Letter: Ask the voters about the loop road

To the community,

There have been a number of news reports about the TTD's South Shore Community Revitalization Project, commonly referred to as the loop road, where the proposals include the relocation of Highway 50, and the reduction of lanes in the casino core area. If approved, the construction to implement this project, will include the removal of about 75 residential properties in the Stateline area and a number of commercial businesses.



Bruce Grego

At this stage additional public hearings are occurring, but I have no doubt that some version of the Loop Road will be supported by the TTD and Nevada chamber. The question is how will the city of South Lake Tahoe respond. Shall the decision making process be limited to additional public hearings and polls? We have seen how government can fail to "read" public opinion concerning important land use planning proposals. How certain was the city of South Lake Tahoe when it implemented the paid parking program a couple of years ago? It conducted a number of public hearings where it interpreted public sentiment in support of this program, this interpretation was supported by City funded surveys. Yet, when offered a choice, nearly 70 percent of the voters reject this project with Measure P.

Paid parking was reversed by the voters in our community and it required that the city take down the parking meters. The loop road, once implemented, cannot be so easily reversed. Once residential and commercial properties are torn down, there is no going back.

The best measurement of public support in our community is the ballot box, not public hearings and not polls or surveys. We need to have this question placed on the ballot. “Shall the city of South Lake Tahoe support the loop road project.” Yes or no. Should we the people make this choice?”

Bruce Grego, South Lake Tahoe

Letter: STHS Grad Night thank you

To the community,

The South Tahoe High Sober Grad Night Task Force would like to thank the following businesses and individuals who helped make our annual event for the graduating seniors such a success. The kids loved the evening and it couldn’t have been made possible if you weren’t a part of it.

Once again, Heavenly Mountain Resort and the Vail Resorts Epic Promise Grant Program gave us a venue that is second to none. Thanks to Ed Cook Tree Service, Thomas Haen Co., California Highway Patrol, BlueGo, South Tahoe Refuse Co., Lake Valley Fire Department, El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, STAR Volunteers and the South Lake

Tahoe Fire Department, they all gave us their valuable time and support.

Many thanks to the following businesses and families:

7-Eleven (Emerald Bay), A & M Construction, AAA Roofing, AAds-Myers Inc., Adventure Mountain Lake Tahoe, Ahern, Aloha Ice Cream , Alpine Family Practice, Altitude Salon, Americana Vacation Club, Anderson Bike Rentals, Applebees, Artifacts, Jon and Cecilia Bachelder, Baja Fresh, Steve and Barbara Bannar, Barton Memorial Hospital, Base Camp Hotel, Base Camp Pizza Company, Beach Hut Deli, Beach Retreat and Lodge at Lake Tahoe, Bear Beach Café, Bed Bath and Beyond, Bert's Café, Big 5 Sporting Goods, Bio Spirit Day Spa, Bliss Skin Care Studio, Blue Angel Café, Blue Dog Gourmet Pizza, Bohemian Beads
Melissa Bornstein, Boulder Exterminators, Boyd's Barber, Brewery at Lake Tahoe, Peter and Julie Butler, Butter Muffin, Cabin Fever, Café Fiore, Cakes by Grace, CalStar, Camp Richardson & Beacon, Carina's Vacation Home, Carpenters Local Union #1789, Casey's, CC Pirates, Chevy's, Champion Floors to Go, Cloutier Enterprises, Rudy's Plumbing and Heating, Cold Stone Creamery, Ed and Susan Cook, Robert Comlossy, Jay Conroy, Party Guy Extraordinaire, Costco Wholesale, Coyote Grill, Crystal Bridge, Crystal Dairy, Cut Loose Hair Design, Davey Paiva Realty, Deanna Maddox Brothers DDS, June Denny, Deputy Sheriffs Association of El Dorado County, Divided Sky, DIY Home Center, Domino's Pizza, Downtown Café, Edgewood Companies, El Dorado Community Foundation, El Dorado Savings Bank, Eliot Building Company, Emerald Bay Center for Women's Health, Escobar Training Center, Fasta Pasta, Feldman, McLaughlin & Thiel, Fragrance Vault Free Bird Café, Freshies, Frito Lay, Gaia-licious Global Gifts, Genasci & Stigers DDS, Getaway Café, Gift Shop of Lake Tahoe, Goodfella's Pizza, Grand Central Pizza and Pasta, Grocery Outlet, Gunbarrel Tavern & Eatery, Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Hatch Electric, Heaven Scent Salon, Heavenly

Village Cinema, Holmgren's Tree Service, Indigo Hair Studio, Ted and Amy Jackson, Jamba Juice, Jill's Classic Cabinetry-Jill Berg, John Dalton Construction, Jon Hetherton Insurance, Joseph Tillson Attorney at Law, Joy's Looking Good, Just Kuts, Kahle Community Center, Kalani's, Lauri Kemper, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Nancy Kerry, Kevin Cassidy DDS, Kiwanis Club of South Lake Tahoe, Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra, Lake Monster Tattoo & Body Piercing, Lake of the Sky Outfitters, Lake Tahoe Education Foundation, Lake Tahoe Golf Course, Lake Tahoe Hi-Lo's 4WD Club, Lake Tahoe Holidays, Lake Tahoe Ice Arena, Lake Tahoe Pizza Company, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, Lake Tahoe Yoga, Lakeside Napa Auto Parts, Noah Largent, Lavender Hair Design, League to Save Lake Tahoe, Les Schwab Tires, Lilly's Tire Service, Los Mexicanos Restaurant, Lovin Lake Tahoe, Loyal Order of Moose South Lake Tahoe Lodge #1632, Luigi's Tahoe Pizzeria, MacDuff's Public House, Magic Carpet Golf, Mary's Draperies and Interior Design, Mike and Lori McKeen, McP's Tap House, Menegon's Ace Hardware, Michael's Hair Salon, MontBleu Resort Casino, Ross Molesworth SLTPD, Mountain Yoga, Nel's Tahoe Supply, Jackie Nelson, Nikki's Chaat Café, Novasel and Schwarte Investments, Off the Hook, Orchids Authentic Thai, Overland Meat Company, Pamela Pilates, Paradise Beauty Supply, Paradise Nail & Spa, Payne's Massage, Pepsi Bottling Company, Pier Sun Tanning, Port of Subs, Preston Development, Primo's Italian Bistro, Pro-Clean – Audie Leonard, Pro Leisure, Rear View Miracles, Red Hut, Redwood Printing, Remember Us Too, Riva Grill, Revive Tahoe, Richard T. Jones III Construction, Paul and Cookie Rork, Douglas and Diane Rosner, Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe, Round Table Pizza. Rude Brother's Bagel & Coffee Haus, Safeway Food and Drug

Salon be Savvy, Catherine Schoen, Rebecca Schwebke, Scotty's Hardware, Sessions Salon, Kelly Shanahan, Sidestreet Boutique, Sierra Athletic Club, Sierra Community Church Young Adult Group, Sierra Ski and Cycle Works, Sierra Tahoe Vacation Resort/Lodge at Lake Tahoe, Sierra Windows & Doors, Simpson's

Jewelers, South Lake Tahoe Parks & Recreation, Soroptimists International of Tahoe Sierra, South Lake Tahoe Educators Association, South Lake Tahoe Optimist Club, South Lake Tahoe Police Officers Association, South Shore Bikes, South Tahoe Educators Association, South Tahoe Refuse, South Tahoe Stand Up Paddle, Sprouts, Staples, Starbucks at the Y, Stardust Tahoe Management, Stardust Vacation Club, STHS Booster Club, Christopher and Mary Strohm, Studio 4, Styles 4 Less, Sublime Beauty, Sunsational Tans, SUP Tahoe, Sushi Pier Tahoe, Tahoe Basics, Tahoe Bowl, Tahoe Douglas Elks Lodge No. 2670, Tahoe Fracture and Orthopedic Medical Clinic, Tahoe Girl, Tahoe Hair Co., Tahoe Hula Hoops, Tahoe Key's Delicatessen, Tahoe Paradise Golf Course, Tahoe Quick Lube, Tahoe Rock n' Ride, Tahoe Sand & Gravel, Tahoe Seasons Resort, Tahoe Sports Ltd., Tahoe Toys & Treasures, Tahoe Turning Point, Tahoe Valley Pharmacy, Tahoe's LED Glow Store, Taqueria Jalisco, The Bead Store – Phyllis Palmieri, The Spot, TJ Maxx, Toast Tahoe, U.S. Bank, Video Library, Village Board Shop, Vinny's Pizzeria, Walmart, Curtis and Holly Warren,Wattabike, Frederick Wenck DDS, What a Girl Wants, Wildwood DIY Boutique, William Cherry and Associates, Women of the Moose Chapter 408, Yellow Submarine Sandwiches, Zephyr Cove Resort and Lake Tahoe Cruises, and Caral Zezula … and all of the awesome community volunteers who donated their time and talents.

Paula Petterson, committee member

Letter: Need help finding

stolen fishing equipment

To the community,

Horseshoe Bar Fish and Game Preserve, which is near Forestville, is devastated to announce that thieves broke into our storage area where we house our equipment for the Wounded Warrior Event that is held the first week in October every year. Finding out that someone felt they needed to steal from these veterans is heart breaking. It is like stealing from a church or organization that helps those less fortunate of our community.

This break-in will set us back many years as the amount of equipment they stole exceeds $25,000 and was not insured. Much of the equipment has the initials HBP written on it. Only the veterans that attended our events or members of Horseshoe Bar Preserve would have equipment with the "HBP" letters printed on it. Some of the rods were made by Bill Carnazzo and had his name printed on the rods. Many of the waders had the size printed in black felt pen. If you see this equipment being sold, do not say anything or accuse anyone. Please contact us immediately at 916.205.6073 or the sheriff's department and let them know you believe it may have been equipment stolen from Horseshoe Bar Preserve in Placer County Sheriff's Office report No. 15-11343.

It has taken years to gather up all the equipment we need for the event. Volunteers have put in hundreds of hours raising funds and helping to acquire the equipment that is needed to hold the event. We also provide the veterans with the same equipment when the event is over. Each veteran is given a complete fly fishing outfit with all the flies and equipment needed to continue fly fishing including boots, waders, fly rod and reel, plus the vest/chest packs that have all the supplies needed to fly fish. The fly boxes have over 100 flies in them to allow the veteran to fish anywhere in the

country.

Over the eight years that this event has been held we have helped rehabilitate seriously wounded veterans by teaching them how to fly fish while staying in our campground along the river for four to five days. Literally all of the veterans who have attended our event have said that learning how to fly fish has changed their lives and their families' lives in so many ways. As one of the vet's wives said to me this year, "My husband looks forward to being able to go fly fishing every week, and when he returns he is a different person. You can see it in how he seems content and truly excited to tell me how he did and how he was able to forget about his injuries. Your program has changes our entire families' lives for the better."

Participating and volunteering in our event is incredibly humbling as you are involved in helping these veterans deal with a wide variety of physical and mental injuries. It is one thing to hear about their injuries and another to actually live with the vets for five days. You get a firsthand view of seeing what they go through on a daily basis. You also are humbled by their attitude and desire to be treated as if they had not been injured. Many of these vets refuse to use handicap placards in their cars because they do not view themselves as being handicapped, even though they are missing limbs and suffering serious nerve and brain injuries.

If you would like to help us replenish the equipment that was stolen, please contact us at hbp@surewest.net , 916.205.6073 or go to our **website** where you can make a donation. The 501-3C number is 27-4671121.

Thomas G.M. Bartos, president and founder Horseshoe Bar Fish and Game Preserve

Opinion: We need an app to deal with politicians

By Joe Mathews

California-based companies like Uber and Airbnb claim to be remaking the world according to the values of sharing and the Silicon Valley magic of leveraging empowering networks. But in politics, they've disappointed, confining themselves to narrow lobbying for less regulation of their companies.

So I hereby—in all modesty—offer a proposal. To democratize our politics, we need an Uber that connects us more closely to politicians in the language they understand best: money.



Joe Mathews

The political-influence business—from campaign finance to lobbying—is an industry not unlike taxis or hotels: a regulated monopoly that serves too few people at too high a cost. Government is so complicated that, when we need something from it, it's awfully hard to know, without an expensive lobbyist on retainer, whom to approach. And buying access has become more costly, so fewer people and interests account for more of our campaign donations.

In California, the problem is particularly severe, since we

have so many billionaires who can buy access, and so few politicians. California's state senators, for example, represent 10 times more people than the national average.

But don't be frustrated. This is the perfect opportunity for a Silicon Valley solution!

Here is the key insight: Most of us don't need to own a politician. But almost everyone has moments when it would be helpful to rent one. I propose a new app, Rent-A-Pol, to eliminate this inefficiency and allow millions of more people to buy the access and political favors they need.

It's very much like hailing a ride from Uber. You have a moment when you require help from a politician or government official—maybe you'd like the right pol to write you a letter, return your call, fight a regulation that's troubling your business, call a hearing to examine an important issue, or introduce legislation you've drafted. So you use the app to inform politicians of your needs, and then government officials and their aides let you know what the price will be—either in campaign donations or government fees.

Sure, we'd have to tweak existing laws that define and criminalize corruption, but the end result would be more efficient, and transparently honest, than the disingenuous status quo in which pols do what their big donors want, and everyone denies any causality.

The winners under Rent-A-Pol won't just be the citizens who get what they want or the politicians who get more campaign money from a broader base. We all win, because of the system's outright transparency. We'd be able to see the exact price it takes to accomplish certain official actions.

Rent-A-Pol would provide accountability for these transactions via a 360-degree rating system. Not only could citizens rate their rented pols—like you can currently rate your Uber driver—but pols would also be able to rate their influence-

seeking customers, based on the reasonableness of their demands. These ratings are game changers—they should make citizens more reasonable and politicians more responsive to our needs.

And Rent-A-Pol would be good for the state budget. The data from the app's transactions could guide state fiscal policymakers as they try to more accurately price the government's own fees for various services. The state could also take a small cut of each transaction for the general fund (in a way similar to proposed taxes on marijuana favored by legalization advocates); that money might go to programs designed to boost citizen participation in the political process.

OK, let's face one hard fact: Despite all the ways that Rent-A-Pol would serve to reform, some brain-dead good government types will yell and moan that this noble technological advance would condone bribery, and worsen the state of our politics. Instead of letting technology make our politics more responsive, these old-school types keep demanding new regulations, most recently with a new ballot initiative that could add to the costs of compliance and thus extend the influence-peddling monopoly of the rich.

I'm sorry, but the notion that government is not for sale is pretense. And everyone knows those anti-corruption laws we'd be tweaking are badly outdated—many of them are part of the same early 20th century reform movements as the health, occupational safety, and labor laws that Uber and Airbnb have so easily flouted. Plus, do you really believe a U.S. Supreme Court that says money is a form of speech is going to disallow the Rent-A-Pol app?

Silicon Valley's revolutionary technologies are all about disrupting old industries by leveling the playing field, cutting out parasitic middlemen, and empowering individuals. That's the promise of Rent-A-Pol; for one thing, the app has

the potential to decimate California's ever-growing lobbying industry.

The rich already buy what they want from government. Why not the rest of us?

Joe Mathews is California and innovation editor for Zócalo Public Square, for which he writes the Connecting California column.

Letter: Tahoe Cross Country shares appreciation

To the community,

The snow is falling. Temperatures are staying cold. We're scraping storage wax off skis and readying our machines for opening day. Winter is coming and Tahoe Cross Country is ready.

Thanks to you, the community, Tahoe City PUD, California State Parks and California Tahoe Conservancy we are venturing into 2016 with our facilities staffed, stocked, and ready to ski. This is undoubtedly thanks to your donations.

In January 2015, we initiated a Low Snow Fundraising Campaign with a goal of raising $80,000 to cover operating fees and general costs. Our supporters answered our call, but we only raised $57,192; leaving us shy of our needed funds. Inspired by this deficit, one anonymous donor challenged the community again. If we raised $40,000, this donor would match it, all or nothing. On August 14, 2015 we launched our Matching Funds Campaign and within three months individuals including full-

time residents, homeowners, visitors from as far away as Washington, Arizona, Wyoming, Florida and beyond donated anywhere from $1 to hundreds of dollars. We exceeded our goal and now have $48,883 as down payment for our future grooming machine, plus the additional matched $40,000 to help cover general costs. In 2015, this community raised a total of $146,075 for Tahoe Cross Country and we cannot thank you enough.

TXC and the Taheo City Winter Sports Park serve thousands of residents and visitors every year and it is our intention and privilege to continue to do so. Not only have you donated when we truly needed it, but the Tahoe City Public Utility District funded us $28,000 in late October to cover utilities, insurance, snowplow and other facility expenses. Additionally, the TCPUD approached the California State Parks on our behalf and both the California State Parks and the Tahoe Conservancy waived last winter's trail fees, saving TXC an estimated $12,000 in fees.

Our ability to promote nordic skiing to youths and adults alike is augmented by the outstanding generosity of our community. It is why we reached as far as we had to and why so many individuals stepped up to support us. For this, we thank you. And we'd like to invite you to our Pass Holder Appreciation Party on Dec. 6 at Jake's on the Lake.

The best way to continue supporting TXC is to buy a season pass, buy a day pass, buy a pass for your dog, your neighbor, your kids. From the board of directors, the management and staff, thank you for supporting Tahoe Cross Country and we'll see you out on those perfectly groomed trails!

Most sincerely,

The board of directors, management and dtaff of Tahoe Cross Country

Letter: Rethinking Hwy. 50 realignment

To the community,

Regarding the Stateline loop road project. I personally don't like the loop road concept of moving traffic around the casinos, uprooting business and people from their homes. And by realigning Highway 50 after tearing town homes for the move, you now have the remaining homes that were in a quiet setting now next to the new Highway 50. It doesn't seem like the right thing to do.



Les Wright

I would prefer we spend the money and do the job right. In my opinion the right way to do it is to put through traffic underground starting somewhere around Tahoe Meadows and exiting before Kingsbury Grade.

That would mean cutting through the Harrah's to Harveys pedestrian underpass for the underground Highway 50 road. The casinos should then be given permission for pedestrian overpasses between Harveys and Harrah's, and MontBleu and Hard Rock.

I'm told it will cost more and realize it will be an

inconvenience to build, but in the long run it would be the best solution. The old Highway 50 would become an open mall between Park Avenue and the eastern loop and I think that is the desired outcome.

Caltrans and NDOT would have to come up with the money. It would take some good planning and good politicians to get this project built.

Les Wright, South Lake Tahoe

Letter: Child care choices lacking in SLT

To the community,

The 2015 Child Care Portfolio was recently released providing information about child care in El Dorado County. The report details information about the child care supply between 2012 and 2014. Despite an improving economy, child care continues to be a challenge for many working families due to the high cost of care and lack of subsidized slots. A minimum wage family will spend 50 percent of their budget on child care. This has forced many families to rely on alternative child care arrangements such as family, friends, and neighbors. The report is available **online**.

El Dorado County child care supply and family data shows a significant decrease in the number of licensed Family Child Care homes (24 percent) between 2012 and 2014. The decrease can be attributed to a reduction in the demand for licensed care that forced struggling providers with high vacancy rates to close.

The reduced demand is supported by:
· 9 percent reduction in the number of children between the age of 0-5 even though the population in the county increased by 2 percent.
· 20 percent reduction in the number of children 0-12 with parents in the labor force.
· 33 percent increase in the number of people living in poverty.
· 5 percent decrease in the number of children in subsidized care.

The increase in the poverty rate and the decrease in subsidized care highlights the struggles many families are experiencing. The cost of licensed care is well beyond the reach of families who are looking for work or working in low wage part time jobs. Families are also struggling to find care during non-traditional hours and Holidays. The South Lake Tahoe community in particular lacks child care providers offering evening, weekend and holiday care. Based on research done by Choices for Children, only one licensed child care home provider will be open on New Year's Eve in South Lake Tahoe. The lack of affordable licensed care and child care options has a negative impact on families, child care providers who serve them and employers.

Choices for Children, a nonprofit resource and referral agency has information on how to become a licensed child care providers and programs to help off-set the cost of licensing fees and readying your home for children. For more information, call 530.541.5848.

Nadine T-Davis, resource coordinator Choices for Children

Opinion: Professional casino cheat set the bar high

By John L. Smith, Las Vegas Review-Journal

John Vaccaro was sure he had something big working.

But in the world of the professional casino cheat, good help can be hard to find. It's not all "Ocean's 11" reruns, baby. Putting together a competent crew isn't easy.

Eventually, Vaccaro's criminal associates in the takeoff of the President Casino in Biloxi, Miss., in 1993 focused on their work long enough to relieve the gambling hall's blackjack tables of $500,000 before the scheme unraveled and resulted in a federal criminal indictment. Some took a plea, others took flight. Nothing if not dedicated to his trade, Vaccaro took another fall.

John Joseph Vaccaro Jr., a military veteran, roofing contractor and longtime member of Nevada's casino "Black Book," died Nov. 16 after a brief illness. He was 75.

Although his criminal record stretched back to 1971, he landed high on the government's radar in 1983 as the leader of what was then the biggest slot machine-rigging caper in Nevada history. In all, eight people manipulated more than 100 slot jackpots at casinos throughout Nevada and racked up more than $8 million before being caught. One jackpot at Harrah's Lake Tahoe alone paid $1.7 million. The first MGM Grand in Reno lost more than $1 million. The crew also scored at the Castaways, Barbary Coast, Bingo Palace (now Palace Station) and Holiday Casino in Las Vegas.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Finding time to be thankful



Being thankful for my dog AJ and my friend Joy for trusting me to be AJ's second mom.

"We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives."

– John F. Kennedy

By Kathryn Reed

Thank you to every *Lake Tahoe News* writer and photographer, and contributor. Thank you to those who send news tips. Thank you to those who offer advice, counsel and support. Thank you to each reader, advertiser and paid subscriber.

More important, though, thank you to my family and friends – for everything, even when I don't want to hear it.

"Thank you" and "sorry" seem to be three of the most difficult words to say. And, yet, not a day goes by that we all could and probably should utter them.

Too often we wait too long and the opportunity is no longer there. Sometimes thanks comes at the end of life, when we know time is of the essence.

How hard would it be to slow down a little, to pause, to give thanks. Sure, it's easy to do it today – on Thanksgiving. But what about tomorrow? And why didn't you do so yesterday?

It's easy to dwell on what doesn't go right, the negatives of our lives.

I have friends dealing with serious health issues; a friend's dad went on hospice this month; for some this is the first holiday since a significant loss; money is an issue for many; for others today is a reminder of their aloneness.

I know it can be hard at times to find something to be thankful for. There are days when the computer is so close to being thrown out the window and I pack up the Jeep with the dog and just start driving. But running away would only change the location where I would have to deal with my problems. And oddly, it just takes looking at AJ at times like this for my thanks to begin. Joy knew what she was doing when four years ago this fall she asked me to take AJ if she were to die.

AJ is proof that something wonderful can come from such incredible sadness. I will be forever thankful to Joy for bringing this dog into my life.

Look around – there must be something you are thankful for. Perhaps you would like to share it with everyone as a comment. And perhaps, just maybe, we can all keep finding thanks each and every day going forward.

Letter: Barton helps South Shore homeless

To the community,

On behalf of the Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, I would like to thank Barton Health employees and physicians for their incredible generosity.

More than 647 employees in 35 departments participated in a fundraising drive for the South Lake Tahoe Warm Room. Employees and physicians raised $2,040 in funds and donated more than 3,000 items – approximately $8,000 in value – totaling more than $10,000 in donations.

Barton Health's contributions will help homeless individuals stay warm, prevent cold-related illnesses, and address some of the hurdles of overcoming homelessness. Examples of items donated include beanies, socks and gloves, instant soups and oatmeal, toiletries, and dog and cat food.

The Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless is working together to end homelessness on the South Shore with community partners, including Barton Health. We aim to provide short term assistance to our friends and neighbors who find themselves without housing this winter, and to provide resource referrals to help break the cycle of homelessness.

The Coalition currently is seeking volunteers and donations for this winter. Call 775.573.0822 or email tahoewarmroom@gmail.com for more information. Volunteer training sessions are scheduled for Dec. 1 from 6-8:30pm and Dec. 8 from 10am-12:30pm.

Together, we can all make a difference in helping members of our community who need our support.

Marissa Muscat, executive director Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless