

Letter: Kirkwood helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Alan Plaugher, Kirkwood Mountain Resort's ski patrol manager, had a great time helping the Bread & Broth volunteers feed 104 dinner guests at B&B's evening meal served at St. Theresa Church Grace Hall on July 5.

"We all are glad to help out with this community food feed. I was very impressed with the variety and nutritional balance on this night. The deal is first rate," he said.

Joining Plaugher were fellow Kirkwood Mountain Resort management team members Dave Myers, mountain operations director; Frank Dixon, finance; and Mike Niccoli, snow surfaces manager; along with his son, Sloane Niccoli. They were a hard working crew and were willing to handle any task that they were given.

Thanks to their help and Vail's EpicPromise grant, which donated the \$250 for Kirkwood's sponsorship, another successful meal was served to help make a lot of folk's day a little better and provide food for meals throughout the remainder of the week. Due to our many generous donors, B&B is able to purchase fruits, vegetables, butter, milk and eggs to supplement the wonderful food donations that are given to B&B by local business and stores.

So in addition to the meal served, the Kirkwood volunteers helped with packing "giveaway" bags filled with food to give to the dinner guests. B&B is blessed to have businesses like Kirkwood and their employees who care about helping others.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Spending choices often reflect values

By Carl Richards, New York Times

I have a crazy idea I want to run by you. Imagine that a cultural anthropologist finds one of your credit card statements in 100 years. What would your spending suggest you value the most? Based on your spending, what assumptions might someone make about how you live your life?

Our credit card statements (really, any financial statement) reveal a lot about what we care about. They are unintentional personal manifestoes. In stark detail, these statements lay out how we spend our money and our time. As a result, we end up with a clear picture of what we value versus what we say we value.

For instance, my top priorities are spending time with my family and serving in my community. In theory, every decision I make, every action I take, should be about meeting those priorities. But sometimes, my statements show I have made other things a priority. I get distracted.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Peer pressure can be

a positive

By Philip Hoy

In every classroom, there is a kind of tipping point when the unmotivated students either get pulled along by the high achievers, or the unmotivated students hold the high achievers back.

I see this all the time teaching English at Coachella Valley High School in Southern California's Inland Empire. Most of my students come from low-income households, have had to learn English as a second language, and hope to be the first in their families to go to college. They've been told since they were in elementary school that higher education is their ticket to a better life, and many have come to believe this.

But high school is a big place, full of distractions. For many, school becomes about socializing, partying and striving to fit in. Other students are stressed by balancing school with a relationship, by responsibilities at home, or by a part-time job. Added to these pressures is the anxiety caused by the daunting cost of higher education. As a result of all these pressures – and low expectations – too few students are truly prepared for college by the time they graduate.

One way to keep our students focused on college is to make them aware of advanced placement courses as early as possible. Currently, we offer 14 AP courses at Coachella Valley High, from calculus to Spanish literature. While I know that our very highest achievers are going to take these courses and succeed, I believe that for the majority of students, the cultural mindset of their classmates is just as important as the educator in the front of the classroom. The sooner students with college ambitions take such courses the better they'll be prepared for the rigors of college. And the more we can grow the AP program at our school, the more students will

share goals and values – and this high-achieving mindset.

So this last November we formed the Coachella Valley High School Advanced Placement Club to support AP and future AP students and encourage more people to take these classes. How we would do this, I wasn't quite sure at first, but I agreed to be the advisor anyway. Maybe we could use my room as a study hall after school. Maybe club members would want to raise money for college field trips. Maybe we could all get T-shirts.

Mostly seniors and juniors – along with a few sophomores – packed into my classroom after school for our first meeting. We elected officers, approved our constitution, and formed our first committees: fundraising, T-shirts, and freshman awareness. We decided to meet on a weekly basis and then adjourned so that the committees could meet separately to discuss ideas and plans.

And then this wonderful thing happened. About 20 of the students who'd stayed for the freshman awareness committee gathered in a rough circle of chairs. Itcelia, a senior in my AP English literature class and our newly elected vice president, asked, "What do you know now that you wish someone had told you as a freshman?"

And then they all started sharing. I sat at my desk in the back of the room and just listened. They discussed the benefits of honors and AP classes, the importance of homework and time management, and the need to balance academics with activities, clubs, sports, community service, and so on. It was amazing. Here was a cross section of our school's highest achievers made up of a diversity of personality types and interests – not just the "nerd herd" but the drama kids, the artists, the athletes, the cheerleaders, the class officers, and students from career academies – building a master plan for high school success.

They decided to bring that plan to the freshmen themselves. By the next meeting, Itcelia had contacted an administrator and gotten freshman teachers' permission to give presentations in their classrooms. She and the other freshman awareness committee members created a PowerPoint slideshow. Club members volunteered to present based on which of their own classes they could afford to miss.

After the presentations, the students gathered to debrief. Some of them had spoken to the freshmen about resisting the pressure to dumb down in order to stay popular, or to get someone to like you. Itcelia was thrilled that during one of her presentations a freshman girl had shared that she liked a boy until she found out he didn't know the difference between you and you're. "Smart is the new sexy," someone in the group said, defining the moment and themselves.

Surprisingly, one of the groups met resistance from a teacher who thought they were being unrealistic in encouraging students to take as many AP classes as possible. But Itcelia, presently enrolled in four AP classes, active in several clubs and community service projects, and in rehearsals for the school's production of "Grease", passionately disagreed. She remembered that when she was a freshman, some upperclassmen tried to discourage her from taking AP classes, saying they were too demanding and wouldn't leave room for anything else.

"But that just isn't true," she said. "It's all about setting priorities and managing your time."

The success of the presentations inspired me to create a club website with links to information on AP courses, colleges, careers, admission tests, financial aid, and scholarships.

The site also includes a weekly blog featuring essays from teachers, counselors, alumni, community professionals, and fellow students. Many wrote about their own paths to college and the fears and obstacles they had to overcome, and others

about the importance of reading or the value of stories in the community. One student wrote about the need for academic rivalries and another published a poem on immigration. We gave away T-shirts that display our blog address alongside inspirational quotes from authors and civil rights leaders or witty slogans like, “You had me at your proper use of you’re.” We got more freshmen to join the club, and at meetings we had great discussions that often began with questions for seniors from underclassmen, particularly juniors looking ahead at their last year of high school.

This next year, with new seniors and a clearer sense of direction, we will build on these successes. We want to increase membership, raise money for college field trips, and encourage more students to interact with and write for our blog.

High school peer pressure can work in positive as well as negative ways, and individual success is often the result of a community of support. With the help of student leaders like Itcelia, who, by the way, graduated as class salutatorian and will attend UC Berkeley in the fall, I believe we can continue to tip the scales of academic motivation in the right direction.

Philip Hoy is a high school English teacher by day and short-story author, novelist, and blogger by night. When he is not creating lesson plans or grading essays, he is writing. He lives in Southern California with his wife, Magdalena, also a teacher. This article was written for Zócalo Public Square and is supported by a grant from the California Wellness Foundation.

Opinion: Senseless killing of Tahoe bear



Someone on the South Shore killed this bear last week.
Photos/Toogee Sielsch

By Toogee Sielsch

On July 9, a family living on Minniconjou Drive in a neighborhood off Pioneer Trail in South Lake Tahoe had the pleasure of enjoying seeing one of our furry forest denizens cruising through their neighborhood. These are the kind of folks who feel getting a view from a safe distance of one of the black bears that live in the basin is a true gift to be cherished.

Later that evening they remember hearing what they described as a single large firework explosion or maybe a gunshot.

I can't even imagine what went through their minds when the next day, Friday, while taking a walk on a trail through the forest-meadow interface below their neighborhood. They found the lifeless body of the untagged, beautiful, healthy, and muscular 2 1/2-year-old black bear they had seen alive and

well the day before. They immediately returned home and made a call to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

Apparently one of their neighbors from Minniconjou Drive, or one the nearby streets like Jicarilla Drive, didn't quite feel the same way about the bears living in the basin that this family and many of the rest of us that live here in the Tahoe basin feel.



Sunglasses give perspective of how big this bear was.

At 5:40pm July 10, I received a call from LTWC asking if I could go take a look at a possible dead bear. My youngest son, Ian, and I met the family at the end of Minniconjou Drive. They showed us where the carcass was. As we approached the dead bear, I was struck by his body position. He was on his back, head rolled to one side, and tongue out and bitten through at the base of two trees.

I took pics on the approach and from other angles before I moved in and did a field examination on the body, looking for any wounds or signs of trauma. I was baffled by the lack of

blood at the scene. On the bear's backside I found multiple small puncture wounds. I must admit that my first impression is that this could possibly be an accident and the bear received those puncture wounds falling out of a tree. But I also know that the first thing a black bear learns when its mother takes it out of the den for the first time is how to climb a tree and stay up it in danger. And there weren't any freshly broken branches around the body, which would be scattered if it had hit and was injured by branches in the fall.

My second impression was that the puncture wounds were buckshot wounds and the bear was shot while climbing up the tree and let it's grip go and fell to its death.

Ian and I dragged the 200- to 225-pound, 2 1/2 year old bear uphill as it was getting dark and not wanting to leave the carcass to the other wild animals in the area and thereby destroying any evidence.

On Saturday, California Fish and Wildlife Game Warden Darrell Stevenson was called to examine the body at LTWC and confirmed the wounds as being from large buckshot from a shotgun. At 2:30pm on Saturday, I walked Stevenson through the site where the bear was found dead. He had spent much of the morning going door-to-door on Minniconjou Drive and adjacent streets interviewing folks for any information.

Above are the facts, and now on to the opinion section of this piece: What kind of inferior life form feels that for nothing more than knocking over a few trash cans, which isn't a bear's fault that they are left out, a bear deserves a death penalty? Not to mention some wingnut is shooting off a firearm in an inhabited neighborhood here in our town? Some folks like to frame we animal activists as crazy, but this horrendous action defies crazy, and tips into the realm of psychotic. Ann Bryant of the Bear League is setting up a donation fund for the information that leads to an arrest and conviction of the

scumbag who did this heartless deed. Anyone having any information about this crime may call the Bear League at 530.525.7297.

This crime might very well go unpunished, but please, let's not let it go unnoticed.

Toogee Sielsch is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: The truth about Squaw's plans

By Andy Wirth

There are rare circumstances whereby we as a society are OK with people misstating the truth. One of those circumstances, for instance, includes fishing stories that may go something like this: "We landed a big one over by Horseshoe Bar, but he got away."

It is not, however, acceptable when one deviates from the truth on topics as important as the proposed development plans at Squaw Valley.



Andy Wirth

Sierra Watch has once again chosen to deviate from the truth and is purposefully misleading the public with its op-ed. I

submit that we should hold Sierra Watch accountable to the truth.

Moreover, as Sierra Watch directly supports the faltering Incorporate Olympic Valley effort (who confusingly has recently flip-flopped and are suggesting that they are now pro-development), they once again find themselves out on a limb of mistruths – all of which are meant to mislead the residents of Placer County.

To clarify the facts related to the Sierra Watch op-ed:

1. The company seeking the development permit is not KSL Capital Partners and Sierra Watch was advised of this fact multiple times. The applicant has always been Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, the parent company and operators of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows.

We are seeking to secure permission to develop a number of condominiums over the next 25 years that is consistent with the past 25 years' worth of development.

Importantly, these plans complement our efforts to compete in a hyper-competitive Western United States tourism and mountain recreation market.

While we are exceedingly proud of what Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows provide from a skiing and riding perspective, we have a lack of quality and variety of lodging offerings – something proven by way of extensive guest research along with our daily experience in operating these great, world-class mountains.

2. Sierra Watch goes on to state: "Their current proposal, known as the Squaw Valley Village Specific Plan, includes a series of high-rise hotels and condo projects with more than 1,500 new bedrooms and a massive indoor amusement park as wide as a Wal-Mart and 10 stories tall."

This statement is simply not true. There is not one – not one

– 10-story-tall building in the proposal, nor is there anything proposed that would appear to anyone in the world to look anything like a Wal-Mart, or an “indoor amusement park.”

3. Sierra Watch further states: “All told, the project would be so big it would take 25 years of day and night construction to complete.”

My company is seeking Placer County’s approval of permission to develop residential units, all of which – and this is critical to understand – are subject to market forces and demand. Hence, the project is being proposed in multiple phases over an extended period of time (approximately 25 years). There is not a single scenario that contains “25 years of day and night construction.”

In every way, Sierra Watch’s statement is patently false and purposefully stated in a manner so as to mislead and elicit fear.

Sierra Watch goes on in their op-ed to elicit input from the public on this matter. This is the only item upon which we agree.

The material difference is that my team and I have spent the past three years meeting with every homeowners association, neighbor and customer in what has been (objectively) characterized as an unprecedented amount of community outreach.

We’ve hosted and attended well in excess of 340 meetings and, in tuning in carefully to those who provide constructive feedback, have implemented vast, almost countless changes to the plan since its original inception over three and a half years ago.

We continue to listen, as my company will never turn a deaf ear to a good idea.

It is simply wrong to suggest that our plan, in its current form, represents anything but the inclusion of extensive and exhaustive input from the community. We feel strongly, and believe that our community's input has in fact made it a better plan.

So, Placer County – elected officials and citizens – as long as it's not a fishing tale, please, let's all hold Tom Mooers and Sierra Watch to the truth.

Andy Wirth is president and CEO of Squaw Valley Ski Holdings.

Opinion: Public needs to be a voice in Squaw's plans

Publisher's note: *This column was first published in the Auburn Journal and is reprinted with permission.*

By Tom Mooers

Denver-based KSL Capital Partners purchased Squaw Valley in 2010, and is now pursuing a sweeping set of entitlements that would remake the region with development of a size, scale and scope Tahoe has never seen.

Their current proposal, known as the Squaw Valley Village Specific Plan, includes a series of high-rise hotels and condo projects with more than 1,500 new bedrooms and a massive indoor amusement park as wide as a Walmart and 10 stories tall, with waterslides, fake rivers, arcades and simulated skydiving.

All told, the project would be so big it would take 25 years of day and night construction to complete.

Placer County decision-makers need to know how you feel about it.

State planning law – the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA – requires thorough environmental review of large development proposals.

In May, Placer County released its initial assessment, known as a draft environmental impact report, designed to encourage public scrutiny and citizen involvement. The draft EIR for the proposed Squaw Valley development runs more than 2,000 pages and assesses the project's potential impacts on everything from water quality to climate change. It's available online.

Even a quick read makes it clear that KSL's proposed development would transform Squaw Valley into a noisy, urbanized place. In the terminology of the Draft EIR, proposed development would have "significant" and "unavoidable" impacts on Squaw Valley – and beyond. For example:

Traffic: According to the document, development would add to area traffic and "exacerbate unacceptable operations" on Squaw Valley Road, on Highway 89 in Tahoe City, in Truckee and in between.

Views: To Squaw's iconic mountain scenery, the project would make a "substantial contribution to the cumulative degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings" with a "significant and unavoidable impact on scenic vistas."

Noise: The project would generate noise louder than "applicable Placer County noise standards," especially for the 25 years it would be under construction – even at night.

Equally remarkable is the information and impacts not included in the draft EIR. For example, assessment of local water supplies is based on a study that does not include records from the current, record-breaking drought.

Fortunately, CEQA is designed to encourage public involvement. This is where you come in.

The idea is that decision-makers, in this case the Placer County Board of Supervisors, need to hear from their constituents and avoid making decisions that might be prove harmful in the long run.

The primary method of communicating that reaction is known as a comment letter. And, although the process can seem quite complicated, the most important point is quite simple: Anyone can write a letter. You can write something technical – maybe a detailed review and recalculation of the peak time projections for traffic in Tahoe City. Or you can write something deep: I want to see the stars at night. Or something clear: Deny this development application and ask KSL to submit a reasonable proposal.

With so much at stake, it should be easy to figure out what's important to you – and to share it.

Send your comments to: Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, Attention: Maywan Krach, 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603

Squaw, Tahoe and our Sierra are counting on us. It's time to stand up. Or, at least, sit down and write a letter.

Feel free to contact us with any questions, by phone at 530.265.2849 or by email at isilverman@sierrawatch.org. And you can sign up online; we'll keep you posted.

Tom Mooers is executive director of Sierra Watch.

Opinion: Drones can be deadly to firefighters

By Robert Westover

Imagine if a hostile country sent an Unmanned Aircraft System or UAS, otherwise known as a drone, to disturb the efforts of firefighters during a catastrophic wildfire. The confusion that might ensue could cause loss of life and property as flames jump fire lines simply because resources have been diverted or grounded to identify and remove the UAS. But these threats aren't coming from an enemy state. They are being flown by our own citizens and impeding the job of our firefighters. This isn't a script for a Hollywood film. It's really happening.

Recently, unauthorized drones disrupted wildfire operations in southern California twice in one week. Because of these drones, air tanker operations were suspended on both the Sterling Fire and Lake Fire on the San Bernardino National Forest.

"If a UAS is detected flying over or near a wildfire, we will stop air tankers from dropping fire retardant, helicopters from dropping water and other aerial firefighting aircraft from performing wildfire suppression missions until we can confirm that the drone has left the area and we are confident it won't return," said Steve Gage, U.S. Forest Service representative on the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

Firefighting aircraft, such as air tankers and helicopters, fly at very low altitudes, typically just a couple of hundred feet above the ground, the same as drones flown by members of the public. This creates the potential for a mid-air collision that could seriously injure or kill aerial or ground

firefighters. In addition, if a drone loses its communication link it could fall from the sky, causing serious injuries or deaths of firefighters on the ground.

Temporary flight restrictions or TFRs are typically put in place during wildfires that require aircraft, manned or unmanned, that are not involved in wildfire suppression operations to obtain permission from fire managers to enter specified airspace.

The FAA, Forest Service, Department of the Interior and other wildland fire management agencies consider drones, including those used by members of the public for hobby and recreation purposes, to be aircraft and therefore subject to TFRs.

Members of the public should not fly drones over or near wildfires even if a TFR is not in place to prevent accidents and disruption of suppression operations. Those determined to have interfered with wildfire suppression efforts may be subject to civil penalties and potentially criminal prosecution. For guidance to those flying drones for hobby or recreation purposes, go online.

Robert Westover works in the office of communications for the U.S. Forest Service.

Opinion: Don't give the homeless sympathy

By Zócalo

It doesn't take more than a stroll down a city street to see that America has a homelessness problem. The guy tucked into

in a stained blanket on the bench, the woman pushing a cart filled with everything she owns – from New York to Los Angeles, there are more than half a million people sleeping outside or in some form of transitional housing.

While this number is lower than it was during the recession, homelessness is still on the rise in many of the country's major cities. New York City's homeless population jumped 10 percent over the past year; LA's jumped 12 percent. With housing costs continuing to skyrocket in these cities, there aren't signs of this trend changing anytime soon.

Has progress been made? Or are more Americans simply bound to find themselves without a bed? In advance of the Zócalo/UCLA event "What Keeps the Homeless Off the Street?", we asked people who study, write about, and are deeply engaged with the homeless:

What have large American cities done that has successfully reduced the number of people living on the streets?

Brenda E. Rosen: Provide supportive housing

In New York City, the answer to reducing our chronically homeless population is supportive housing: permanently affordable homes with on-site social services.

Supportive housing is a time-proven, cost-effective strategy that gives the homeless a second chance at life. But they can't be forced into it. My organization, Common Ground, is a "Housing First" adherent, which means there are minimal requirements to move into the housing we provide. Asking someone to get sober while they are living on the streets is a recipe for failure. We believe the process begins when someone chooses to come inside, and are then given the tools they need to succeed.

New York has long been a leader in this approach. In 1990, when Common Ground was founded, Governor Mario Cuomo enacted

the first “New York/New York” agreement, which made affordable housing central to how government can improve the lives of underserved individuals. Thousands of supportive housing units have been built under this program, and in the past year, New York City has actually recorded a decrease in the number of unsheltered homeless people on its streets.

Recently, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio launched a separate plan to build 200,000 units of affordable housing, including units specifically set aside for homeless people.

These plans are not only humane; they will achieve long-term public savings. For every chronically homeless person given housing and support, we save \$10,000 each year, because they’re not cycling through hospitals and jails.

But our work isn’t over. In a city built out to its edges, the cost of land is skyrocketing. It is critical that we continue to invest in supportive housing, create incentives for for-profit developers to build affordable housing, and use our scarce city-owned land to maximize housing options for vulnerable New Yorkers – including giving priority to non-profits.

Brenda E. Rosen is president and CEO of Common Ground, a New York City-based nonprofit that develops and sustains high-quality, affordable supportive housing. Prior to Common Ground, she worked at New York City’s Department of Homeless Services.

Mark Loranger: Provide jobs

In Los Angeles, the homeless crisis reflects a challenge that virtually every city, large and small, is experiencing across the country: How can we house the neediest among us in a humane, safe manner, while encouraging personal responsibility and accountability?

The root causes of homelessness are complex and interrelated:

lack of affordable housing, job loss, economic inequality, poor decisions that result in prison sentences, physical and mental health challenges, and ineffective public policy have all contributed to the problem. But my experience working with the homeless suggests that there is a solution that is effective, at least for those that are ready, willing, and able to work: it's called a job.

A job brings hope and dignity, in addition to a paycheck. Rigorous evaluations of programs like ours at Chrysalis demonstrate that formerly homeless individuals that hold a job for at least six months are significantly more likely to stay out of prison, maintain stable housing, have better health incomes, and significantly decrease their reliance on public support.

Organizations like the Center for Employment Opportunities and the Doe Fund in New York City, the Cara Program in Chicago, and the Women's Bean Project in Denver all view employment as a key part of the solution to ending homelessness and poverty.

Investment in, and expansion of, successful programs that bring economic hope and opportunity to our communities will help us solve this crisis.

Mark Loranger is the president and CEO of Chrysalis, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit that works with the homeless and those in poverty to help them find and retain employment.

Alicia Horton: Provide career training

Homeless people are not "hanging out" in the streets; they are living in the streets. They are conducting their lives in the only place available to them. I can assure you they would rather not sleep, eat, meet friends, and drink a beer there. They would rather have a place to go, something constructive to do, and a safe space where they could relax and reassemble their lives. Sound familiar? Most of us call it home.

But, because a home can be such an elusive goal for so many in

today's economy, a city's capacity to keep people off of its streets is directly correlated with its ability to provide the range of services required to fully engage and support someone experiencing homelessness. One such program in Washington, D.C., the Real Opportunities Employment Training program, provides 20 weeks of culinary arts training. During the training, clients are given intensive case management, housing assistance, a stipend, and transportation assistance. Clients can also utilize all of the other services offered by the agency, including showers, laundry, phones, hot meals, pantry services, computer access, and a mailing address. In this comprehensive approach, there isn't even any time to conduct life on the street. The program addresses basic needs, while supporting a client's ability make the changes necessary to step out of their homelessness.

So, if we don't want people living in the street, then we had better get about the business of providing them with a somewhere to live, where they can conduct their lives privately and with the appropriate supports, like those of use lucky enough to have a place we call home.

Alicia Horton is the executive director of Thrive DC, a homeless and low-income service organization dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness.

Tamera Kohler: Encourage collaboration between governments and communities

In 2005, Utah launched a 10-year plan to tackle "chronic homelessness" – the state of being homeless for longer than a year or four times within three years and having an assessed disabling condition. That year, 1,932 individuals experienced chronic homelessness in the state.

The 10-year plan centered on collaboration between local and state governments and communities, caring community support, and champions who built up local resources to improve services

for the homeless across the state.

By January 2015, a count showed 178 people were experiencing chronic homelessness in Utah – a 91 percent decrease in 10 years. All 178 of these people are known by name. They have been professionally assessed, and we can help them move out of chronic homelessness if they choose. Utah is the first state to have a system in place capable of serving all of its chronically homeless individuals.

The reduction in Utah's chronic homelessness is primarily due to the provision of permanent housing using a "Housing First" approach, which includes supportive treatment services in mental and physical health, substance abuse, education, and employment.

Today, the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Utah is well under the national average: 14,516, based on the 2015 count. This is an 8.54 percent drop from the number of people experiencing homelessness in the state just last year, due to the availability of additional resources and outreach programs.

Tamera Kohler is the interim director of the Housing and Community Development Division at Utah's Department of Workforce Services.

Matthew Doherty: Don't get stuck in "pilot mode"

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness just launched an amendment to Opening Doors, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, and we did so with more confidence than ever in the nation's ability to end homelessness for all Americans. We are seeing progress in many communities across the country, which both demonstrates that ending homelessness can be a reality and helps to provide a road map of strategies and practices for other communities to learn from and replicate.

Strategic approaches that I've seen in action in communities that are making the most progress include:

- Challenging the status quo and embracing evidence-based practices across the full range of homeless programs and services, and using Housing First approaches to link people to permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- Strengthening collaborations and building teams that draw on resources from across systems, agencies, and programs.
- Never getting stuck in "pilot mode." Pilot programs can be useful in demonstrating successful strategies, but too often that success doesn't result in further action or systemic change.
- Building in mechanisms for accountability and evaluation.
- Keeping the focus on people experiencing homelessness, making person-centered planning a centerpiece in system design and quality improvement efforts.
- Leaving no one behind, by performing comprehensive outreach and providing immediately available interim housing options, with clear paths to permanent housing.
- Staying in it for the long haul, recognizing that housing is not the endpoint for people, but an intervention to be used as a platform for community involvement and contribution.

With these approaches, achieving an end to homelessness is within reach. The more we can learn from each other, the more success we will have in ensuring people have safe, stable places to call home.

Matthew Doherty is the executive director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Matthew is responsible for the implementation of the Opening Doors plan.

Amy Turk: Fund affordable housing units

We're at an important juncture in Los Angeles, where homelessness is publicly acknowledged as a crisis, and there is much debate about what the solution or solutions should be.

At the Downtown Women's Center (DWC), we have seen how an apartment and a supportive environment can transform a woman's life and keep her from returning to the streets. We know this is the solution. Housing and supportive services are critical to ending the cycle of homelessness. But the problem is there is not enough housing.

Our organization has been working in Skid Row since 1978, addressing the needs of homeless women through basic services and permanent supportive housing. DWC was founded at a time when more and more women were ending up on the streets of L.A. with nowhere to go for meals, showers, clean clothes, or safety.

Today, nearly 40 years later, we continue to meet the needs of homeless women in downtown L.A. When one in every four homeless individuals is a single adult woman, we see a high demand for our services – and for the permanent supportive housing that gives women a place to call their own.

However, without the adequate funding for housing and increased committed action from our community and leaders, we cannot make a dent in decreasing the number of homeless individuals in our city. We need full funding for tens of thousands of affordable housing units across the city and the county. People are on the streets because they don't have a home. The answer: let's give them homes and support them on the path to stability. It's that simple.

Amy Turk is the chief program officer at the Downtown Women's Center in Los Angeles. She provides oversight of DWC's clinical health services, vocational education, social enterprises, day center, and permanent supportive housing.

Opinion: California isn't the real West

By Joe Mathews

Let's stipulate that U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia was wrong to dissent in last month's ruling legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide.

But Scalia was right when, in the same dissent, he suggested that California is a different place than the American West. And in so doing, he unwittingly raised an important question about California's future.



Joe Mathews

Scalia made his point via a swipe at his colleagues for being unrepresentative of the United States population (and thus wrong to impose their support for marriage equality on the entire country). After noting that all nine justices attended Harvard or Yale law schools and that only one grew up in the Midwest, he wrote that the court has “not a single Southwesterner or even, to tell the truth, a genuine Westerner.” But what about Justice Anthony Kennedy, who is from Sacramento? Scalia's answer: “California does not count.”

The words “California does not count” prompted California

pundits to fly off the handle. How dare he disrespect California? Of course we count! “Antonin Scalia Doesn’t Heart California – or Get Us, Either” said an *LA Times* headline.

Attorney General Kamala Harris coolly countered Scalia – an old-school “originalist” who thinks the U.S. Constitution should be read as it was in 1789 –with a line from old-school rapper Ice T: “Don’t hate the playa, hate the game.” You should know that Ice T’s line was inspired by one from Gandhi’s 1927 autobiography (“Hate the sin not the sinner”) and St. Augustine’s 424 A.D. letter (“with love for mankind and hatred of sins”), so Harris out-originalist-ed the originalist Supreme Court justice by more than 1,300 years.

Despite the snappy California retorts, Scalia’s fundamental point went unchallenged, because he’s right: California doesn’t fit in the American West. Or anywhere else for that matter.

Indeed, the best book ever written about California – Carey McWilliams’ “California: The Great Exception”, published in 1949 – is about precisely this reality. California is singular among Western U.S. states in how it was settled so early, grew so quickly, and changed so suddenly. Our Western neighbors are more plodding, less populous places.

“One cannot, as yet, properly place California in the American scheme of things,” wrote McWilliams, adding: “California is no ordinary state; it is an anomaly, a freak, the great exception among the American states.”

But is California still such a great exception? Not exactly. Yes, we’re the only state to break ground on high-speed rail. But in a number of ways, we have begun to resemble other Western states.

Most crucially, California is no longer a state of arrival, a destination for the world. Immigration is flat. More people have been leaving California for other states than have been

moving here from the rest of the country.

As a result, states like Nevada, Arizona, Oregon and Utah – having received so many Californians seeking cheaper living – have effectively been colonized by us, and are voting and eating more like California. All four now have In-N-Out Burger outlets, as does Texas, another big destination for exiting Californians. And as we jack up tuition at our universities, more California high school graduates head to public universities in neighboring states. (I've seen this firsthand while teaching at Arizona State University).

Those of us left behind in California are also more Western – because we are more likely to have grown up here. In previous generations, California was populated by people from Asia, Latin America, and the American Midwest and South. In today's California, the majority is homegrown – born and raised in California – and newer arrivals are more likely to be from Las Vegas than Little Rock. This homegrown California is also older – and less dynamic. We remain more ethnically and racially diverse than other Western states, but there are signs that our diversity lead is narrowing.

It's not just demography making us more Western; drought has a role too. We're becoming a drier place, with dustier landscaping that resembles Arizona and Nevada. Last year, we finally regulated groundwater, as other Western states have been doing for years.

If these trends persist, and California continues to Westernize, it will pose questions for our state and our country. The fact that California was so exceptional often accelerated change nationwide. As the historian H.W. Brands has noted, the American dream was of slow, tedious Poor Richard's Almanac-style growth until California became a state – and gave us a new, faster dream of rapidly accumulated wealth. Will it be good for us, and for America if we become just another Western state?

For now, you are right, Justice Scalia. California doesn't really count as Western. But time has a way of changing the meaning of many things, including marriage and our messy state.

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

Opinion: Trash a problem on July 4



Trash in South Lake Tahoe left by July 4 partiers.
Photo/Provided

By Catherine Cecchi

Despite a great outreach push from land managers and local jurisdictions, environmental groups, and area businesses for Tahoe residents and visitors to clean up after themselves as they celebrated the Fourth of July, the evidence from Sunday morning indicated that we continue to have a significant

problem with littering as people celebrate the holiday in South Tahoe.

Clean Tahoe, a South Tahoe nonprofit focused on litter abatement, removed more than 400 pounds of trash from the public roadway and sidewalks near the Stateline area on the morning of July 5. The largest problem area was along Stateline Avenue and Lakeshore Boulevard, where nine 30-gallon bags of litter were collected.

While Clean Tahoe staff did not take an inventory of what was collected, the overwhelming majority was bottles and cans, cups, cigarette butts, and food wrappers/packages.

Clean Tahoe contracts with the city of South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County to clean litter and illegally dumped items along our roadways and in neighborhoods on a year-round basis. Last year, more than 608-cubic-yards of trash and debris was removed from South Tahoe by the two-person field crew.

Because of the large concentration of visitors, Clean Tahoe focuses efforts on July 5 on the city streets near Stateline.

"This year the Stateline area wasn't quite as bad as last year, but it is still pretty disappointing to see that much litter left out in our community after one night," said Jeff Pollitt, Clean Tahoe field crew supervisor.

Clean Tahoe's work was only one of many cleanups around the lake this year, with dozens of organizations, businesses, and land managers leading the efforts.

It's been wonderful to see the attention being given to cleaning up after the 4th of July celebrations, and the volunteer participation for the beach cleanups in particular is really exciting. We're hopeful that with continued outreach and awareness, we'll have fewer litter issues each year.

Catherine Cecchi is program manager for Clean Tahoe.