sofa to entertain the attentive guests.

Librarian and branch Manager Katherine Miller told *Lake Tahoe News* that she's noticed people walking into the library asking: "Why wouldn't we vote for the library?"

She would shrug. Staff is not allowed to use time and resources to campaign for a political endeavor.

However, it helps to have Friends, among other supporters.

"We owe everything to this PAC," Miller said of the library political action committee.

In turn, Henderson broadened her acknowledgement to a large group of supporters.

"We were fortunate to have a lot of committed people to Measure L. For me, the real bottom line is I want to live in a community with a library," she said.

The El Dorado County Library has long been a venue for community functions, a creative outlet for gatherings such as the appy hour for those trying to master their computer technology and a resource for audio books, published works to read and tools to conduct professional projects.

As the Lakeview Commons project across Highway 50 comes into full fruition, the library location becomes all the more pertinent in steering visitors and locals to a world of words and vision. And one might catch a glimpse of Mark Twain's character in MacEvoy Lane.

Paid parking opponents win in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Say goodbye to South Lake Tahoe's parking meters at Lakeview Commons and Lakeside Beach.

The voters on June 3 said take them out. This will happen after Labor Day.

With 100 percent of the precincts reporting, the yes votes were 1,271 at 68.41 percent and the no votes were 587 at 31.59 percent.

"I think the people have spoken very well; that they just don't like it," John Cefalu said of paid parking.

Cefalu was one of the main opponents to the meters and early leader to force the city's hand to change its policy.

"For the city to make the argument that this is a fundamental part of the budget and they need the revenue, I just can't buy it," Cefalu told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The city's latest paid parking program has not been welcome since the get-go. Meetings were often contentious, with name-calling and anger the norm instead of civility and compromise.

While a group called Tahoe 4 Tahoe secured enough signatures to take the question of paid parking to the voters, legally they could not do so because of how the Vehicle Code is written when it comes to parking meters. Had it gone to court the city would have likely won based on past rulings. In the end, though, the City Council decided it was better for the

voters to decide and the city put the measure on the ballot.

“I just hope that the vitriol is over. We are getting a lot done in this town with marginal revenue,” Mayor Hal Cole told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We need to all start pulling in the same direction moving forward. A lot more investment is needed.”

The decision does not affect the parking garage at Heavenly Village or the meters on Bellamy Court.

“It means we have to find a way to plug a hole that the lost revenue will create. We will be discussing that at the next council meeting,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Sullivan, Ashworth elected to judgeships

By Susan Wood

The women running for the two judgeships in El Dorado County will join presiding Judge Suzanne Kingsbury in what will be a slightly more gender balanced Superior Court.

Superior Court Commissioner Dylan Sullivan and Deputy District Attorney Vicki Ashworth won judgeship offices 5 and 1, respectively, in the June 3 primary election – both with resounding turnouts in their favor. Sullivan received 18,124 votes or 59.99 percent against attorney Joe Hoffman. Ashworth pulled in 15,841 votes at 51.5 percent to beat business owners David Combellack and Joe Weinberger.



Dylan Sullivan, right, receives support election night from El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury. Photo/Wendy David

Sullivan seemed humbled by the win – declaring hard work, perseverance and strong familial influences as leading her to the office. She was the oldest of three children born to a teenage mother and knew she'd have to work hard, be strong and take responsibility to mold her path to success.

"My mother instilled that in me," she told *Lake Tahoe News*. They were the only two college graduates in the family.

She pledged to continue the diligent work ethic, find fair resolutions and truly listen to people, much like she attempted to do in the campaign. She even talked about listening as if it were a lost art.

"That was the most effective part of my campaign – to really talk to them and go to the public forums. I think that's an important part of being on the bench," she said, during a break at her celebration with about two dozen people in a suite at MontBleu on Tuesday night.

Sullivan acknowledged Judge Kingsbury as yet another strong role model who helped "create an environment for me to succeed."

Sullivan mentioned pounding the pavement as the most

interesting component to the campaign because of the residents' surprised reactions.

"I felt it's the least I could do. My one regret is that there was no way I could make it to every voter," she said.

Ashworth had a similar experience in her door-to-door interactions with voters.

"Most people don't expect that," she said, while driving home after her gathering.

But then again, anything's possible in El Dorado County. She was pleasantly surprised by so many people showing up at the public forums during the campaign season. She even attributes much of her success in her win as "voters educating themselves and being involved."

Ashworth has long learned how to balance being a conscientious observer, capable of a proactive bent. Meaning, she's a doer, which her record prosecuting high-profile cases proves, but has watched others such as longtime Judge Eddie Keller in action on the bench which has taught her another aspect of the law.

A judgeship isn't necessarily a lifelong dream – but a recent quest.

"It's been (there) since the children were getting older," she said.

And so it goes, the balance of family and work.

She promises El Dorado County she'll be "fair and impartial."

Opinion: Time for Tahoe to decide what it wants

By Nancy Kerry

The polls have closed and voting is complete. Now the tallying begins.

These past few months of debate regarding the value of parking meters as a revenue source for the city has resulted in a higher level of engagement and discussion among community members about revenues, expenses and the future of the south shore. An open and free democracy quite often results in these types of lively debate with opinions and positions on all sides of the issues.



Nancy Kerry

I've had the privilege of listening to various opinions on both sides of the issue and have heard many good opinions. The City Council's decision to put this question before the voters was the right decision. The community has spoken through their vote, and their collective opinion is held in high regard and the community's involvement is appreciated.

I commend Peggy Bourland and her group of friends that took it upon themselves to challenge a decision they did not agree with and circulated a petition. Her efforts and those of her group are exactly what democracy in the United States is all about.

Even when we disagree or when democracy is messy, it’s a wonderful and respectful method of having a powerful voice in your government. At the time of this writing, we do not yet know the outcome of the vote as the polls have just closed. However, the votes have been cast, the decision is therefore made and it is now in the County’s hands for tallying.

Thank you to all of the voters in this election.

Now that the issue regarding the meters is settled, it is critical the community turn our attention to the future of the South Shore. The question remains, “What future do we want and how do we envision paying for it?” The community of the South Shore receives more federal and state dollars from taxpayers in other parts of the state and country than most other communities because of the state and federal government’s efforts to protect our beautiful Lake Tahoe. As a community, we have relied on these and other outside funding sources for many years for capital improvements and public services.

However, those funds are less plentiful today and more competitive to obtain. If we envision investment in improved recreation amenities, significantly improved streets and roads and attracting private investors to remodel commercial properties, we need a strategic approach to economic development, business attraction and job creation. As a community, we can improve our economic forecast, which currently remains uncertain, by attracting and obtaining more private investment, supporting the local business community (both small and large businesses) and using growth in revenues to invest in our future.

But what future does the community want to invest in? It is sometimes easier to know what we are against, than what we are for. Now would be a great time to leverage the community’s interest in local decision making process to shape the future of the South Shore.

In the past four years, the city has reduced expenses significantly, eliminated 30 percent of the workforce, reduced employee wages and benefits and simultaneously invested millions of local tax dollars back into the community through the Harrison Avenue project, street improvements and other capital projects. The city cannot reduce a sufficient amount of expenses to generate enough revenue for the amount of the investment needed in the community.

Although we have more to do to continue to reduce expenses and long-term liabilities, the question remains the same – "What does the community want and how do we as a community envision paying for it?" We will be discussing these questions and more at the next City Council meeting on June 17 and I encourage everyone to join in the discussion and debate and shape the decisions impacting our tomorrow.

Nancy Kerry is city manager of South Lake Tahoe.

Brown, Newsom, Harris advance to November

By Michael Finnegan, Los Angeles Times

Gov. Jerry Brown finished first Tuesday in the California Primary, easily advancing to the general election while Republicans Neel Kashkari and Tim Donnelly battled for the second spot on the November ballot.

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom and state Attorney General Kamala Harris, both Democrats, also advanced to November. Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones, another Democrat, also was all but guaranteed to move to the general election.

The election was the first full-scale test of a new primary system aimed at curbing entrenched partisanship in state politics. In contests for statewide office, Congress and the Legislature, candidates who finish first and second – regardless of party – will compete in a November runoff.

The "top-two" system was approved by voters four years ago. Exasperated by chronic gridlock in Sacramento and Washington, voters ignored pleas of the two major parties to keep California's partisan primaries intact.

Read the whole story

Fire damages Incline Village house

A fire damaged a single-family home in Incline Village on Monday.

The cause of the June 2 fire at 815 Ellen Court is under investigation.

Assisting North Lake Tahoe firefighters were crews from Tahoe Douglas and North Tahoe Fire.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Drought brings gold prospectors back to life

By Scott Gold, Los Angeles Times

David Fiori, waist-deep in the chilly Kern River, braced against the current, stabbed a shovel into the ancient silt between his feet and tossed the muck downstream. His eyes, though, wandered to a potential prize – a spot on the opposite bank of the river.

To the uninitiated, it looked like just another leafy bend in the 165-mile-long Kern, which carries the snowmelt of the Sierra Nevada toward the sea. But prospectors have had a different sort of perspective in this stretch of California for a long time.

On the other side of the river, Fiori noted, the crystalline water roiled and turned white because it splashed over a cluster of underwater boulders. It's the sort of geological quirk that abruptly slows the current, causing heavier elements to settle into the muck of the riverbed – namely, gold.

Read the whole story

Macau casinos to ban smoking on gaming floor

By Howard Stutz, Law Vegas Review-Journal

Come October, Macau's casinos won't smell the same.

The special administrative region government last month told its resort operators that smoking will be banned on mass-market gaming floors starting Oct. 6.

Here’s the surprise: Macau’s six casino operators – including MGM Resorts International, Wynn Resorts Ltd. and Las Vegas Sands Corp. – asked for the prohibition.

The ban doesn’t include Macau’s private gaming rooms. Casinos can build smoking rooms on the gaming floors, which have their own heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. But the rooms can’t include table games or slot machines.

Read the whole story

Sorenstam favorite to win celeb golf tourney

By AP

For the first time in its 25-year history, the favorite to win the annual celebrity golf tournament at Lake Tahoe is a golfer.

Annika Sorenstam is listed at 2-1 atop the odds posted Monday at Harrah’s/Harveys Lake Tahoe Race & Sports Book.

Defending champ and four-time winner Billy Joe Tolliver is at 9-2, followed by eight-time champ Rick Rhoden at 5-1.

The ex-pitcher Rhoden has played on the senior tour, but it’s the first time any longtime golf pro has competed at the American Century Celebrity Championship at Edgewood. The tournament uses a modified Stableford system that puts a

premium on birdies and eagles.

Sorenstam will play from the same tees as the guys in July. It’s been 11 years since she played with the men on the PGA Tour at Colonial.

Low jobless rate for community college graduates

By David Leonhardt, New York Times

The federal government’s main educational-attainment categories are fairly blunt. In particular, the “some college” category includes a wide array of people: Those who have dropped out of college without earning any degree, those who have earned a two-year degree meant to lead directly to a job (such as in nursing) and those who have earned an academic two-year degree that is often a first step toward a bachelor’s degree.

If you want to understand how successful community colleges are, to take just one example, you need to know how well someone with a two-year degree fares in the job market.

Fortunately, in a series of tables that aren’t on its website but are available upon request, the Bureau of Labor Statistics does distinguish among the different versions of “some college.” (It would be even better if the bureau made this data easily available to the public.)

The group with the highest jobless rate, not surprisingly, is people who have attended some college classes without earning any degree. Their jobless rate is only slightly lower than

that of high school graduates who have never attended college.

Read the whole story