Bees, yellow jackets creating a buzz

Toogee Sielsch with El Dorado County Vector Control looks at bees that drowned in a hot tub in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

By Kathryn Reed

The overriding reason to be in a hot tub is to relax. Just the opposite happens when bees buzz around just inches from your face and then want to make the body of water their continual drinking fountain.

Then there are the yellow jackets that have such good sniffers they know where the barbecue is – or any protein that is outside – within a quarter of a mile.

Those bumblebees and honeybees, well, they are just spreading love as they pollinate.

Now is the season for the worker bees and yellow jackets to proliferate. While they are more in abundance now, the prediction is it won’t be a bad year for them.

Toogee Sielsch with the El Dorado County Vector Control while on a stroll through Cove East this week talked all about these winged critters.

Because there were a couple hard freezes in the spring he does not anticipate the yellow jacket season being bad, especially compared to a couple summers ago when it seemed like there was a constant hum in the basin. That was when eating outside was near impossible without sharing your meal with the little buggers, all under the threat of being stung.

Honey bees are getting under a hot tub cover and then drowning. Photo/LTN

There are five species of yellow jackets in the basin. They are part of the wasp family and aren’t actually bees. In nature they are primarily feeding on aphids. They are also a low level pollinator.

The biggest problem is so many people are allergic to their sting. This can become a public health issue and why vector control gets involved.

“We use a powder they crawl through. They spread it to their friends,” Sielsch said of how his department gets rid of yellow jacket nests. Even then, the crew is cognizant of proximity to water and other environmental concerns. He said 600 nests would be a rough estimate of how many were treated during the prolific summer.

“We would never treat primary pollinators,” Sielsch added.

Honey bees and bumblebees aren’t usually going to sting someone. They would have to get pretty aggravated to do so. The problem with yellow jackets is they don’t lose their stingers and can keep after a person. It’s only honey bees that drop their stinger. And it’s only the females that sting.

The good things about the traps that are sold at stores is that they are specific to attracting and then killing yellow jackets so there is no threat of killing off the good bees.

As for the bees showing up in a hot tub, there is probably a nest nearby and that big tub looks like an inviting source of hydration. They just want to share.

Alessi dragging heels to retire to get most money

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe has no idea how long it will have its current city clerk because she can’t make up her mind about retiring even though in June she announced she’d be leaving this month.

“We are sort of in limbo here because she has not given me or the council a date,” interim City Manager Dirk Brazil told

Lake Tahoe News.

Suzie Alessi

Alessi on June 19 stunned those in attendance at the council meeting when she said she was retiring before her term expires at the end of the year.

On July 9 she told *LTN*, “I do not have a definite date yet. Waiting to hear back from CalPERS.”

Retirement is usually something someone gives a little more thought too. Even on the public employees’ retirement website it says, “You may file your service retirement application within 120 days of your planned retirement date.”

People do this to ensure they don’t have an interruption of taxpayer supported paychecks. Alessi could retire now, she doesn’t have to wait for anything from CalPERS. She also can walk off the job without any notice to anyone.

She will make close to $100,000 as a retiree.

Because the city has an elected city clerk there is no one to hold the person in that office accountable. There is no one to say the person ought to make a decision for the good of the city.

Brazil said he is trying to plan for whatever happens. This is so he has options at the ready for the council.

Legally, the council would have 60 days to appoint a clerk after Alessi’s retirement. It is state law the city must have

a clerk. There are people who fill in on an interim basis much like what Brazil is doing at the helm of the city. This is a route he advocates.

While the city manager has no oversight of the clerk, Brazil said he does believe the workload is more than one person. Alessi has an assistant. While that woman is a city employee, she reports directly to Alessi, an elected official. This further complicates matters.

Most cities don't have an elected city clerk. It would take the council putting the topic before voters to change how South Lake Tahoe handles the clerk position. This might happen this fall.

While there has not been anything on an open or closed session since Alessi's announcement indicating the council was discussing the topic of the clerk's office, it is expected to be on the July 17 agenda. If the council chooses to take the issue to the voters, there is time to get it on this November's election.

Each of the council members was asked by *LTN:*

· *What is your feeling about having the city clerk position being elected or appointed?*

· *Do you think the public should decide whether the office should be elected or appointed?*

· *What would you look for in a future clerk?*

· *What are your feelings about the current office?*

Only Councilman Tom Davis responded. He is adamant the position should be elected, saying this gives the public better accountability. While Davis acknowledges it's not a perfect system, he believes the current set is the best for the citizenry.

Development rights in Tahoe get overhaul

By Adam Jensen

The Lake Tahoe Basin has a unique system of private property development rights established to protect this national treasure.

The development rights system began in the 1980s and is central to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's management of growth in the Lake Tahoe Basin. It is designed to ensure development will help achieve a wide range of environmental goals.

It has also become clear the system is not well understood or easy for investors and developers to use.

Development rights, formerly known as commodities, are entitlements one must acquire before developing a property and can include commercial floor area, tourist accommodation units, existing residential units, residential development rights and allocations, land coverage, and restoration credits.

"The Lake Tahoe Regional Plan recognizes the importance of redevelopment," said Jennifer Self, a senior planner with TRPA. "Private investment in our communities is a key mechanism for getting environmental improvements on the ground. We want to make sure our systems are encouraging this type of redevelopment and not hindering progress."

Since September 2015, a dedicated group has been meeting to discuss how to better manage growth, support environmentally

beneficial and economically feasible redevelopment, and improve the effectiveness and predictability of the current development rights system.

The Development Rights Strategic Initiative Working Group includes representatives from the environmental and business sectors, state land banks, California Attorney General's Office, the TRPA Advisory Planning Commission, and the Regional Plan Implementation Committee.

The working group released recommendations in September 2017. A formal environmental review of the recommendations is anticipated this summer, with the final approval and adoption in September and October. All working group meetings and approval hearings will include opportunities for the public to comment on the proposals.

"The working group partnered with a national expert in development rights systems to look at best practices from around the country and see what we could model right here in Tahoe," Self said.

Under the recommendations, TRPA would make five key improvements that would increase flexibility and create a more user-friendly system while still maintaining the overall development cap for the basin:

- Allowing for the conversion or exchange of development rights from one type to another to allow for more flexibility and responsiveness to market demands. The system no longer has rigid silos of development types.
- Eliminating local government approval of development rights transfers across jurisdictional boundaries to simplify the system and reduce fees. A local jurisdiction would have the option to reinstate the so-called "veto" if it saw a net loss of 5 percent of existing development rights over a two-year period.
- Strengthening partnerships between TRPA and the

California and Nevada land banks to increase development rights inventories. This partnership would help accelerate the goals of the Regional Plan by retiring development on sensitive lands and transferring the development rights at low cost to projects in town centers.

- Improving the transfer-of-development-rights system to increase predictability and make the system more user-friendly. A few key improvements include eliminating a requirement to have an approved project prior to a transfer, expanding tracking and inventory capabilities on LakeTahoeInfo.org, and highlighting successful redevelopment projects.
- Allocating a portion of the residential bonus units for local achievable housing—housing for those who earn too much to qualify for affordable and moderate-income housing but too little to afford the median market-priced multi-family or single-family unit. These bonus units would be awarded essentially free of charge to eligible projects.

“All in all, we’ve heard from community groups that we’re moving in the right direction,” Self said.

For more information on development rights and public meetings, go **online**.

Adam Jensen is an environmental education specialist for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. This article first appeared in the summer 2018 issue of Tahoe In Depth.

Plenty to do without snow on top of Heavenly

Jessie Marchesseau flies along one of the ziplines at Heavenly with Lake Tahoe in the distance. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

"*Zip on*" – it's a phrase being echoed through the trees at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

At speeds of 35 mph it's almost like Lake Tahoe is a blur of blue flying by. A series of seven ziplines and two sky bridges on the Skyway zipline tour are hidden in the woods; starting behind the Tamarack Lodge and finishing just below the midway station of the gondola. The longest being 950 feet.

On this particular day four members of the *Lake Tahoe News* team had an opportunity to tryout whatever we wanted at **Epic Discovery**, the summer playground Heavenly has created at the

top of the gondola.

None of us had been on the Skyway; in fact, this was a first for Jessie and Terra to experience any of the summer amenities. For Sue it was her inaugural time on a zipline.

There is no arguing this is an incredibly scenic and unique way to experience the Tahoe forest.

Sue Wood on belay as she descends the last tree platform. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It takes about three hours to complete the tour. This does not include getting the gear on and off. It definitely takes a

certain amount of fitness to even walk to the starting point with harness et al, and then to be able to pull yourself in on the line.

We took a little longer than usual because one person had to leave early and therefore be belayed from one of the tree platforms, and another didn’t stop correctly so she had to be pulled in by one of the guides.

A big shout out to Mikey and Jackson who were exceptional guides. Their instruction, patience and encouragement were outstanding.

After a bite to eat we took a spin down the tubing hill. While at the bottom it doesn’t look like much, it goes faster than you expect. Ask the attendants at the top for a spin to make it even more fun.

One of two bridges to cross along the Skyway zipline tour.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

While Jessie and I were up for doing more, we didn’t want to take the time it would to complete one of the ropes courses. We figured if there were a next time, we’d do the ropes course first and then one of the **zipline courses**. However, there is a limited number of people allowed on many of the apparatuses and some require reservations, so timing could be tricky.

Even though the Skyway had views of the lake, the **Silver Rush zipline** actually seems better because it has fewer (five ziplines, longest 1,510 feet). The seven seemed like too many, with a bit of redundancy.

Unfortunately, my favorite element of summer fun, the coaster, was not open that day, though it is now. It was closed all last summer because it had to be completely rebuilt after Mother Nature ripped it apart in the winter of 2016-17.

Tubing is one of the activities at the top of the gondola. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Before going make sure everything you want to do is operating. Just like in winter when Heavenly charges full price when a fraction of the mountain is open, in summer it's full price no matter the amenities that are functioning.

The three of us at the end assessed whether we would have paid the $199 each (fourth person is free) for what we did. No – was the answer. That fee included one of the zipline tours, three ropes courses, coaster, tubing, and rock climbing wall. Extra are the two single ziplines and the expedition tours. Yes, it was our choice not to do more. Maybe had we paid we would have found the gumption to go on one of the ropes courses. We called it day, still wondering if we would

recommend all of this to our out of town guests who would be arriving with disposable income for something like this.

Book review: ‘Permanent Vacation-2’ delights

By Kathryn Reed

Going to more than a dozen national parks in less than a week would normally be an exhausting undertaking. Not how I did it this summer.

“Permanent Vacation, Volume 2” (Bona Fide Books, 2018) is a compilation of 18 essays written by people who have lived or worked in a national park.

This version comes seven years after the **first volume** was released. In that book the essays were from West Coast parks.

The latest book is much broader, covering parks from Hawaii to Florida and points in between.

This is the first book released by the Meyers-based publishing house under current owner Maeko Bradshaw. The familiarity of

format and style makes it read like a sequel under the same leadership.

Of the 18, one writer is from South Lake Tahoe (Joseph Flower) and another from Truckee (Joseph Flannery). Combined, all of their stories paint a picture of the National Parks that the average visitor is never going to experience. Some tales are about how the experience changed the worker/writer.

An overriding theme in this volume seemed to be the solitude of the work, the remoteness of the location. This is hard to imagine for someone living in California near one of the busiest parks – Yosemite.

Some of the locales written about were places I hadn't heard of – like Isle Royale, Apostle Islands and Kenai Fjords. I enjoyed getting a glimpse into these areas, and learning something new about places I've been – like Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Grand Canyon and Everglades.

As with any collection of essays, some are more interesting than others. Fortunately, most are sure to captivate you. This is definitely a book you will want to put on your summer reading list.

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Note:

· It may be purchased **online** through Bona Fide Books for $15.

Project aims to reduce Mysis shrimp at Tahoe

Mysis shrimp were introduced to Lake Tahoe in the 1960s. Photo/Robin Li/ Seamor Marine Ltd.

By Tom Lotshaw

A UC Davis research team led by civil and environmental engineering professors Geoff Schladow and Alex Forrest, along with environmental science and policy Professor Steve Sadro, is working on a pilot project to test and optimize a strategy to reduce Mysis shrimp populations in Emerald Bay and Lake Tahoe.

Working with the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, the team aims to reduce the abundance of Mysis shrimp, one of Tahoe’s most ubiquitous invasive species, to levels where they no longer impact the ecosystem of the lake.

Mysis shrimp were deliberately introduced into Tahoe in the 1960s to provide a food source for lake trout and kokanee salmon, popular sport fish that had also been introduced.

“The Lake Tahoe ecosystem has changed dramatically in the last 50 years, and the importance of restoring ecological function of the lake’s native species in place of the invasive Mysis shrimp cannot be overstated,” Schladow said. “Our findings in Emerald Bay will be critical in developing a plan and strategy for Lake Tahoe.”

If the number of Mysis shrimp can be reduced, native zooplankton species like daphnia, which play a critical role in eating other, smaller native zooplankton species that can reduce lake clarity, will be able to recover to levels not seen since Mysis shrimp were established in the lake. That could lead to a significant improvement in water clarity—one of the long-term restoration goals for Lake Tahoe.

The research team is using real-time, remote sensing technologies to locate high-density patches of Mysis shrimp and map out the natural variability in the distribution and migration of these organisms throughout Emerald Bay. If successful, the technology and tools developed through this pilot project will be used to provide guidance for harvesting Mysis shrimp in the rest of the lake.

The use of underwater remote sensing draws on Forrest’s research experience with autonomous underwater vehicles as data collection platforms. If this pilot project is successful, the team will use similar platforms in the future in other parts of Lake Tahoe that can’t be surveyed using boat-based techniques.

“Applying emerging technologies and untethered, autonomous robotics enables an understanding of aquatic habitat and ecosystem assessment not available today,” Forrest said.

The California Tahoe Conservancy contributed $390,000 in

Proposition 1 funding and Nevada Division of State Lands provided $60,000 in federal funds through the Clean Water Act for this project.

Tom Lotshaw is the public information officer at TRPA. This was first published in the ***summer 2018 Tahoe In Depth.***

Classical musician returns to her mountain roots

Musician Lindsay McIntosh comes full circle as her career brings her back to the Sierra. Photo/Susan Wood

By Susan Wood

INCLINE VILLAGE – “If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere” from “New York, New York” could have been classical musician Lindsay McIntosh’s theme.

Catapulted from her humble beginnings in the Truckee High School band, McIntosh did make it in the Big Apple as the song implies – and then some.

At a mere age 34, the Julliard-trained oboist takes a lifetime of achievement to return home with her craft. Now as deputy

director of Classical Tahoe, she’s instrumental at staging the world-renowned summer music festival and institute to celebrate the arts for three weeks starting July 8 at Sierra Nevada College.

Big endeavor? Yes. But from her early days playing in the Truckee High School band onto a full scholarship at the world’s premier music school, she’s never shied away from a challenge, hard work and the dream to make and curate classical music.

Case in point – delving into her professional life may result in being handed three or more business cards.

Five years ago, McIntosh hit the fast track. She used her second year at Julliard to enhance her desire to lead and create musical events by founding New Vintage Baroque, an ensemble dedicated to historical instruments used to perform a 21st century repertoire.

She produced 25 programs, took in more than $100,000 in fundraising, established a board of directors, commissioned 17 world premiere performances, collaborated on three opera productions, recorded an album of original works on the VIA label and played in 75 performances in New York, Connecticut, California and the Netherlands.

From Truckee High Lindsay McIntosh went on to Julliard. Photo/Susan Wood

Four years later, the oboist took her decade of expertise to launch Coburn Music – which staged pop-up concerts in Truckee. It's SXSW in Austin meets the Sierra Nevada.

Her heavy involvement in the music world has given her a lot of insight, many contacts and much joy.

"My whole experience is rooted in hard work," McIntosh told *Lake Tahoe News* over coffee at her hangout blocks from her new home – the I.V. Coffee Lab.

The sense of accomplishment leads to her happiness.

"When I'm sitting there with an orchestra, I'm being a part of something bigger than myself. I can't create that without playing," she said.

She recalled growing up trying out different woodwind

instruments but wondered which one “would get me a job.” She was destined to play the oboe because, if anything, it required more than practice to perfect it. Oboists make their own reeds, adjusting their shapes to accommodate certain sounds.

Lindsay McIntosh in 2000 during a band-a-thon in Truckee. Photo/Provided

“There’s a lot of back pressure in oboes. You can either play it or you can’t,” she said, displaying a few she’s constructed from a special cane produced in France. “You either sound like an angel from heaven or a squawking duck.”

This was her assessment as she advanced from high school to an undergraduate program in Turlock to Boston University to Julliard.

So why return to a sleepy, small mountain town versus the lights of the city “that never sleeps?”

For all her accomplishments, McIntosh has a humble side – crediting her operatic husband, mother, high school bandleader, best friend and fellow musician as well as the Truckee community for helping her make her mark on the music world.

Julliard teaches more than how to be the best musician. A student takes classes in how to be a whole person, immersed in one's industry. There's even a class on how to behave during receptions.

"I never thought I'd leave New York. I was there for six years, but (the music scene) is oversaturated," she said. "I was connected to the music world in New York, but I wanted to give back."

It's almost like she knew all along she'd eventually come home to her roots. With creating the weeklong Coburn Music festival on a trip home last summer, her transcontinental outreach prompted her to bring home a handful of accomplished musicians in their own right to play at various Truckee venues. The experience put her in touch with Classical Tahoe Executive Director Karen Craig. Both admired each other's work from across the country.

When a job opening at Classical Tahoe came open on the day McIntosh was meeting with Craig's associate in New York, it was nothing short of serendipity.

Today, McIntosh couldn't imagine her professional life anywhere other than Classical Tahoe – where plans for making it a year-round venue are floating around.

"We went after each other. The bottom line is, either timing is everything or the stars were in line," Craig said of landing McIntosh. The oboist describes the experience the same way.

"What intrigued me the most is she was raised here. She's a

total go-getter who earned a scholarship from the top music school," she said.

Lindsay McIntosh at a Boston University recital. Photo/Provided

Craig added McIntosh's notable charisma, gifted talent and intrepid characteristics that have helped her seize "uncharted waters."

It's a long way from those early days in Truckee when McIntosh labored over music theory and stayed after school to practice her scales with bandleader David Green, who's now retired after 24 years.

"She's dedicated to what she does and gives it 110 percent," Green said of McIntosh. The teacher didn't know she would be so successful because she "had trouble with her rhythms," but "she worked really hard."

Her best friend and fellow musician in high school, Brandon Dolph, noticed the same traits. The two musicians never dated when they were young (he dated her best friend), but they were always there for each other. (McIntosh was a bridesmaid at Dolph's wedding.)

"Lindsay struggled. I helped her with her theory. This doesn't come naturally to some kids," said the trumpeter, who runs a Reno music shop. "She had to work harder. Because of that, she developed a work ethic that's tenacious."

One day, it all clicked. Then, McIntosh accelerated and "reached a level we can only dream of," he added. "I'm super happy she's home."

He intends to attend McIntosh's labor of love.

Classical Tahoe's summer music festival features 350 terraced seats with a diverse lineup of iconic experiences honoring legendary composers like Beethoven and Mozart and performed by musicians from the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony to the Seattle Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

As majestic as the music sounds in idyllic natural surroundings, Craig portrays the setting as intimate – quite a departure from the usual symphonic metro venues seating thousands of people.

TAMBA, partners busy building multi-use trails

By Amy Fish

Multi-use trails connect our communities to the forest, and the nonprofit Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association (TAMBA) and its public partners are working on trail projects that benefit public recreation and the environment at Lake Tahoe, harnessing the power of hundreds of volunteers.

TAMBA has formal partnerships with local land management agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, Nevada State Parks, California State Parks, and the City of South Lake Tahoe.

Through these partnerships and the nonprofit's dedicated volunteers, TAMBA is focused on improving outdoor recreation opportunities at Tahoe, connecting trails to communities, and ensuring Tahoe's trails are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Last year, TAMBA hosted 180 volunteer trail days with 8,700 volunteer hours of trail building and maintenance around Lake Tahoe.

South/West Shore projects

Valley View Trail: Volunteers rebuilt the lower section of the trail on Tahoe Mountain last spring after erosion from the massive winter swept out much of the trail. The new route contours the landscape, providing a more sustainable trail alignment.

Corral Trail: More jumps and berms were built on one of the most popular trails at Tahoe.

Angora Ridge/Fallen Leaf Lake Trail System: Volunteers built 5 miles of new trail in partnership with the Forest Service. This trail system is in the Angora Fire burn area and links the North Upper Truckee neighborhood to Angora Lake and Fallen Leaf Lake.

Bijou Bike Park: The jump lines and pump tracks were upgraded

keeping the 5-acre bike park in top shape. The bike park is owned and operated by the City of South Lake Tahoe and open to the public for free.

North Shore projects

Incline Flume Trail: TAMBA adopted and upgraded the trail in partnership with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Friends of Incline Trails, and the Tahoe Fund. This historic trail, known as “The Other Flume Trail,” connects Mount Rose Highway to Tunnel Creek Road with amazing Lake Tahoe views.

Elevator Shaft: The Tahoe City trail was rerouted and a new section of trail built to fix a 25-year-old erosion problem. The reroute allows bikers, hikers, and trail runners to access the Tahoe Rim Trail from the Tahoe City Nordic Center via a fun new single-track trail with panoramic views of Lake Tahoe.

Burton Creek State Park: TAMBA and state park crews worked together to build a new trail.

TAMBA has more major trail projects happening all around Lake Tahoe this season. A combination of paid crews and community volunteers are building the collective vision of connecting all communities to the trails.

2018 projects will include a new trail near Mount Rose and Tamarack Lake, improvements to the Kingsbury Stinger Trail, new trails near Fallen Leaf Lake and Angora Ridge, improvements to the Stanford Rock Trail, and a multi-use trail near Kings Beach.

For more information and to get involved, go **online**.

Amy Fish is a TAMBA board member. This was first published in the summer 2018 issue of Tahoe In Depth.

S. Lake Tahoe slow to make decision on pot tax

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe electeds have yet to commit to putting a question on the November ballot asking voters to tax marijuana.

Discussion on the topic filled the bulk of the July 2 City Council meeting. The special meeting was necessary because the city clerk didn’t properly do all the paperwork for the topic to be on the agenda at the last regular meeting.

The council is running out of time to make a decision in order for it to be on the Nov. 6 election. A decision is expected at the next regular council meeting, July 17. The council asked the consultant to bring back more information. Some of this has to do with how tourists were projected to contribute to revenue; some about how business fees would be recovered if development agreements go by the wayside. Also to be determined are the pros/cons of taxing microbusinesses as one entity versus breaking down the components of each. Some on the council also wanted a better handle on what expanding the legalization locally would cost the city, particularly the police, finance and planning departments.

Tim Cromartie with Hdl Companies, the company hired to provide recommendations for a tax initiative, gave an overview on what the various segments of the cannabis sector might garner based on various tax figures. He said the numbers provided would be good for two or three years.

Cromartie said the “pain point” for producers and consumers is

at about 30 percent before people will stick with the black market. This gives local municipalities little room because the state of California already assesses about 25 percent in taxes. That’s a combination of excise and sales taxes.

California is already having issues, with cannabis tax revenue only at about half of projections.

It’s also widely acknowledged that there is an oversupply of cannabis in the state, and elsewhere.

Cromartie said cultivation operations should be taxed based on square footage, not on quantity produced. This largely has to do with that method providing a consistent revenue stream and not relying on harvests, which can be variable. Plus, if the market bottoms out, the tax would not be affected if it’s based on the facility’s size.

The consultant’s proposed maximum rates:

- Cultivation, indoor, artificial lighting – $10/square foot
- Cultivation, indoor, mix lighting – $7/square foot
- Cultivation, outdoor – $4/square foot
- Cultivation, nursery – $2/square foot
- Testing laboratory – 2½ percent gross receipts
- Retailer – 6 percent gross receipts
- Distribution – 3 percent gross receipts
- Manufacturing – 4 percent gross receipts.

The firm suggested initial rates start lower.

Hdl estimates with four businesses the city could conservatively bring in between $217,000 and $350,000 a year

in taxes; with eight businesses between $435,000 and $700,000; and with 12 businesses between $616,000 and $996,000.

If voters were to approve a pot tax in November, it would become effective Jan. 1, 2019. It would require a simple majority to pass.

Pot was also one of the discussion items in closed session; specifically the lawsuit regarding Tahoe Wellness Cooperative. No reportable action was taken.

However, a change now for closed sessions is that only people who have business regarding the item are allowed behind closed doors. In the past the city clerk was allowed in these private meetings. This was even though no notes are supposedly kept. The council made this change last month.

Opinion: LTN owner says goodbye

By Kathryn Reed

Saying goodbye is never easy, but that's exactly what I'm doing.

After nine years of owning/operating *Lake Tahoe News*, it is time to move on. This will be the last month of the news site (unless it sells – **here is the listing**).

The coverage will be sporadic until the end of the month.

LTN started on Labor Day 2009 with the Jaycee Lee Dugard parade. What an introduction.

Every day since then we have been providing a variety of news. We have broken a slew of stories, often being the only publication to write about a topic. We weren't afraid to upset people, even advertisers. We were never bought by anyone. For our travel pieces we won multiple awards.

I'm proud to say we never charged for an obituary. We were innovative in how we eliminated the trolls by creating a policy to charge for comments – something I wish we'd done sooner. The nights when we picked who to endorse in the various political races were some of the best political discussions I've been involved in. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to be part of that important endeavor. The various series we did from the five-year anniversary of the 2007 Angora Fire, to South Lake Tahoe turning 50, to mental health, to looking at affordable housing in 2017 were accomplishments that everyone who was involved in them can look back on with pride. That is what true journalism is about.

So many of the stories we wrote were ideas provided by readers. You were wonderful sources. Some sent in tips, photos, asked about something that led to a story. It really was a group effort in so many ways.

It hasn't just been hard news. We published incredible feature stories on people, places and organizations – with more to come this month. We tried to provide a mix of stories, to be a community newspaper – just online. I believe we achieved that goal.

I started *Lake Tahoe News* because I was frustrated with all the news I knew was not getting published and couldn't imagine what I didn't know that should see the light of day. This is an incredibly rich area for news. I was never at a loss for something to cover; just disappointed not to be able to get to everything. Before *LTN* I had been freelancing for publications like the *Tahoe Mountain News, New York Times, Reuters* and *Sacramento Business Journal*. This was after being fired as

managing editor of the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* because I wouldn't blur the lines between advertising and editorial. I came to Tahoe from San Francisco where I had been an editor at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The *Trib* was where I started my journalism career as a reporter out of college.

There are so many people who have made *Lake Tahoe News* what it is. If it weren't for you readers, it wouldn't matter what we do every day. You have kept me going on days when I was ready to chuck the computer out the window. You made me realize what we were doing was worth it, that it was important, that we were making a difference.

And while all of that is still true, it is time for me to move on, to explore new challenges, pursue new dreams. I've been in the news business since graduating from college 30 years ago; even before that if you count high school and college papers as well as summer internships. The grind, especially these last nine years of working every day, has me wanting and needing to take a break.

I know it's always dangerous to start naming people because inevitably someone will be left out, but here goes. Sue Wood – thank you for being with *LTN* from the first story and to the end with more coming this month. Your words, counsel and support have been invaluable. Lisa Tolda was also there on Day 1, shooting the parade, and has been a stalwart supporter of true journalism; Kim Wyatt for endless conversations, being my go-to sounding board who talked me off the ledge so many times; Carolyn Wright for making me understand copyright law and upping the level of photography to a professionalism that is off the charts; Dave Gill for being my IT guru who saved me when the site had some serious technical troubles and who will be there until the end and beyond; Joann Eisenbrandt puts more time and research into a story compared to anyone I know; Jessie Marchesseau, Linda Conaboy and Terra Breeden who are still writing for *LTN* – covering a diverse lineup of stories that shows their range; Karen Kuentz who unfailingly provides

the weekly pet of the week even when out of town; Anne Knowles was there early on, covering mostly Douglas County issues before getting a full-time job elsewhere; Kat Hill who covered the North Shore before buying her own publication; Pat Banner who from Washington state reads *LTN* after the fact for typos and other corrections; Lisa Huard for your stint at selling ads; Denise Haerr for taking photos when I couldn't and providing so much cultural content; and the writing and photo interns who also taught me, with one being responsible for getting *LTN* on Instagram. I could go on and on about each person; they all deserve their own story about what they mean to me and the impact they've had on *Lake Tahoe News*.

I am so grateful to *LTN*'s advertisers. South Tahoe Refuse, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe Community College, Barton Health and the city of South Lake Tahoe took a chance on *Lake Tahoe News* in 2009 when none of us was really sure what the news site was going to be. They have continued to support *LTN* to this day. There were plenty of other advertisers through the years – thank you.

And thank you to the many individuals who donated to *LTN*, especially to those who did so with commenting not being the reason to do so. Your support of community journalism is admirable.

While I move on, I hope the void created by *Lake Tahoe News'* absence won't last long. There needs to be a watch dog. Without an informed citizenry, we all lose. Public agencies need to be held accountable. The public should demand accurate, unbiased new coverage – not merely settling for press releases being regurgitated or stories that favor chamber-backed businesses. It takes time, work and money to put out a publication. Support the media you read by buying an ad or telling an advertiser you saw their ad. When you see that donate button, don't ignore it; subscribe to publications, don't just read the allotted number of free articles and move on until the next month.

I leave being proud of what I created with *Lake Tahoe News*. We made a difference. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

Kae