

LTCC not replacing theater arts instructor

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College no longer has a full time theater arts instructor.

The college board earlier this month accepted the resignation of Susan Boulanger.

In an email to college faculty on Jan. 15, Boulanger wrote, "You know by now that I have decided to leave LTCC. I have given it a lot of thought, and I believe it is time for me to move on, to move forward. I don't know what is next – maybe it will be in So Cal, maybe somewhere else, maybe even Tahoe! I'm open to opportunities and trust that God is going to open the right doors for me."



Susan
Boulanger

Boulanger's job has been tenuous ever since **October 2016** when it became public that the college was thinking of disbanding the department. Public outcry and a community task force salvaged the department. The result included drastic changes to course offerings and the number of theater productions reduced from three to one.

Adjunct faculty are taking over the courses Boulanger was

slated to teach this quarter.

The spring production – the only performance the college was to have put on this academic year – will be overseen by Dave Hamilton, Boulanger's predecessor before she was hired in 2009. It is going to be a series of four one-act plays.

"It is well documented we were having challenges with demand in our theater program," LTCC President Jeff DeFranco told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Part of this was related to enrollment, part because of how the state a few years back changed how many times a person could take the same class.

DeFranco said the college does not intend to replace Boulanger. While it's possible current faculty could teach one of her classes, adjunct instructors are likely to fill the void. He said the college is committed to continuing to offer for credit classes, putting on one production a year, and partnering with the community so the theater is used more often. Examples of the latter include Valhalla staging a play at LTCC last fall and the "Vagina Monologues" coming in February for two nights.

The college looks to fill full time positions based on need instead of filling a vacancy with the same type of instructor. That is why the theater position is going by the wayside.

Last fall the board agreed to hire a full time wilderness education instructor. The hope is that position will be filled in late spring, with the person able to begin teaching in the summer.

There are more students on the wait list for wilderness classes than all other departments combined. That is reason alone to add staff. Plus, a full time person will be able to grow the department through additional classes.

"If we want to be a premier destination community college, let's move into that direction and provide true destination programs," DeFranco said. "We are trying to do more things to bring students to campus."

To that end, the board on Jan. 23 approved expanding the international program to attract more foreign students, as well as an outreach coordinator position.

A reason to target international students is per their visa they must take three in person classes per quarter. This greatly boosts enrollment.

The outreach person will be a recruiter of sorts as well as a liaison to local high schools.

Also on Tuesday night the board approved adding a full time political science/history instructor. That position has been vacant for two years.

Other staff changes include:

- Director of Institutional Effectiveness Jeremy Brown's last day was Jan. 12.
- Systems Administrator Bill King retired at the end of December.
- Instructional Dean Michelle Sower is scheduled to be on sabbatical in February and March.
- Faculty members Scott Lukas and Sara Pierce will be taking on the role of faculty on special assignment to help fill the leadership gaps on a temporary basis.
- Recruitment is under way for the director of Institutional Effectiveness.
- The administrative assistant to the dean's position is vacant.

· A program coordinator for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning is being sought; this is a grant-funded position.

Experts: More deadly mudslides inevitable

By Jeremy P. Jacobs, E&E News

MONTECITO – Experts analyzing the catastrophic mudslide that claimed 20 lives here say there's no doubt it will happen again.

The big question: Will the state and local governments act to reduce the risks created by development in mudslide-prone areas?

"California tries to lead by policy, but unfortunately, we make advancements by crisis. That is our history," said Susan Lien Longville, chairwoman of the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. "Every time there is a major flood event, we have task forces and we do studies."

Longville knows. She was part of a task force convened by the state Legislature following a 2003 mudslide that killed 16 people in San Bernardino. The task force drew up recommendations and a "model ordinance" that offered guidelines and requirements for development.

No county or city has adopted it.

Read the whole story

STR tired of trash scattered in neighborhoods

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Refuse is fed up with having to pick up after dozens of residents whose trash is everywhere but in a proper container.

Jeff Tillman, president of the South Lake Tahoe-based company, said consistently his crews have to deal with between 75 and 100 cleanups each of the five days they provide service on the South Shore.

"I'm tired of playing patty cake with them. It's time to hit them hard," Tillman told the South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority board last week.

His crews are directed to pick up whatever garbage isn't in a can. This takes time, and time is money.

Tillman admitted it's possible some people don't even know their trash has been strewn about – mostly likely by animals, with ravens being one of the biggest culprits. But he also knows that based on the repeat offenders "some of these people don't care."

STR changed its policy a few years ago to start trash collection at 7am. This was to stop people from putting out garbage the night before, which gave animals more opportunity to feast and make a mess. While this has helped, it has not solved all the problems.

Tillman was hoping the board would take on the enforcement arm if his company supplied evidence. His crews have cameras to

document the problem, with each occurrence being date stamped.

South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Douglas County are the member agencies of the waste management authority.

At the Jan. 19 meeting the board agreed to have STR come back with a proposed fee to assess violators, and for each member agency to devise a fee and appeal process. There are ordinances on the books now that can be used through code enforcement to tackle some of the issues. This additional fee for STR's efforts would go beyond that.

Tillman made it abundantly clear that he is not looking for another revenue source, but for the problem to go away and if doesn't, then for the violators to held accountable.

The board said it wants to be part of the solution, and respective staff said they'll work to make it happen.

There was talk of mandatory bear boxes for repeat offenders.

Here are samples of trash problems provided by Clean Tahoe, which also is tasked with litter issues.

Polystyrene ban could be broader than SLT

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council at its Feb. 6 meeting is expected to solidify its desires for a ban of polystyrene, also known as Styrofoam.

Four tiers are expected to presented to the electeds, who last

fall asked for staff to bring back details about what such a ban might look like.

Members of the South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority were given a preview of what the council will be presented. The idea is that perhaps a basinwide ban might be contemplated. This group's members are South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Douglas County.

It was suggested the presentation be made to the Local Government Committee of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency when it meets in Stateline at the end of February.

The tiers to be considered by the city include:

- Ban polystyrene single-use containers used for take-out food.
- Ban retail sales of polystyrene, which would include items like foam coolers and food containers.
- Ban all products using polystyrene on goods packaged outside the city limits like egg containers and trays meat comes on.
- Ban all polystyrene products at special events.

The latter is already part of the special use permit, so it would be included in any future ordinance or resolution the council comes up with.

Any combination of these ideas could be implemented.

Tracy Franklin, the city's communications guru, in her presentation on Jan. 19 said many restaurants are already using a biodegradable, sometimes compostable material for to-go containers. She has spoken with other eateries and explained how the price point is not much greater to make the transition.

More than 100 cities or counties in California already have some sort of ban on polystyrene. The material is bad for the environment and people's health, especially if they reheat the food in the container.

Franklin said in speaking with local retailers the response was that their corporate offices are already used to how Californians operate – meaning they will adapt if the city says certain goods can't be sold or used here.

She added that the Poultry Council is asking for a two-year grace period to work on coming up with a suitable alternative packaging material.

Officials with South Tahoe Refuse were at the Friday meeting. While they agreed polystyrene is not recyclable and does not breakdown, they want to make sure whatever is used next that there is a market for it.

Still, even if the "new" products can't be recycled, at least they will eventually breakdown at a landfill, something polystyrene will never do.

Despite legality of pot, stoned driving hard to detect

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

When a 22-year-old Hayward man allegedly slammed his Cadillac into a California Highway Patrol vehicle and killed Officer Andrew Camilleri on Christmas Eve, he was under the influence of alcohol and marijuana, officials said.

CHP reported that Mohammed Abraar Ali had a blood-alcohol

level of .11, above the state limit of .08 for motorists. While it's not clear how the agency documented Ali's cannabis consumption, he said he got high at a Christmas party, authorities said.

Proving intoxication from weed is more difficult than it is with alcohol, as law enforcement does not have a device like a breathalyzer for alcohol. Without such a tool, law enforcement must rely more on roadside sobriety tests.

Read the whole story

Government shutdown moderately impacts Tahoe

Note: *While the shutdown came to end late Monday, it could start all over again in three weeks.*

By Kathryn Reed

One of the casualties of the federal government shutdown is the impact on the meteorological conference taking place on the South Shore.

"We lost two speakers who were going to discuss fire safety issues and updates—a meaningful topic in light of Napa/Sonoma and SoCal fires. We adjusted and had another speaker talk about potential effects of shut down on weather issues," Phil Weidinger with Weidinger Public Relations told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The shutdown that started last week is fluid in that lawmakers are continuing to negotiate a deal that could resolve the situation at any time. Tied to the funding measure and

complicating matters is the issue of immigration.

The U.S. Forest Service is the major government agency in the Lake Tahoe Basin. All employees were told to report to work on Monday. However, most employees will be told to go home, with law enforcement staying on. For others there are protocols to adhere to before they can turn off the office lights.

As with past shutdowns, federal government workers are not guaranteed a paycheck while not working. It is essentially forced time off without pay and without knowing when they'll be ordered back to work.

Congress members, though, continue to get paid even though they are the ones who caused the shutdown.

One agency still open is the U.S. Coast Guard in Tahoe City. "We're always open," is what they told *Lake Tahoe News*.

South Lake Tahoe has a local FBI office.

"All FBI agents and support personnel in field offices are excepted from furlough. Select personnel at FBI headquarters will be designated as excepted to provide direction and investigative support to all field operations and select headquarters functions," FBI officials said in a statement.

Carl Hasty with the Tahoe Transportation District said of the shutdown, "It affects us, but at this time it does not directly affect our bus service." There can be delays in processing requests and other administrative steps.

The shutdown is not affecting the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's day-to-day work.

If a project involved a federal partner, communication has stopped. That's the case, though, for all entities dealing with the feds.

Douglas County will "monitor the situation as it unfolds,"

according to County Manager Larry Werner. He told *Lake Tahoe News* at this point there are no known impacts locally.

In the early stages the shutdown should not be problematic for any local jurisdiction.

SLT warm room proving to be a good neighbor

By Kathryn Reed

All the angst about the warm room in South Lake Tahoe opening on Rufus Allen Boulevard was for naught.

The seasonal overnight shelter, now in its third year, is just another business in the neighborhood. Even though some **residents last month balked** at the idea of having “these people” be so close, the fears have not come to fruition.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District’s board received an update about the facility at its meeting last week. Bus stops and facilities are nearby. Plus, the local Boys & Girls Club chapter is at the old Al Tahoe school site, still owned by the district.

Jude Wood, who runs the after school program, told the board there have been no issues with warm room guests. In fact, she expressed how she would rather explain to her children and those she cares for that the person walking down the street is someone the community is trying to help, instead of seeing someone sleeping on the lawn at St. Theresa’s and telling the child the community had turned its back on that person.

This year the warm room is operating in a building owned by

the city of South Lake Tahoe that most recently housed Unity at the Lake church.

The district has been part of the solution by putting in better security at the Al Tahoe building so warm room clientele can't just wonder in.

Rachel Yaker and Annie Davidson with Tahoe Homeless Coalition made a formal presentation to the board, outlining the proactive measures undertaken to make sure everyone feels secure. In large part it has to do with the hours – when people can arrive and leave. Security has been hired as well.

This week Tahoe Homeless Coalition volunteers will be training employees at the recreation center and ice rink about how to handle this clientele.

These people were already in the area. The library is a common place for people to hang out during the day if they don't have a home to go to.

The fact that Bread & Broth has been in operation for 29 years down at the street at the Catholic Church without a problem for the neighborhood says a lot. It's not unusual for those diners to queue up an hour before the doors open.

The fact that no one spoke against the warm room at the Jan. 16 meeting, or simply brought up a concern speaks volumes for how well the facility has addressed the apprehension of the naysayers from just a month ago.

While the warm room advocates would like to find a permanent facility, funds have not allowed that happen. Plus, it's a seasonal operation, so that can be an issue with securing the same rental year-in and year-out.

Tax overhaul a blow to affordable housing efforts

By Conor Dougherty, New York Times

The last time that Congress approved a sweeping overhaul of the federal tax code, in 1986, it created a tax credit meant to encourage the private sector to invest in affordable housing. It has grown into a \$9 billion-a-year social program that has funded the construction of some three million apartments for low-income residents.

But the Republican tax plan approved last month amounts to a vast cutback, making it much less likely that such construction will continue apace. Because the tax rate for corporations has been lowered, the value of the credits – which corporations get in return for their investments – is also lower.

“It’s the greatest shock to the affordable-housing system since the Great Recession,” said Michael Novogradac, managing partner of Novogradac & Company, a national accounting firm based in San Francisco.

[Read the whole story](#)

This year’s flu exposes flaws in medical system

By Morten Wendelbo and Christine Crudo Blackburn, The Conversation

Flu season in the U.S. typically peaks in February, but this year's outbreak is already one of the worst on record. As of Jan. 6, 20 children have died from the flu, and overall mortality caused by the flu is already double that of last year's.

One reason the flu is so severe this season is that the dominant strain is H3N2, which has an impressive ability to mutate and is particularly aggressive against Americans over 50.

Making the threat worse is the fact that most of the IV saline bags used in common medical treatments and procedures – including severe cases of the flu – are made in Puerto Rico, which is still reeling from Hurricane Maria. Hospitals in some areas around the country that are operating at or above capacity because of the flu are quickly running low on saline, resorting to time-consuming and potentially dangerous treatments of patients.

The IV saline shortage is unlikely to cause a life-threatening breakdown of medical treatments. But the shortage does expose a dangerous flaw in the medical supply chains that everyone relies on to counter disease outbreaks or bioterrorism. Many different types of important medical equipment and medicines either come from abroad or rely on a single producer.

Global supply chains

Globalization has changed the way we produce, transport and store almost anything, including medicines and medical supplies. Now that it's inexpensive to transport goods, many can be easily produced abroad at substantially lower costs. In nearly all cases, that benefits producers and consumers alike.

For the medical industry, approximately 80 percent of all pharmaceuticals used by Americans are produced overseas. The majority of this production takes place in China and India.

Forty-three percent of saline in the U.S. comes from Puerto Rico. The U.S. was already running below optimal levels of saline when Hurricane Maria hit.

Rapid transportation of goods also allows most industries to rely on “just in time” deliveries. That means goods arrive only shortly before they are needed, rather than arriving in large shipments.

In most situations, and for most goods, that causes few issues. However, when there’s an insufficient stockpile, delivery delays can be life-threatening. Many of our hospitals receive shipments of critical pharmaceuticals three times a day.

Unhappy coincidences

As researchers studying how countries can prepare for disease and disasters, it’s clear to us that the IV saline shortage is just the tip of a gigantic iceberg.

There are two ways the “just in time” system can be disrupted: an unexpected surge in demand or a delay in delivery. In this case, both occurred simultaneously. The U.S. is dealing with an unusually potent strain of the flu, while Hurricane Maria brought production in Puerto Rico to a grinding halt. If only one of the two had occurred, it’s unlikely the U.S. would have experienced a shortage.

Now, hospitals overrun with flu patients have to turn to alternatives to IV saline. One is an IV push procedure, in which medications are manually “pushed” into the IV line. This can be deadly if not done correctly.

In the case of IV saline, the simultaneous occurrence of both demand and delay was accidental. Unfortunately, it’s not only possible that such confluence will occur in the future – it’s likely. In the case of pandemics or biological warfare, there will likely be both a surge in demand for important goods and

a simultaneous disruption of production and delivery.

If a pandemic disease severely affected China or India, where large shares of medicines come from, production could be knocked out or slowed. That would leave the rest of the world vulnerable to the disease's spread, because there would be no supply of crucial medicines to combat it. The 1918 influenza pandemic caused disruptions that prevented coal from being delivered to the northeastern U.S. That left some without heat in the height of winter, causing people to freeze to death and compounding the deadly pandemic.

Today, such a breakdown could leave hospitals and other crucial infrastructure without electricity. If the spread of the disease is intentional, as in cases of bioterrorism or bio-warfare, adversaries could target global supplies of crucial treatments.

Preparing for problems

The destruction in Puerto Rico and the impact it has had on the supply of small IV saline bags in American hospitals is a warning. This time, it's IV saline. Next time, it might be electricity to run intensive care units or critical antibiotics to treat infections.

Global supply chains are a massive puzzle, but public health and emergency preparedness officials need to, at a minimum, understand every link in the chain of critical goods. Without a thorough understanding of the supply chain, it's difficult to preempt problems that could arise in times of emergency. Hospitals and other crucial infrastructure, such as power plants and the transportation industry, may want to diversify their suppliers of critical goods and encourage those suppliers to not focus production in a single area, especially not to an area prone to natural disaster. A final, but far more costly, option is to ensure we can produce most of these goods domestically in times of emergency.

In our view, the solution depends on a partnership between government and industry. Federal, state and local governments have to alter procedures, but private companies involved in the production and delivery of critical goods have to plan ahead for emergencies.

If these weaknesses in our global supply chains are not addressed, especially as they relates to medical supplies, pharmaceuticals and other critical goods, we are headed for disaster.

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Opinion: March to the Polls – it matters

Publisher's note: *This is South Lake Tahoe Mayor Wendy David's speech at the Jan. 20 women's march.*



South Lake Tahoe Mayor Wendy David rallies hundreds on Jan. 20 to make sure they vote to make their voices heard. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Wendy David

When I was 16, the 1964 Republican National Convention was held at the Cow Palace near San Francisco. The Republican presidential candidate was Barry Goldwater, running against Lyndon Johnson.

Now I can remember very little about the speeches, the platforms, the protests, but I can remember being on the floor (I was a floor page, a helper) and the excitement, everyone covered in the pins of their favorite candidate, the signs bopping up and down all over this cavernous, livestock arena, like they were actual human beings, jumping up and down. I can't actually remember why I got to go, but it was an experience never to be forgotten by this 16-year-old girl.

President Kennedy had been assassinated the November before

the convention. There were civil rights protests going on. Protesters, civil rights activists, were being ejected from the convention. I had never seen anything like it.

I tell this story because it set in motion for me a life of never, never, ever missing the right and gift of the opportunity to vote. Never!

I had to be 21 to vote. Heck, by then I was already married with one child and three weeks overdue with the next.

In 1972, I got to vote in my first presidential race, which didn't turn out so well for me. Richard Nixon won with 520 electoral votes to George McGovern's 17. Now that I think of it, it ultimately did not turn out well for Nixon either.

But, still I voted.

I ask myself, what is different today, from 44 years ago. Were we more compelled to vote because of the times of radical change? Was it President Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy all being assassinated before our eyes? Was it the Vietnam War, the unjustness of our friends being injured or killed for what? Where was the reason? Was it that our parents' generation had just fought in WWII, literally preserving our free world. I know my dad was in Europe for the first four years of my parents' marriage.

Whatever it was, we voted, we voted, we voted. We voted for democracy, equality for all races, equal rights in solidarity with all our heroes that fought much more publicly than us! Other women encouraged us as women to stand up, to sit in, to burn our bras! Or just not wear these contraptions to begin with! That alone was a freedom.

Seriously, could all of these freedoms voted for, marched for, sacrificed for, be at risk? Unbelievably, yes. Can we change this? With our vote, yes we can!

Voting is the right we were given by our nation's fathers and then mothers for us as men and women, preserved and protected for us by generations that have fought for these rights.

When the precious right to vote is taken for granted, ignored, or forgotten, while knowing it is vital and integral to who will lead us, and determines how we will be taxed and supported through our government, how health care will be delivered and protected for all and how we fund public education and those that seek a higher education to better themselves, support their families and make the United States a better country, it is time act.

When we are complacent, women's rights, equal rights, human rights suffer. We stand together today because we can no longer afford to let others decide, others vote, others change the progress of the last decades.

Just an aside, our last local election, the vote for our roads initiative, a mere 22 percent of registered voters, voted. One minute, one item on the ballot, one check mark, one decision forfeited to others when we do not vote!

I was fortunate to be able to travel to Kenya in 2012. It was presidential election time in Kenya. Kenya has extreme corruption in its leadership, the government misappropriating funds allocated to the public schools, for roads, for infrastructure. As we rode in our bus through the little villages on voting day, we saw hundreds of Kenyans walking along the most desolate dirt roads, miles and miles from their huts, dressed in their best, brightest robes and tunics, scarves and skirts, in stark contrast to the dry and barren landscape. Heads high with hope for a better future, they were walking to their polls, an all day walk to vote. They have a very high voting percentage in Kenya, much higher than here in the U.S.

Our walk is shorter; our resolve must be even stronger.

One year ago our first women's march joined hundreds of thousands across the nation to march as well. A march has a purpose, to move forward with resolve, to make a difference and to do it publicly, proudly gaining strength from all others that have joined. Last year we marched in solidarity for our democracy, for our country, committing to each other to make a positive difference where we live.

One year later, and oh, what a year it has been, we march again. We walk with purpose. The theme of this year's march is March to the Polls. Our power has always been our vote. We must march to the polls, educate, contribute, speak up and speak out with our vote, encourage women to run for office, elect women to office, ensure that there is not one elected official anywhere, anymore that has ever used their power to sexually abuse women, has bragged about their stature, has attempted to role back almost 50 years of progression. We must vote to ensure that our nation of immigrants, for we are a nation of immigrants, continues to welcome the huddled masses, yearning to be free.

The time really is up. Time is up for being complacent, waiting for others to lead. We cannot be lazy, tired, ignorant or uninformed. We cannot be quiet. The time is up for being quiet!

One year from the first Women's March has been a year nothing short of beyond belief. The Me Too movement exposed and kicked sexual abuse in the workplace, government, entertainment, and professional sports out of the darkness and into the light. And it has been glaring! We are here to make sure that no woman or girl ever experiences this evil darkness again.

We can do so much. We have amazing, engaged people. Look at the power here today. Let's band together in electing qualified progressive leaders and if there are good women (and there are), support them as they lead locally so that someday, they may lead us nationally.

Time is up for standing by, for keeping mute, for tolerating less in our leadership. We must continue to march to the voting polls, and by doing so, refuse to tolerate racism, sexism, cronyism and ever, ever supporting or tolerating a candidate that does not respect all women, all races, all colors, all religions, all ethnicities, all genders and the equal rights given to all citizens of the United States. The time was up for that when this nation was formed ... we must preserve it.

I am so proud to be here with all of you. Today you are already making 2018 a year of change. Women all over the United States are saying enough! Let us continue to support each other. Time is up, it is a new time, this is our time!