Letter: Breakfast club helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

About 15 years ago, several ladies from Zephyr Heights began a social gathering once a month to share friendships over breakfast. Every third Monday of the month, 10-12 ladies ranging in age from their 30s to 92 share family happenings, celebrate successes and support each other when needed. One of the approximately 15 Zephyr Heights Breakfast Club members, Peggy Ellena, began volunteering at Bread & Broth and coordinated the club's Adopt A Day of Nourishment on June 29.

Representing the Zephyr Heights Breakfast Club at the dinner were Julie Nelson, Peggy Ellena, Maryon Tilley and Sandie Mancinelli. They were a very busy group. They helped assemble over 75give-away" bags filled with fruits, vegetables, canned goods and breads, served 125 meals and helped with the dinner's cleanup.

Describing their three hours of volunteering, Ellena and Mancinelli together wrote, "The experience helping B&B was gratifying and blessing to all of us. The regular volunteer staff was patient with us and were good teachers – obviously dedicated to their mission. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to help!"

B&B would like to thank all of the members of the Zephyr Heights Breakfast Club for their donation of $250 and sending a wonderful group of volunteers to the dinner served at St. Theresa Church's Grace Hall. Thanks to the club for taking the opportunity to help people in need.

For more B&B information, go online or find us on Facebook.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Robinson’s life no home run for racial progress

By Jason Sokol

Jackie Robinson’s story brings together two American obsessions: sports and freedom. This is why we never tire of his tale. Yet in the way that the story has been handed down, it masks as much about our national identity as it illuminates.

The story of Robinson’s breakthrough often comes in the language and rhythms of baseball – the stuff of hits and runs, stolen bases and brushback pitches. He wrought havoc on the base paths, demolished a racial barrier, and opened up our society.

The popular tale emphasizes Robinson’s moral courage, and rightly so. It has shaped him into a folk hero who belongs to the ages. But Robinson’s story becomes most instructive when we bring it down from the realm of the timeless epic, and connect it to the time and place in which it occurred.

The larger history – of racial struggle in Brooklyn and America after World War II – is often ugly and painful. When Robinson’s saga is placed in this context, it does not represent just a feel-good triumph for racial equality. It also reveals how the quest for freedom and democracy has coexisted with our country’s commitment to segregation and racism.

To be American is to know that we strive for freedom and at the same time we practice its opposite. We are capable of great leaps forward in terms of racial progress, including the

election and re-election of the nation's first black president. Yet our streets are not yet safe enough for unarmed black men to walk in peace. This remains our unresolved conflict: high-achieving African Americans have been welcomed into specific realms of American life, yet such individual accomplishments have done nothing to alter the deeper patterns of black poverty, police brutality, and spatial segregation. The conflict between racial progress and racial inequality was as clear in Jackie Robinson's day as in our own.

For many Brooklynites, an afternoon at Ebbets Field was the definition of bliss.

The aroma hit them first. The smell of bread rising from the Taystee factory, and cakes baking at the Ebingers plant, greeted the fans when they stepped out of the train station. As the throng pressed closer to the stadium, that scent mixed with roasted peanuts and hot dogs, sweat, and grass. Then came the sounds: the excited yells of children, the vendors hawking scorecards or newspapers. Many Brooklyn natives, like Joel Berger, recalled Ebbets Field as "a total sensory experience." Nighttime made the stadium a palace, transfixing the eyes. Joe Flaherty remembered the decadent feel "of walking through Prospect Park to see a rare night game." On a balmy evening in mid-summer, "all of a sudden the sky would be lit up," transforming Flatbush into "the Emerald City, and as you got closer, you'd pick up your pace, and you'd give your tickets and go charging inside." A Dodger game was the quintessential Brooklyn experience. In the age of Jackie Robinson, it became more than that. Ebbets Field was not only the borough's cultural heart but the very seat of American democracy.

Robinson broke baseball's color barrier in 1947, almost nine years before anyone had heard of Martin Luther King Jr., or Rosa Parks. His achievement armed postwar Brooklynites with a distinctive claim to progress. Dodger fans had long detected something special in their baseball team and their borough; Robinson deepened that sense. He "added another dimension to

being a Dodger fan," reflected journalist and Brooklyn native Pete Hamill. "It was about right and wrong…we became the most American place in the country." A moral element at once mingled with the magnificent smells and sounds and sights.

If white fans looked further down the street, they would have come to entirely different conclusions about the extent of racial progress. On the same Bedford Avenue that housed Ebbets Field, they would have witnessed the grim reality of housing segregation. Discriminatory federal policies had combined with block-busting realtors and fearful white homeowners to create racially homogeneous neighborhoods. Brooklyn's African Americans were corralled into a few select areas. Poor blacks had little choice but to pay high rents for dilapidated apartments. In neighborhoods like Crown Heights, Brownsville, and particularly Bedford-Stuyvesant, residents found basic services sorely lacking. Their garbage was collected only sporadically in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and in such areas, the city built few recreation centers, parks, or pools. In the very same years when Robinson played for the Dodgers – 1947 to 1957 – black ghettoes solidified.

This is what the rhetoric about Robinson and interracial democracy so brazenly missed. Even if Robinson's heroics in the stadium pushed baseball fans to rethink their racial attitudes, even if Ebbets Field became a crucible of integration, very little of that feeling spilled over into the city – or country – at large.

Robinson's own family experienced the inequities first-hand. Jackie Robinson learned that it was one thing to integrate the national pastime, and quite another to desegregate white towns and neighborhoods. The Robinsons ended up enjoying polyglot Brooklyn. But white homeowners had tried to prevent African Americans from buying property in Flatbush. The Robinsons' black landlord had endured such discrimination. Moreover, after the Dodgers integrated, some white fans had renounced their allegiance to the team. The borough was no interracial

oasis, and even for the Robinsons it was not always welcoming.

In 1953, Jackie and Rachel Robinson began to search for a house in the suburbs of Fairfield County, Conn., and Westchester County, N.Y. It was a humiliating experience.

The Robinsons attempted to buy land in New Canaan but were rebuffed. Rachel called about one house in Greenwich and, after giving her name, the owners refused to show it. The couple settled for a property just across the state line in New York. Jackie recalled that in autumn 1953, "we finally found a piece of land in New York's Westchester County that was just what we wanted." The Robinsons offered the asking price, waited for weeks, and were told that the price would be raised by $5,000. This was standard practice in housing discrimination, a sure-fire way for whites in exclusive towns to claim that they had nothing against African Americans – it was just that blacks could not meet the asking price. This was purely the market at work, they would say, not racism. So the Robinsons promptly kicked in the extra $5,000. "There was another period of confused silence," Jackie recalled. "At last, we were told that the land had been sold to somebody else. It was this way everywhere we went." Suburban whites did not want an African American for a neighbor, even if it was Jackie Robinson.

After the *Bridgeport Herald* printed an article about the Robinsons' experience, the citizens of North Stamford, Conn., were moved to action. Ministers circulated non-discrimination petitions. The Robinsons finally bought a home on Cascade Road. Rachel Robinson recalled that moment: "I don't know that I ever have felt closer to being a real American, closer to having lifted from my shoulders the nagging doubts and insecurities that are the heritage of the American Negro." For her, the ability to buy a home was the true test of American freedom.

Their story serves as a sobering reminder about the meaning of

racial progress in America. That progress isn't really about whether we embrace famous black athletes or cultural icons, or even whether we elect an African-American as president. The true test of our progress is whether we can enact policies that combat racial inequality – to stop the rising tide of mass incarceration and police brutality – and whether we can eradicate racial inequality from our private realms, much closer to home, as well. Only then can we begin to build a country in which African-Americans are truly welcome in every neighborhood, every school, and on every street.

Jason Sokol is an assistant professor of history at the University of New Hampshire. His latest book is "All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn".

Editorial: E-cigarette regulation is the real issue

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the June 21, 2015, Sacramento Bee.*

There's no pressing health reason not to raise the smoking age to 21 in California. Smoking kills, and nine out of 10 tobacco users say they picked up the habit as teens.

But the proposal, which passed the Senate early this month and has moved to the Assembly, is hardly where the action is when it comes to kids and tobacco. Just as Uber has displaced taxi cabs and AirBnB has stolen the thunder from hotels, so has smoking been disrupted.

E-cigarette use among adolescents tripled between 2013 and 2014, according to the most recent National Youth Tobacco

Survey. Meanwhile, regular cigarette use among high school students has declined.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Civil War was won by immigrant soldiers

By Don Doyle

In the summer of 1861, an American diplomat in Turin, Italy, looked out the window of the U.S. legation to see hundreds of young men forming a sprawling line. Some wore red shirts, emblematic of the *Garibaldini* who, during their campaign in southern Italy, were known for pointing one finger in the air and shouting *l'Italia Unità!* (Italy United!). Now they wanted to volunteer to take up arms for *l'America Unità!*

Meanwhile, immigrants already in the United States responded to the call to arms in extraordinary numbers. In 1860, about 13 percent of the U.S. population was born overseas — roughly what it is today. One in every four members of the Union armed forces was an immigrant, some 543,000 of the more than 2 million Union soldiers by recent estimates. Another 18 percent had at least one foreign-born parent. Together, immigrants and the sons of immigrants made up about 43 percent of the U.S. armed forces.

America's foreign legions gave the North an incalculable advantage. It could never have won without them. And yet the role of immigrant soldiers has been ignored in the narrative of a brothers' war fought on American soil, by American soldiers, over issues that were uniquely American in origin.

In the 1860s, Confederate diplomats and supporters abroad were eager to inform Europeans that the North was actively recruiting their sons to serve as cannon fodder. In one pamphlet, Confederate envoy Edwin De Leon informed French readers that the Puritan North had built its army "in large part of foreign mercenaries" made up of "the refuse of the old world."

Embarrassed Northerners claimed the Confederacy exaggerated how many foreign recruits made up the U.S. armed forces – pointing to immigrant bounty jumpers who enlisted to collect the money given to new recruits, deserted, and then re-enlisted. The underlying premise was that foreigners were not inspired by patriotic principle and, except for money, had no motive to fight and die for a nation not their own.

It was not true. Immigrants tended to be young and male, but they enlisted above their quota. Many immigrants left jobs to fight for the Union, enlisting before the draft – and the bounties – were even introduced. They volunteered, fought, and sacrificed far beyond what might be expected of strangers in a strange land.

Historians have done an excellent job of retrieving the voices of native-born, English-speaking soldiers. But the voices of the foreign legions remain silent – thanks to the paucity of records in the archives, the language barriers posed to historians, and, perhaps, a lingering bias that keeps foreigners out of "our" civil war.

Why did they fight? What were they fighting for? Recruitment posters in the New York Historical Society provide hints at the answers. One poster reads: *Patrioti Italiani! Honvedek! Amis de la liberté! Deutsche Freiheits Kaempfer!* (Italian patriots! Hungarians! Friends of liberty! German freedom fighters!) Then, in English, it urges "250 able-bodied men . . . Patriots of all nations" to fight for their "adopted country."

One immigrant mother gave testimony in 1863 to an antislavery convention as to why her 17-year-old son was fighting for the Union. “I am from Germany where my brothers all fought against the government and tried to make us free, but were unsuccessful,” she said. “We foreigners know the preciousness of that great, noble gift a great deal better than you, because you never were in slavery, but we are born in it.”

Following the failed Revolution of 1848, thousands of young Germans fled to America. They took up arms in what they saw as yet another battle in the revolutionary struggle against the forces of aristocracy and slavery. “It isn’t a war where two powers fight to win a piece of land,” one German enlistee wrote to his family. “Instead it’s about freedom or slavery, and you can well imagine, dear mother, I support the cause of freedom with all my might.”

In another letter written to his family in Europe, a German soldier gave a pithy explanation of the war: “I don’t have the space or the time to explain all about the cause, only this much: the states that are rebelling are slave states, and they want slavery to be expanded, but the northern states are against this, and so it is civil war!”

So it was civil war, but for many foreign-born soldiers and citizens, this was much more than America’s war. It was an epic contest for the future of free labor against slavery, for equal opportunity against privilege and aristocracy, for freedom of thought and expression against oppressive government, and for democratic self-government against dynastic rule. Foreigners joined the war to wage the same battles that had been lost in the Old World. Theirs was the cause not only of America, but of all nations.

Don Doyle is the author of “The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War”. He is McCausland professor of history at the University of South Carolina. He wrote this for What It Means to Be American, a

national conversation hosted by the Smithsonian and Zócalo Public Square.

Opinion: Ski towns wrestle with marijuana

By Allen Best, Mountain Town News

You can buy a Budweiser in Vail. You can smoke a bud, as in the flowering portion of a cannabis plant, in the privacy of your own home. But buy a bud, shatter, wax or chocolate chip cookies infused with THC, the psychoactive agent in cannabis?

Not yet. And perhaps not ever. Unlike some other ski towns in Colorado, which have chosen to treat marijuana similar to alcohol in important ways, Vail has been deeply ambivalent about allowing sales. Almost everybody would agree that attitudes toward cannabis use have rapidly changed, and many people would agree that it’s for the better that the economy of cannabis has been brought above ground.

But what is the effect on the “brand” of Vail? That’s been the question in recent weeks as elected officials mull whether to allow sales. It’s a question that Whistler could someday also face, given the trend toward legalization in North America. After all, “super, natural British Columbia,” as the tourism slogan goes, is located between Washington state and Alaska, and both have now legalized sales for recreational use.

Colorado voters, with a 55 percent plurality, legalized recreational use, “grow ’s “great social experiment,” as Gov. John Hickenlooper put it, has gone reasonably well since 55 percent of voters in November 2012 legalized recreational use,

“grow” operations, and sales. Sales were authorized beginning in January 2014.

In Vail, the margin was even larger, 60 percent. And among that majority was Andy Daly, the silver-haired mayor of Vail. He’s been in Colorado 46 years, working first as a ski patroller at Aspen before moving into management jobs. He’s overseen several ski areas and for a time was president of Vail Resorts, the ski company.

Daly says he voted for legalization in the hope that bringing the marijuana economy above ground would reduce the power of drug cartels in Mexico and the United States. It’s probably too soon to know whether this has succeeded, in part because Colorado is responsible for such a relatively small part of the North American market for cannabis.

But wanting to legalize cannabis sales is not the same as wanting stores on your main street or, in the case of Vail, the Bridge Street. Colorado’s law allows the towns, cities and counties to allow sales —or not. Far more than half so far have chosen not to allow sales. Use is allowed in all jurisdictions, but nowhere in public, such as along streets or parks.

As mayor, Daly is inclined to keep Vail’s door closed on sales. He says he is persuaded by the community survey, which is distributed not only to residents but also second-home owners and others with a deep interest in Vail affairs. In that survey, 85 percent of respondents indicated they had no interest in allowing cannabis stores in Vail.

Daly says his thinking is guided partly by business owners in Vail but also those in Breckenridge and Aspen. Legalized sales, he says, “Would be extraordinarily disadvantageous to the brand we’ve tried to develop in Vail and protect and extend.”

The testimony of Mexican visitors has particularly influenced

Daly. Wealthy Mexicans have been drawn to Vail for decades, and the town is currently in the process of establishing a sister-city relationship with San Miguel Allende, a resort along the Atlantic coast. As Brazil has prospered, Portuguese has also become a commonly heard language in Vail, too. Vail's attraction to rich Latin Americans is the sense of security. "They feel it's a very safe environment for their children, and at least anecdotally, they are not in favor of marijuana for sale in downtown Vail," says Daly. "They don't want their kids to see it. They think it would be detrimental to the overall experience. They feel the same as (our) business owners, that it would be inconsistent with our brand."

Like Whistler, Vail is not entirely prim and proper. Alcohol has often flown freely, sometimes during holidays producing exuberance bordering mayhem. Marijuana use has been ample, too. In 1985, when a quad lift with a sliding canopy to protect riders from snow and wind debuted, it was formally called the Vista Bahn. With a knowing smirk, locals called it the Rasta Bahn, a reference to the marijuana culture of reggae music then popular.

That's not to say that you can't buy marijuana now when visiting Vail. It's harder than ordering a pizza, but it's still easy enough. Three stores that sell cannabis products can be found in a strip that locals call the Green Mile. It's located in Eagle-Vail, the unincorporated community between Vail and Beaver Creek. From Vail Village, it's a 5- or 10-minute ride. Some hotels dispatch vans to take their guests to the cannabis stores.

The one I visited during mid-June is called Roots Rx, and it's located in a suburban office building with an engineering company upstairs and a packaging business next door. It will dispatch a limo to customers who call in, and a "budtender" named Sara told me that the limo has stayed plenty busy since the store opened last October.

Small by standards of those in Denver, it still has the full range of goods: joints, bud for smoking in bowls, plus the concentrates: shatter, pie crust and wax.

It also has edibles: various candies and cookies infused with THC, the psychoactive agent in cannabis. To seemingly everybody's surprise in Colorado, edibles have been responsible for 40 percent of product sold since recreational sales began in January 2014 and the concentrates another 19 percent.

Edibles have had unintended consequences, most famously the catatonic night that *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd spent on a high-priced hotel bed in downtown Denver soon after sales began in 2014. She wrote about her frightened over-indulgence some months later. Unlike smoking, which quickly produces a sensation, eating or drinking THC-infused products has a more delayed impact. Feeling nothing at first, some have gobbled several portions.

"An overdose on marijuana is called a nap," one "budtender" assured me with a smile when I visited a Denver-area store selling recreational marijuana last winter. But the evidence suggests a more unwieldy set of reactions. One college student jumped from a hotel balcony in Denver after wolfing down too many edibles. There have been reports, shy on data and strong on anecdote, of increased visits to emergency rooms.

Colorado regulators in February responded with new rules that mandate identification of THC contents in portions. A chocolate bar may have 100 milligrams of THC, but the bar is broken into chunks of no more than 10 milligrams per serving. In most of the stores I have visited across Colorado since December, customers are advised to start low and go slow. In other words, wait an hour or two to see what 5 grams will do.

A substantial number of marijuana buyers have been tourists. One study conducted a year ago, six months after sales began,

found that visitors were responsible for 50 percent of purchases in metro Denver and up to 90 percent in ski towns.

Aspen and Telluride both allowed sales as soon as the state's rope was dropped in January 2014. They twitch liberal to Vail's innate conservatism. Jack Nicholson and Goldie Hawn hung out in Aspen for decades, and Oprah Winfrey and Tom Cruise have places in Telluride. But Vail? It's better to know Wall Street, than Hollywood, to pick out the rich and famous that visit Vail or its nearby companion of Beaver Creek.

Both Aspen and Telluride treat cannabis much the same as alcohol, at least in determining location of outlets. Like bars, they must be a respectful distance from schools, for example. Both towns also chose to let the market regulate the number of stores. There is no quota. The market itself has capped, for the time being, four stores in Telluride and five in Aspen.

Steamboat Springs was more slow to open the door – and only partially so. Elected officials there carefully created zoning that precludes cannabis stores near the base of the ski area or in the historic downtown area. The stores – capped at three – are all out on the edge of town, with the likes of auto-body shops and plumbing offices.

Other ski communities are split. Most of the world thinks of Crested Butte as one place. It's really two places. The original mining town tilts liberal, but a newer municipality at the base of the ski area called Mt. Crested Butte trends conservative. One allows cannabis sales, but the other one? Forget about it. You see that same dynamic in many other joined-at-the hip ski towns, including Aspen and Snowmass, Telluride and Mountain Village, Winter Park and Fraser.

But here's something more perverse. Those places more inclined toward conservatism also are distrustful of the free market.

Big-government Aspen lets the free-market govern how many cannabis stores operate, but trust-the-free-market Steamboat believes in central planning.

Authentic Colorado

Breckenridge offers arguably Colorado's most interesting story. The town calls itself "genuine Colorado," a reference to its roots in the gold rush of 1859. One relic of that mining era is architecture along the town's Main Street with the Queen Anne's touches of the Victorian era.

It's a cute place for families to stroll, stopping at stores that sell T-shirts, candy and clothing. One store is called the Joy of Sox.

And when recreational sales began in 2014, visitors could also shop for Sour Diesel and other strains of indica and sativa at a store located on the second floor of an old yellow-sided house on Main Street. That's where the Breckenridge Cannabis Club was located, and on opening day it had lines of customers up the narrow stairs and out the door and onto the sidewalk along Main Street.

Breckenridge had a history of being ahead of the Colorado curve in legalization. The town was quick to allow sales of marijuana for medicinal uses after it was authorized by state voters. They could even be on Main Street, if only in second-floor locations. In 2009, town voters went one step further, with 73 percent of voters allowing possession of up to one ounce. It was the first municipality in Colorado to do so. When 55 percent of Colorado voters opted for legalization, Breckenridge was there with 70 percent.

But as time went on, Breckenridge's embrace became less broad. Many people saw medical marijuana a sham. It was supposed to be for people in genuine need, and the Colorado law spells out the conditions: cancer, glaucoma, AIDs, and others. But there was also a provision for "severe pain," and medical

dispensaries in Denver and elsewhere found physicians, on call, who could diagnose that severe pain – wink-wink – in short order. No need to get an appointment weeks in advance. Rather, the script was minutes away. “I’ve never seen so many 21-year-olds with severe neck pain,” the local sheriff said at the time.

The Breckenridge Town Council decided that recreational sales needed to be treated differently than medical sales. The Breckenridge Cannabis Club could still operate out of its second-floor location on Main Street if it sold medical marijuana, but recreational sales could only be done in certain zones. One of those zones is a service district called Airport Road. Several cannabis stores had located there. Locals dubbed it Airpot Road.

The Breckenridge Cannabis Club fought to stay on Main Street and sell recreational pot. But 70 percent of town residents said no. Risk was the central axis for the debate. “Big risk, little upside,” warned three former mayors with a combined tenure of 16 years. “When marijuana goes mainstream, added the former majors, our Main Street may then be ready. But not now, not yet.”

In March, a survey commissioned by the Breckenridge Tourism Office probed how visitors saw the community in light of the availability of marijuana. Overall, 75 percent said it was neither positive nor negative, but more (12 percent) were very positive than (percent very negative). In the overnight visitors not from Colorado, i.e. the destination guests, reviews were even stronger, 20 percent finding marijuana as positive compared to 7 percent who saw it as a negative.

Breckenridge also collects a local sales tax on marijuana sales, but it’s only 1.5 percent of the total sales, compared to 10 percent for grocery and liquor, 22.5 percent for bars and restaurants, and 31 percent for short-term lodging.

The experience in Vail

In Vail, legalization has been a curiosity to most people. One person I know, a long-time consumer of marijuana, has started buying his stash from the Green Mile stores. Why wouldn't you, he said, instead of buying from somebody you barely know in the shadows?

Make no mistake: it's still illegal to consume marijuana in public. People can buy edibles, and no one will know. But smoking a joint or a bowl? Colorado law strictly bans smoking in public places. That includes the ski area and Bridge Street. Indoor smoking is also banned in hotel rooms. Those people smoking – whether tobacco or cannabis – are commonly fined $250 to $300, for the cost of removing the scent.

A hotel valet named Geno, who I used to play basketball with in Vail, reports that he doesn't get asked about where to buy cannabis all that often. Everybody has an iPhone, and the information is at his or her fingertips, he says. "If somebody does ask, I explain that it's not as legal as some people think," he said. It's illegal to drive while under the influence.

As the Vail council started discussion options in early June, Greg Moffet was one of the more outspoken members. He tends toward florid Hawaiian shirts and sandals, even at council meetings. But he didn't argue for legalizing sales. However, he did declare that Vail needs to respond to a new reality. "We have people coming to town anyway, with their shopping bags from Eagle-Vail or Denver," he said. "I am most concerned about creating an environmental where a percentage of our guests – and we need to make peace with this fact – that a percentage of our guests want to consume this product. I think it is incumbent on us to not put our heads in the sand as to what is going on here. The status quo is broken."

Moffet says that Vail needs to provide a place for people to

consume cannabis, no matter where they've purchased it. Daly observed that Moffet was talking about marijuana clubs. Only one such place seems to exist in Colorado, at the gambling town of Black Hawk.

Later, in an interview, Moffet said that in his ideal model, cannabis would be consumed where it is sold. "But that model does not exist today," he added.

The Vail council will take up the marijuana issue again in July, and Moffet says he doesn't think the town's ready to accept sales. But he also argues that Vail should not close the door forever. "It's moving too fast," he says.

You hear that comment frequently in Colorado. While 23 states and the District of Columbia now allow medical use of cannabis, Colorado was the first to implement regulations for sale of purely recreational use. Washington state voters approved legalization at the same time. But without a legal framework or sales of medical marijuana, Washington has been slower to move forward. Colorado is the petri dish for the experiment.

Now, Oregon, Alaska and Washington D.C. have legalized recreational use – although the latter has a modified model, one that emphasizes personal grow operations.

Where will this all end up? *High Times* magazine sponsored the Cannabis Cup on April 18-20 in Denver. The event drew some 50,000 to 75,000 people. Bill Kreutzmann, the drummer for the Grateful Dead, was there to promote his book, "*Deal: My Three Decades of Drumming, Dreams and Drugs*". Some of the 300-plus vendors were hawking pipes, LED lights for more energy efficient grow operations and T-shirts: Denver: Center of the Cannaverse, said one.

There was a sense of triumph as thousands of people drew on cannabis cigars, called blunts, and a collective puff at 4:20pm April 20 produced a haze of smoke. Before, in

conference rooms, speakers had discussed everything from how to cook organically and healthily with cannabis (“cut out the refined sugar!”) to political implications. Ballot issues are being readied in Arizona, California, Nevada, Maine and Massachusetts. Legislators in some other states are working up proposed legalization laws.

“If California legalizes it, it’s over,” said Russ Belville, who does a daily two-hour show on 420 Radio, which calls itself the NPR of THC.

What’s all over? The national policy of prohibition. The U.S. government took the first steps to ban marijuana in 1937, just a few years after legalizing alcohol, and then stepped up the ban in 1970 by making it a Schedule 2 controlled substance under federal laws. Belville showed a chart showing that more than two million people have been imprisoned under the laws. “Mostly black and Latino men,” he said.

Keith Stroup, an attorney who in 1970 founded NORML, the advocacy organization, said that in 1969, polls showed just 12 percent of Americans favored legalization. Now, polls show between 53 and 58 percent for legalization. They can see the failure of prohibition, he said, but two-thirds of Americans also have an unfavorable opinion of marijuana users. “They see us as slackers, people without ambition who spend our days on the sofa,” he said. “We have passed the tipping point, but marijuana smokers must be responsible in how they pursue it and how they present it.”

And after the United States? Other countries took their cues from the U.S. in making marijuana illegal, speakers said, and the reverse will be true, too. Might that include Canada?

Colorado’s key lesson is that legalization has more complexities than you might think. The popularity of edibles surprised everybody. Police are still trying to get a handle on how to judge the influence of somebody who has ingested

THC. Everywhere there are questions about the impact of greater availability on the formation of adolescent minds.

Five and 10 years from now, there will probably still be questions. Keep in mind that the prohibition of alcohol in the United States ended in 1933. If prohibition was considered a massive failure, Americans are still coming grappling with the effects of legalization 77 years.

With cannabis, much the same is likely to be true, too. But Colorado is already one toke over the line.

Opinion: Californians have no idea how important public universities are

By Joe Mathews

Californians, I regret to inform you that your diplomas have been held, and you won't be graduating.

You flunked higher education.

Another state budget, accompanied by an 8-month-long controversy over UC demonstrated once again that we Californians don't have a clue about what our public universities mean to the state.



Joe Mathews

Because if we did, we wouldn’t make them beg us for money to educate more of our children.

Most Californians think that we’re all here because of Junípero Serra or the Gold Rush or oil or sunshine or Hollywood. Nope. The biggest force luring people to California over our history has been our abundance of free – or very cheap – high-quality public education. California pioneered such educational access very early – by 1912, Berkeley was already the largest public university in the world. Offering university degrees on the cheap was a great money saver; we stole away some of the smartest people from other states and countries and had to pay for just four years of their education (a much better deal than paying for K-12 for Californians).

The result of this policy: for most of the 20th century, Californians weren’t just better looking than other Americans – we were smarter too, with the highest rate of college graduates.

But, then in the second half of the 20th century, we began to forget what we had. The state locked in lower tax rates and higher spending by ballot initiative, at the expense of public investment in our world-class university system. The universities made it up by adding tuition fees. Today, we Californians still look great – but we’re not as smart. We’ve fallen out of the top 10 of U.S. states by percentage of adults with college degrees.

The public universities have held onto their reputations and found ways to serve more students despite relentless cutting. The UC 10-campus system, a focus of debate this budget season, saw a 30 percent decrease in state funding – and a 20 percent reduction in its cost per student – over the past decade.

But try telling that to voters, legislators or the media, all of who see the universities as greedy and inefficient – even as they've educated more people with less state support. UC and CSU have fought cuts by appealing to reason and making funding deals with politicians. But reason and politicians are not to be trusted in California, especially when recessions shrink state revenues.

Instead, UC has come to rely on charging out-of-state students huge tuition fees. ($38,000 compared to $14,000 for in-state students). The justification is that such fees subsidize about 9,000 California students whose enrollment is not funded by the state. In one disgraceful legislative hearing this spring, lawmakers actually complained that out-of-state students eligible for financial aid were in fact receiving that aid. Yes, you read that right. The Legislature doesn't want poor kids coming to UC from out of state.

Since the state has a demonstrated need for more educated workers (we'll be short by 1 million by 2025, according to a much-cited report), we should be building on our historic lead and rapidly expanding our universities. But today's California is so small-minded and budget-obsessed that no one seems inclined to make long-term investments in our well being anymore. Even the usually reliable and nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office has itself fallen prey to the myopic short-sightedness, declaring that UC doesn't need to increase its enrollment, even as it receives record numbers of applications.

In response to Sacramento's cuts and meddling, the UC finally got tough and hired former Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano, the

former secretary for Homeland Security, as UC president. Last November, she confronted newly re-elected Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature with a choice: give UC more money or watch it raise tuition again. Sacramento leaders and their media cheerleaders howled but Napolitano's strategy worked. She ended up with more money – including crucial one-time money to cover pension costs – than anticipated.

But Napolitano still had to beg the Legislature to cover an increase in enrollment of 10,000 students over four years (and got less than half of what she asked for).

With immigration flat and the birth rate under replacement levels, California will need to attract more people from out of state too study and work here to maintain the state's vitality. It won't be easy, as other countries and states are more competitive now, especially when it comes to cost-of-living considerations, including the cost of education. So we'll have to make higher education better and cheaper.

It's an argument that Californians haven't much heard – and clearly don't understand. Maybe we all could enroll in a summer course on the importance of higher education in California, and the massive returns we receive from our investment in it.

But who would pay for it?

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

Opinion: Tips for summer driving

By Jaime Coffee

Californians may be experienced with warm weather driving, but the California Highway Patrol and the California Office of Traffic Safety warns that summer presents a new set of challenges on the roads.

“Carefree summer travel requires extra care by motorists to make sure the trip is not ruined by problems,” CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow said. “Drive at a safe speed, maintain your vehicle, and be aware of the challenges of summer driving.”

Some of the hazards of summer driving:

· Leaving children or animals in a vehicle – dangerous at any time of year – becomes extremely dangerous. Be sure that all children are properly restrained in a safety seat or booster seat when driving.

· More new drivers, generally young and inexperienced, will be on the road when school is not in session.

· Visitors not only generate more traffic on the roadways, but those who are unfamiliar with an area may be distracted looking for landmarks and exits.

· High temperatures may create problems for tires and engines. Hot weather can lead to blowouts in tires that have not been well maintained.

· More bicycles, motorcycles and pedestrians are on the roads. Pedestrians can be unpredictable and hard to see, especially in bad weather or after dark.

· Forest and grass fires generate smoke, reducing visibility and sometimes causing road closures. More emergency vehicles may be on the road in a fire area. Check for road reports before you leave home.

“When school is out and temperatures climb, family travel can be a happy occasion,” said OTS Director Rhonda Craft. “We can make sure it stays that way with a little trip planning and attention to safe driving.”

OTS also reminds drivers to make safety a priority:

· Buckle up. Every trip. Every time.

· If you have a vehicle issue, drive out of traffic lanes and off the highway if possible – freeway shoulders are not a safe place for repair work.

· Research road conditions and closures before getting in the car. Visit www.quickmap.dot.ca.gov for real time highway conditions.

A few more tips for safe summer driving from the CHP:

· Vehicle care is critical: oil changes, cooling system, tires, belts and hoses, and windshield wipers and wiper fluid should all be well maintained.

· Carry a roadside emergency kit with fresh water, cell phone, first aid kit, flashlight, flares and a white flag, jumper cables, jack (and ground mat) for changing a tire, work gloves, basic repair tools and duct tape, a jug of water and paper towels for cleaning up, nonperishable food, extra windshield washer fluid, and maps.

Jaime Coffee works for the California Highway Patrol.

Letter: Fanny Bridge transparency questioned

To the community,

After spending the last three and a half years reviewing the documentation provided by the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) to the public on the proposed Highway 89 Fanny Bridge Revitalization I am amazed at the continued use of falsified information to justify the project. Initially the TTD may not have done adequate research on the information they used to file the California Access Program Project Application for the federal funding for the proposed project; however, the continued use of misleading information is unethical.

The current Caltrans Bridge Inspection Report dated June 9, 2014, states that the girders, columns, abutments, footing and pier caps are structurally sound. With accurate information provided to both the TTD and the TRPA, both agencies have continued to falsify the actual condition of the bridge.

On May 19, 2015, the TTD published: “Because it serves as the sole vehicular and emergency access and evacuation route over the Truckee River for West Shore residents, Fanny Bridge’s deficiency also proposes a safety risk to local residents and visitors.”

The TRPA staff also presented the same information to the TRPA Governing Board on Feb. 18, 2015. Confirmation from Caltrans was provided to both agencies on Nov. 4, 2014 when Caltrans confirmed that the repairs to Fanny Bridge are minor in nature. Much of the information provided in the funding application fell into the same category.

Actions taken by the TRPA during the vote on this project did not follow its past direction in protecting the Tahoe environment. The executive director for the TRPA held a public meeting a few years ago and displayed a Tupperware box with road sand in it. Stating that road sand is the No. 1 cause in the decline of lake clarity. TRPA further stated: “TRPA years ago established an urban boundary to stop sprawl, capped the roadway capacity of the basin to reduce reliance on the private automobile .…” and “Limiting the amount of land coverage at Lake Tahoe will continue to be a cornerstone of TRPA’s plan to protect Lake Tahoe’s water quality.”

The proposed project approved by the TRPA governing and advisory boards adds road sand to an expanded highway system resulting in approximately 4.4 acres of land coverage some of which is through a stream environmental area.

On April 14, 2015, I met with the staff of Sen. Dianne Feinstein to request the senator’s involvement in the SR89 Fanny Bridge Project. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who co-authored the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act and prides the achievements of the act by eliminating roadways through forested land, protecting the irreplaceable environment and protecting the SEZs; after over a month from meeting with her staff, Feinstein has remained silent on whether the impacts to the environment, community and businesses out way the proposed cost of $33 million.

The outcome of the SR89 Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project was decided on over a year ago, which was confirmed by a representative of Placer County. Based on factual information there is no justification for the project.

I would like to thank all of the members of the North Shore community, League to Save Lake Tahoe and Friends of the West Shore who supported me on my passion to try and provide the best project possible for our irreplaceable environment, community and businesses.

Jim Sajdak, Tahoe City

Opinion: LTUSD condones trashing tennis courts

By Kathryn Reed

Football is king. That’s nothing new. It’s just sad all the lies that go into making it a reality.

The latest lie is how Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials profess to care so much about the tennis courts at South Tahoe High School. Ever since those courts were rebuilt a few years ago it has been a nightmare to be able to play on them.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater claims he wants to keep the courts pristine. He doesn’t want riffraff coming in and ruining the courts. That’s why they are always locked, he has repeatedly said.

It cost about $350,000 to build what at the time were essentially six new courts. While the project wasn’t originally part of the Measure G facilities bond, a line in the contractors’ contract made it logical to repave the courts. The contract said if the workers could not park at STHS, they would be paid an additional 15 minutes at the start and end of their day to compensate for the time to get to the work site. This was going to add about $400,000 to the nearly $25 million project going on at that time.

The district decided it would be more prudent in terms of time

and money to have the workers use the tennis courts as a staging area, lose access to them for a season and then have them rebuilt.

The use of these courts has been contentious and controversial since they were resurfaced.



South Tahoe High’s tennis courts are being used for housing for a multi-day football camp. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Tennis players are the first ones to want the courts to remain in good condition. But maybe it doesn’t matter since we aren’t allowed to play on them for more than 16 hours this summer.

What is galling is the duplicity of school district officials. Or maybe it shouldn’t be surprising if one looks at the sports the children of these decision-makers play.

Tarwater did not return a phone call, nor did STHS Athletic Director Tony Sunzeri nor school board President Barbara Bannar.

The courts were covered with tents last weekend. Boys attending a football camp were sleeping there. They were sleeping in the school. They were all over campus.

Several tents remained as a group of tennis players got to the courts Monday. The boys walked on the courts in their cleats. There are signs that say “Tennis Shoes Only”. It is these types of shoes that can ruin the surface of tennis courts. Apparently rules don’t apply to football players.

Chicks with Sticks, of which I’m a member, is a group of friends paying Lake Tahoe Unified School District $300 to use the courts for one day a week for eight weeks. Members of this group are the only ones allowed to use the tennis courts at South Tahoe High School this summer, according to LTUSD.

Why the public can’t use the courts for their intended purpose and football players can muck them up is beyond me.

It took the organizers of Chicks with Sticks more than 16 hours to secure a deal with LTUSD. Sixteen hours is about all the courts will be used – at least for tennis.

The fact that the school district clearly has no policy for how the courts get used, allowed a now retired secretary to make decisions above her pay grade, and gave the organizers the run around is a horrendous way to do business. Tennis could be big business in this town, and on the entire South Shore. One only has to look at what the nonprofit Zephyr Cove Tennis Club Foundation, which is in its second year, has done, to see what a well-run public facility looks like. (ZCTCF operates the six courts owned by Douglas County.)

It is inexcusable that the district says no to tennis at STHS except for eight days this summer, but yes to football players.

The courts are a mess. There is garbage flying around. Trash cans are outside the court, none inside. There is debris – like wood chips – that makes turning an ankle highly likely. Sand in the back of a court is dangerous. (Now I know why each player had to sign a liability form.) A bench is broken and lying in disrepair. A rolling ladder had to be moved so

players wouldn’t run into it.

It’s incredibly sad to see my tax dollars being so misused. It’s sad to see tennis courts be locked so people can’t play on them. It’s sad to see football players be allowed to use them to sleep on, and even more horrendous to hear the click-clack of their cleats on these fairly young courts.

The fact that these boys wouldn’t listen to anyone explain how walking onto the court while we were playing was bad etiquette shouldn’t have surprised us. They had already trashed the courts and were continuing to do so in their cleats. And apparently all of this is OK with LTUSD officials, because, well, football is king.

Opinion: EDC Grand Jury has outlived its usefulness

By Larry Weitzman

While the precursor of the grand jury system dates back beyond the Magna Carta (which just had its 800-year anniversary on June 15), after reading the political claptrap from the current El Dorado County Grand Jury (2014-15), it appears that its usefulness has past.

One of the reports, “Time to Admit & Correct a Mistake” (Case GJ 14-15) wants to abolish the County Charter and revert to a general law county, which is a step backward in democracy. The appropriate title for this report should have been “Putting political Gain Above what’s Right for the County.” As stated in my column from a year ago, the grand jury is no longer a fact finder but a political body out to create

political power for certain individuals. In fact, this grand jury and the several before it are pursuant to the Quadra Case (411 F. Supp 451) very likely illegally constituted.



Larry Weitzman

In my column from July 14, 2014, explained that the 2013-14 grand jury was an illogical attempt to neuter the Board of Supervisors and enhance the power of the chief administrative officer by first eliminating elected department heads and then giving the CAO the absolute power to appoint all department heads – including all department heads currently appointed by the Board of Supervisors – was among the many power hungry charter changes sought by the CAO. This current grand jury – which is composed of some members from the previous grand jury – is trying another approach by claiming that we should revert back to a general law county where only three department heads are elected, the sheriff, the DA and the assessor, the rest of the current electeds should be appointed by the CAO.

Using illogical or specious facts, the GJ commences its rant by claiming that only 14 counties of California's 58 counties are charter counties, leading the reader to believe that El Dorado County is in the extreme minority, one of the outcasts. This is a good example how liars figure and figures lie. While that fact may be true, is it relevant? What is relevant is who the charter counties are. It turns out that about three-quarters of California's population live in charter counties. It is mostly low population counties that are not charter counties, like Alpine, Modoc, Calaveras and Amador. In mid-size counties, Tehama, Butte, Placer and El

Dorado, the voters have chosen a charter county. Tehama is the smallest population-wise with about 63,000 people, about a third of El Dorado County's population.

The population of charter counties exceeds 25 million. Charter counties give the voters more democracy and a bureaucracy that is more responsive. Ever try to fire or get a response from a non-elected bureaucrat? An appointed auditor or tax collector might be beholden to the appointing body or official, creating areas of mischief. Independent checks and balances are the key to a vibrant democracy.

Attacking the Charter Committee

This GJ claims the Charter Review Committee ignored the prior GJ (13-14) charter changes such as remove term limits for supervisors or create them for elected department heads. I attended every CRC meeting except the first meeting, which was perfunctory. Nearly every item from the GJ recommendations was extensively discussed. The CRC did make five recommendations to the BOS, three of which the voters approved with two more set for the next election.

Chairman interrogated

Chairman of the CRC, Kris Payne, was interviewed by the current GJ and wasn't asked about the accomplishments of the committee or what was done, except the GJ says, Payne said that the CRC "didn't have the authority to consider the GJ's report unless directed by the BOS." So the current GJ is saying those recommendations needed to be reviewed by a new CRC.

I have news for the GJ, in the meetings I attended which were effectively all of them, the report was discussed and found to be ludicrous for the most part. It would usurp most of the BOS' power, meaning the voters' power by placing too much power and authority into the hands of one person, the CAO; that the voters could then do little to change as the BOS

would be effectively neutered. It was an attempted takeover of power by Terri Daly, CAO at the time of the 2013-14 grand jury. In fact, the Charter changes that were written appeared to be designed by Daly.

Term limits were also extensively discussed and left alone. The committee understood that terms limits on legislators, i.e., people who make laws and land-use decisions are one thing, but term limits on professional department heads are completely different as they have no lawmaking ability or far ranging power. Why would you limit your right to use a CPA, doctor or lawyer to just eight or 12 years? In real life most people keep their professional help for life.

Payne said the questions he was asked by the GJ were always leading and they seemed to want to find fault with the CRC. Payne says the CRC did not abdicate its legal responsibility. It appears that this GJ wants a do-over on the CRC. Pack it with its people and try and have five people remake the county in its image. In the GJ report it clearly states the BOS and the CRC have been unwilling to consider the need for repeal or amendment to the charter. As CRC chairman said they and the BOS approved five changes. All the other recommendations were rejected. What makes this GJ so smart?

Payne was extremely proud of the performance of the CRC. Meetings were done in the evening so there could be more public participation. It was set in a conference room and while attendance was large, well beyond the five committee members, everyone had a seat at the large conference table and Payne encouraged public participation on all issues. Meetings were always timely noticed on the BOS agenda and Payne carefully maintained Brown Act compliance.

Still pulling puppet strings

In another twist this GJ biggest complainant appears to be none other than Daly, who was seen continually going in and

out of the GJ room. She failed to get her ridiculous power-grabbing ideas effectuated last year so she went at it again this year. As with last year's GJ, this GJ became a pawn of Daly's manipulation.

Kill the messenger

If their report isn't laughable already, then it's their claim that "the absence of a local robust media market means voters in EDC lack reliable information about county government." And with that claim, the GJ even attacked the *Mountain Democrat* for its columns and several editorials; first demeaning the newspaper, saying it is only "published but three times a week and has a circulation of only 10,300…" The words "but" and "only" demonstrate the political editorializing of the GJ. Why are they demeaning the *Mountain Democrat*? Maybe their next move will be an attack on the First Amendment. Maybe the GJ should inquire of Terri Daly about the *MD*'s impotence. Perhaps the GJ never heard of the Internet and social media.

What makes the GJ media experts anyway? All it does is demonstrate their bias with specious, unfounded claims and a lack of real knowledge of the media and the lack of transparency within the CAOs office who often won't talk to the press.

IT disaster

Without showing that every claim they make is a virtual spin job, perhaps the most obvious is the GJ's failure to understand the Cost Allocation Plan that is the responsibility of the auditor-controller. The GJ shows it has no understanding of the plan, the law or department responsibilities under the plan. The Cost Allocation Plan was more than adequate and passed muster during a recent State Controller's audit. This plan was in existence for over 10 years and never had a problem in its operation among the various departments until Daly's handpicked director took over

Information Technologies. It's at that point IT failed to do direct billings properly. This has nothing to do with the plan, but everything to do with the IT department.

But the GJ tried to blame the auditor for the mistakes of the IT department and its inept and totally incompetent director appointed by Daly. The loss of funds was the failure of the IT to do proper record keeping and billing. The BOS finally removed the IT director where she had no business being in the first place. The auditor can't replace the records lost by the IT director. The facts are clear on this issue and it is just another fabrication created by the GJ. In other words the GJ for the last several years has become a purely political body and not a fact-finding body. It was this way last year as well.

The county spends a lot of money on the GJ. (The $80,000 annual budget is more than double the Yolo and Placer budgets of $35,000.) We should abolish the GJ or at a minimum, defund it. Of the 50 states in the United States, only two have civil grand juries. Forty-eight states don't or have abolished them. And only about 13 percent of the U.S. population suffers under this political tomfoolery. This GJ and many of the recent GJs before are not properly composed as provided by law with respect to diversity in age, race, and location and are supposed to be picked from a cross-section of EDC and a large jury pool. Because there are so few applicants a recruitment process is almost necessary, allowing cliques to form or special interest groups to take over the process which becomes a witch hunt as demonstrated here with its entirely bogus findings. They should all be rejected.

We will never know how the GJ concocted this hack report and the 14 others, as it is secretive and unaccountable. But it is obvious several of the reports are a simply another attempt at a county coup motivated by politics. What needs to be abolished are not the County Charter and the disenfranchising of the voters, but the El Dorado County Grand Jury itself. If

that can’t be done, then it should at least be defunded.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of rescue.