Opinion: Our water-guzzling food factory

By Nicholas Kristof, New York Times

Let’s start with a quiz.

Which consumes the most water?

A) a 10-minute shower.

B) a handful of 10 almonds.

C) a quarterpound hamburger patty.

D) a washing machine load.

The answer? By far, it’s the hamburger patty. The shower might use 25 gallons. The almonds take up almost a gallon each, or close to 10 gallons for the handful. The washing machine uses about 35 gallons per load. And that beef patty, around 450 gallons.

The drought in California hit home when I was backpacking with my daughter there recently on the Pacific Crest Trail, and the first eight creeks or springs we reached were all dry.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Have Democrats

pulled too far left?

By Peter Wehner, New York Times

Among liberals, it’s almost universally assumed that of the two major parties, it’s the Republicans who have become more extreme over the years. That’s a self-flattering but false narrative.

This is not to say the Republican Party hasn’t become a more conservative party. It has. But in the last two decades the Democratic Party has moved substantially further to the left than the Republican Party has shifted to the right. On most major issues the Republican Party hasn’t moved very much from where it was during the Gingrich era in the mid-1990s.

To see just how far the Democratic Party has moved to the left, compare Barack Obama with Bill Clinton. In 1992, Clinton ran as a centrist New Democrat. In several respects he governed as one as well. He endorsed a sentencing policy of “three strikes and you’re out,” and he proposed adding 100,000 police officers to the streets.

In contrast, President Obama’s former attorney general, Eric H. Holder Jr., criticized what he called “widespread incarceration” and championed the first decrease in the federal prison population in more than three decades. Obama, meanwhile, has chosen to focus on police abuses.

Read the whole story

Letter: Auditor asks EDC supes to resolve issues

Publisher's note: ***This letter was given to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on June 2, with a copy given to CAO Pamela Knorr.***

Ladies and Gentlemen:

For the past couple of years, I have been asking for the county staff and sometimes your board to fix certain county ordinances, policies, and fee collection programs. Your board and your staff have not adequately prioritized resolving these issues. Because of the significant time that has passed, I am going to document some of these significant unresolved issues now.

<u>Outdated Claims Procedures Ordinance</u>

The county's claims procedures ordinance was adopted in 1958. This outdated ordinance violates state law in some instances and states that I am only to do payroll once per month. If I were to adhere to this ordinance, the county would be at significant legal peril. I wrote the former CAO and former county counsel about this problem in 2013. I was assured that this matter would be resolved. In June 2014, I informed the Executive Management Advisory Committee about this problem and was assured that county staff would work quickly to resolve this matter. This matter has not been resolved.

<u>Board Adopted Tuition Reimbursement Policy Different than MOUs</u>

The County's Tuition Reimbursement policy adopted by your board and on your board's website is materially different than the requirements in the MOUs with organized labor. As an example, the MOU with Local 1 that was adopted in November 2013 is more restrictive than board policy. This inconsistency wastes a lot of time, frustrates our employees, and is extremely unfair to our employees. In June 2014, I informed the Executive Management Advisory Committee about this problem and was assured that county staff would work quickly to resolve this matter. This matter has not been resolved.

Special District Developer Impact Fees

The county levies Developer Impact Fees for Special Districts pursuant to Government Code Section 66000 and our local ordnance. The county continues to levy these fees even though we are not in compliance with state law or our local ordinance. Nexus studies that are required by state law are long overdue in most cases. I informed the former CAO, the former County Counsel, and the entire Board of Supervisors about this significant problem in March 2013. I was assured that the County staff would take corrective action. In June 2014, I informed the Executive Management Advisory Committee about this problem and was assured that county staff would work quickly to resolve this matter. This matter has not been resolved.

EDH Sheriff’s Substation Developer Impact Fees

The county levies a Developer Fee for an El Dorado Hills sheriff’s substation pursuant to Government Code Section 66000. The county continues to levy this fee even though the county has no plans to build this substation. The county has not updated its Nexus study as required by state law. On April 2, 2015, I informed the County Counsel and CAO about this issue. This issue has not been resolved.

I am hoping that your board directs staff to resolve these problems as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Joe Harn, CPA and auditor-controller

Letter: Jenner is not news

To the community,

I have often said and written: We are a nation of litigation with a tabloid mentality. The land is filled with tort terrorists and scandal-mongers.

The latest big do about Bruce Jenner is beyond reason, particularly when it replaces so much news of substance and consequence. We are living in a cluttered catastrophe of a culture crisis. We have enemies in this world, but in this case I remember what Pogo said: “We have met the enemy and they is us.”

Not being particularly religious. I do remember some significant words – *Jesus wept*.

Merlyn Karst, Denver

Letter: Chamber mixer a success

To the community,

Summer officially begins later this month, but it certainly felt like summer was in full force at the Round Hill Round Up

Business After Hours Mixer (BAHM) on May 28 at Round Hills Pines Beach Resort.

Over 70 people experienced the resort's new tiki bar and their new signature drink, the Painkiller, while enjoying the beautiful weather on the beach.

Thank you to Round Hill Pines Beach Resort for hosting and providing a wonderful night of networking.

Shannon Earley, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Letter: Ski patrollers help at Bread & Broth

To the community,

"Heavenly Ski Patrol welcomes the opportunity to serve our community in times of need. We appreciate all of the effort toward feeding the hungry and feel privileged to be a part of it today."

These were the collective words of Heavenly Ski Patrol members Jo Cain-Stiles, David E. Hellod and Nate Ludwig. These three ski patrol members were the volunteers representing the Heavenly Ski Patrol, which sponsored the hot and nutritious meal served by Bread & Broth at the May 18 evening dinner.

Approximately 95 meals were served by the welcoming ski patrol members. As a nonprofit, all volunteer organization, B&B provides full course meals, giveaway food bags and to go servings every Monday evening at St. Theresa Church Grace Hall and provides a smaller meal at its Second Serving on Fridays at the Lake Tahoe Presbyterian Church.

For several years now, the Heavenly Ski Patrol organization has been hosting two adopt A Day of Nourishments annually. As always, the members from the ski patrol are really helpful with the dinner setup and stay to the very end of the dinner service helping with the dinner's cleanup. Bread & Broth would like to thank the Heavenly Ski Patrol for its efforts to help those in need by providing the funds and giving their time to serve meals that ease hunger in the Lake Tahoe South Shore community.

To help B&B as a donor or sponsor, contact me at 530.542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: EDC CAO signs backdoor PI contract

By Larry Weitzman

El Dorado County interim Chief Administrative Officer Pamela Knorr, with a sign off from the new County Counsel Robyn Truitt-Drivon, has hired a private investigator.

The PI contract was hidden under a "consultant" contract with a law firm that Knorr has dealt with when she was CAO of Alpine County. Ditto for the private investigator. This all ties back to a lawsuit brought by the Alpine undersheriff against Knorr, who subsequently left Alpine under a cloud.

Larry Weitzman

El Dorado County has a policy that allows the CAO to execute contracts less than $50,000 without Board of Supervisors approval (because of inflation it is a bit more than $60,000 now). It is the same policy that is followed in most California counties.

Pamela Knorr as CAO of Alpine County entered into a contract on March 1, 2011, with Ken MacHold of MacHold Investigations, a private investigation firm at the rate of $50 an hour not to exceed $50,000 to investigate the sheriff's department, with emphasis on the undersheriff.

The total incurred cost of that contract is unknown and a California Public Records Act request for invoices and payments have initially been rebuffed by County Counsel Dave Prentice of the law firm of Prentice, Long and Epperson. This private practice is contract county counsel to four small counties, including Alpine County – and now El Dorado County – and about a dozen more small government agencies, such as the Fresno Kings Madera Health Authority as general counsel. This information comes directly from the firm's Website.

The Alpine County investigation is partly and directly responsible for a federal lawsuit for damages in the U.S District Court against the county of Alpine, Pamela Knorr, and various other county officials. Trial has been set for the middle of next year.

Fast forward to early 2015.

Pamela Knorr essentially hires the same investigator for El

Dorado County, but does so in an apparent subterfuge by hiring the investigator through an attorney's office, possibly giving her an attorney-client secrecy privilege.

The 11-page contract was executed by CAO Knorr and El Dorado County Counsel Robyn Truitt-Drivon on March 2.

The purpose of the contract is stated on page 1, which contains the following recitals: "Consultant has represented to county (EDC) that it is specially trained, experienced, expert and competent to perform the special services required hereunder and county has determined to rely upon such representations; and county (EDC) has determined that the provision of these services provided by Consultant is in the public's best interest, and that these services are more economically and feasibly performed by an outside independent consultants as well as authorized by El Dorado County Charter.…"

Why the foregoing is important is that if you check the law firm's Website, it shows no current services in investigations except for El Dorado County, which became a client and is the firm's only investigatory client as a result of this contract.

In other words, this is essentially the contract of Ken MacHold with the name and contract rates for services changed.

Article III of this contract provides for compensation and charges for services and it lists the cost per hour for the investigator at $110 an hour.

Remember, the direct contract with MacHold from 2011with Alpine County was at $50 an hour. It obviously would have been less expensive to contract direct, about half as expensive.

Also in Article III is the real giveaway: "Vehicle travel (non-standard trips more than 150 miles from consultant's Roseville office) … current IRS per mile rate."

Why is that critical? The consultant, Prentice, et al, doesn't have an office in Roseville. According to the Internet and verified by a phone call, consultant's offices are in Redding and Fresno. Not Roseville.

Who has an office in Roseville? Ken MacHold.

The county contract routing sheet also indicates that this is a modified MacHold contract, as it states, "Blue route and memo for previously approved boilerplate are attached. Changes are limited to Article III."

Reliable sources say it is MacHold who is the investigator interviewing EDC employees. The questions are back to the issue of a "respectful workplace. " And they are not being done anonymously.

The county under Terri Daly, in contracts approved by the BOS, has already spent $249,240 with the Van Dermyden Maddux Law Firm ($52,063) and MRG group ($197,177) on the alleged "climate of fear" (Knorr was the contract administrator).

The results of the spending were that if there were any climate of fear issues in the county, it was from CAO, Terri Daly, Kim Kerr and in the IT department.

On March 2, according to the county contract routing sheet, Knorr signed the contract prematurely. Before a contract can be signed it must be approved by risk management. On March 4, two days after Knorr executed the contract, Prentice, et al LLP's professional liability insurance was disapproved because the limits of liability were insufficient and remained so until April 29. County rules require no contract shall be signed until it meets all requirements. Additionally, it is unclear if Workers' Comp insurance has been complied with.

Because we are unaware of the contractual relationship of MacHold and Prentice, et al, liability insurance may still not meet the requirements.

There is more. A bill arrived recently for this consulting contract in the amount of $15,627. The CAO's office directed that these invoices be paid and that they be encumbered to "Facility ACO Projects" fund. The payments are to be charged to the budget line "Fixed Asset: Project Management" and the description of the User Code is "New Courthouse."

Is the new courthouse being investigated or or the alleged "climate of fear?" Does the state Judicial Council know about this county investigative expense allocation to the "New Courthouse?" Is a private eye a capital expense?

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Opinion: Strengthening the educator-pupil bond

By Brandon Sportel

About four years ago, I found myself asking a question many teachers ask their students: "Why would you do something like that?"

I was sitting down with a fourth-grade student I had just been asked to counsel. I had success at getting to the bottom of students' issues and I had earned a reputation as a teacher version of "Columbo."

The student had been sent to the principal's office for hurting another kid during recess. The reports were that he had also kicked another student for taking his place in line. I had worked with this student in the past for similar behavior toward peers. Now the behaviors were getting worse, and the parents were not responding. The boy answered my question about his motivations by saying, ¨Students were cutting in front of me,” and, “Two days ago they were calling me names.”

I had this realization that I was expecting the student to somehow psychoanalyze himself and come up with a grand justification for his behavior and actions. Asking the “why did you do it” question did not help me to solve the issue — and I realized it never would. It was simply a fallback question for adults when they were not sure what to do.

This was the beginning of my attempts to engineer ways for myself and other teachers to take care of the emotional lives and mental health of our students.

I first knew I wanted to be a teacher when I was in middle school in Michigan. I got paid a $25 stipend for running a basketball clinic with little kids and discovered I was good at motivating students. As I pursued teaching, I moved to California, and became an assistant in a classroom with students that had developmental disabilities, emotional disturbances, and aggressive behaviors. This environment, along with excellent training, challenged me to figure out how to support students with multiple challenges and give them a better quality of life. I currently teach two special needs classrooms at Canalino Elementary School in Carpinteria.

Every good teacher I’ve talked to wants to build better relationships with their students. But lack of time is a major barrier. A typical classroom has 25 to 30 students and if a teacher devoted just 2 minutes to each student, that would add up to an hour every day, which would have to come out of valuable instructional time in this academic-focused (and test-crazy) era. And even if they had time, teachers rarely have the resources to handle social, emotional, and mental health challenges. Improving professional development in this area would help. So would clear, practical, and efficient protocols that are used school wide.

What teachers most need is the ability to teach students strategies and techniques to meet the expectations of a challenging school day. To this end I developed the “Think Time,” protocol –, a process for identifying student’s needs by connecting their feelings and actions. My brother, a fellow teacher and a mentor to me, and UC Santa Barbara student psychologists worked with me to create a paper-and-pencil form that took teachers through the steps of asking students questions such as “What were you feeling before the problem occurred?” It gave them suggestions to pass on to students – for example, conveying that, “a better choice next time, rather than acting out, would be to ask to speak to the teacher privately.”

Here is a typical example: A student was sent to me after getting multiple warnings for disrupting the math lesson. The teacher reported that the student struggled to sit still and focus, blurting out answers without raising his hand, and was disrupting the students at his table by fidgeting and tapping his pencil. When we began, he was asked to identify his feelings from a chart. He chose energetic, excited, and anxious, which helped me understand his impulsive behaviors. The student then listed the actions that were connected to his feelings – in this case, (blurting out and fidgeting). Once I better understood the feelings that motivated his actions, I realized he just needed to choose a more socially appropriate way to cope with his feelings. We settled on having him discreetly step outside the classroom, take a three-minute break to move around, and return to the lesson ready to try again.

Of course, not everything was smooth when I began to roll this program out at my school. Teachers struggled to find the time to sit down with students and go through the process. They had trouble finding the right replacement behaviors, and struggled to understand the true purpose of the process.

So we improved the protocol by providing training to teachers that explained the rationale, created and implemented lessons for students, revamped the questions teachers should ask students, hired mentors to assist the teachers, and made the process digital.

After these tweaks, teachers reported that students were using replacement behaviors, which increased instructional minutes and improved communication with parents. But we also realized that we were only reaching the students with chronic disruptive behaviors (typically two to five kids per class). What about the needs of the other students?

Students with difficult behavior are not the only ones who struggle emotionally. Students often internalize feelings and lack the ability to express their needs appropriately, which makes it nearly impossible for teachers to recognize what is motivating their actions. We tested a “positive version of Think Time,” where all students could record things they were proud of, or simple acts of kindness that showed good citizenship.

From there, we developed the “check-in system.” This system teaches students how to reflect on their feelings routinely and to express them appropriately to get their needs met.

Our helloyello.net web app allows students to let teachers know what’s going on in their lives good or bad, wrong or sad, daily. And the app gives teachers the opportunity to “close the loop” quickly – within seconds– to strengthen their relationships with students.

The results have been stunning. For instance, a teacher recently shared with me that her student checked in that she was struggling to stay awake at school because her baby brother’s crying was keeping her up at night. The teacher closed the loop by letting the student know she had read her check in and asked if she could email her parents. The teacher sent a friendly email to the parents, who in turn were grateful and quickly solved the problem at home.

"Check-ins" are particularly good at addressing bullying. Students feel safe reporting problems on the playground or in the bathroom since they can confidentially reach their teachers without having to tell them face to face, in view of the bully. In one example, a student wrote about feeling bad because he participated in teasing someone; teachers, armed with additional information, are able to step in before the conflicts escalate.

Our HelloYello team is confident our procedures can help other schools in California. My school, Canalino Elementary is a Title I school, meaning at least 40 percent of students come from low-income families. Many of our students are also English language learners, requiring us to take extra care to find ways to make sure the kids understand the questions and the behaviors expected of them. Of course, schools better off than ours also struggle with the emotional well being of their students.

Taking care of our students' social and emotional health isn't an end just in itself. Research studies have shown that social and emotional well being has a significant impact on student achievement. Teaching students to express themselves appropriately, with reasoning and evidence, is a recurrent theme in the Common Core Standards. Teachers cannot help students achieve their academic potential or demonstrate how much they've learned if they do not know how the students are feeling, what they are thinking, and what's going on in their daily lives.

Brandon Sportel has been selected as the Carpinteria district teacher of the year, and Santa Barbara County teacher of the year. He was the California winner of this year's Milken Educator Award. He wrote this for "Reimagining California," a partnership of the California Endowment and Zocalo Public

Square.

Letter: El Dorado County seniors deserve better

Publisher's note: ***This letter was sent to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in advance of the June 1 budget hearing. The author is the former director of the county Human Services Department, worked for the county for 30 years and helped build all of the senior programs.***

Dear members of the board:

Regarding Monday's budget discussion, I know you have much to consider. So, briefly:

If you follow all of the staff budget recommendations regarding Community Services Senior Programs, the county will effectively begin disassembling a vital senior continuum of care that took more than 40 years to build.

When Community Services stood as a separate department, its percentage of administrative costs ran about half what currently is being charged for administration by the Health and Human Services Agency. In other words, there are certainly better ways of doing business that would save county resources and save services for seniors.

Note that, while the recommended budget requests an appropriation of $3.9 million for Health and Human Services Agency Administration, the actual amount proposed to be spent on administration appears to exceed $8.1 million. A significant amount of what is being spent is being drawn out of Community Services.

Thousands of our county's seniors are depending on your continued support, as are their families, hundreds of volunteers and a very dedicated, hard working, capable, modestly-paid direct service staff who embody what public service should be about. The challenges faced by elders and their families are substantial and the services are critical to their well-being.

If you remember Moni Gilmore, please give seniors the support she would have asked from you. If you never met her, ask someone who knew her.

Thank you. I'll be glad to meet with you on any of the above points.

John Litwinovich, former EDC employee

Opinion: EDC continues deficit spending

By Larry Weitzman

Having deficit budgets is commonplace in the federal government. They just effectively print more money to cover it. (They do it by borrowing money such as selling T-bills.) But in subordinate governments, while borrowing is sometimes done and some jurisdictions even end up going bankrupt (making future borrowing even more expensive and many times next to impossible), it is frowned upon.

Here in El Dorado County we have had two straight years of general fund budget deficits and our next budget will make it a third straight negative year. The only reason EDC is surviving is because of a $50 million plus cash fund balance built through the FY 12-13.


Larry Weitzman

With respect to the EDC deficit, it only relates to the general fund portion of the budget, the discretionary part of the budget in which the Board of Supervisors can determine how the money is spent whether on senior programs, analysts in the CAO's office, funding a music festival or on law enforcement. The other part of the budget, which about equals the general fund, is non-discretionary. It must be spent as the revenues specify, like road fund money or government funded mental health. Much of that money is federal or state and must be spent as specified. These non-discretionary revenues have nothing to do with deficits or surpluses.

Let's review again how EDC got into a deficit situation, what caused it and why it's going to get worse. It only requires the examination of a few numbers which are from a CAO PowerPoint presentation from a Dec. 16, 2014, BOS meeting and are available on the EDC website.

First let's examine the last five years of actual revenue and expense general fund data starting with FY 09-10. The numbers are in the millions of dollars

Fiscal Year 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13 13-14 14-15

Revenue 182.3 182.4

183.2 196.8 197.3 ?

Expenses 178.7 177.8 176.1 182.9 205.1 ?

Surplus/(negative) 3.6 4.6 7.1 13.9 (7.8) (15-20 est.)

The final number is the best estimate from the CAO and the auditor's offices. Now let's look at salaries and benefits for the last five years which are about 65 percent of general fund expenses.

Fiscal Year 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13 13-14 14-15

Salaries/Benefits 117.9 118.2 116.0 118.5 132.3 142.0 (est.)

Notice the deficits started when salaries and benefits skyrocketed, as they were effectively level at $118 million for the FY 09-10 to 12-13. They rose by about $14 million in FY 13-14 and will rise by about $24 million estimated for the FY 14-15 that ends June 30. While the rest of county expenses remained relatively constant, it is salaries and benefits that are almost entirely responsible for the current deficit issues and will continue to grow. In two years that is $38 million in extra spending on salaries and benefits. As a side note, county revenues for the FY 05-06 to 08-09 where almost level at an average of $188.7 million, meaning revenue growth in 10 years averages less than 1 percent and will not overcome the spending as it is growing at a much higher rate.

There are two reasons why salaries and benefits grew at such a rapid rate: (1) New, additional hiring of perhaps 100 or more general fund positions (for the last nine months, the CAO refuses to do an analysis of the hiring when this deficit became obvious. This demonstrates a complete lack of transparency, i.e., what are they hiding?); (2) The 15 percent raise, with the hiring being responsible for about 75 percent of the accumulated $38 million jump in new salaries attributable to the growth in the county bureaucracy. Law enforcement hiring is near zero. While Supervisor Shiva Frentzen back in September asked for an analysis of this new hiring, Supervisor Brian Veerkamp did not support her motion.

The current budget was set by the previous BOS with only three votes. It is bleeding about $1.3 million a month. Veerkamp is the only remaining BOS member that voted yes. Supervisors Frentzen and Ron Mikulaco voted no to the current hemorrhaging budget, which now becomes the Veerkamp budget.

Supervisor Veerkamp has received emails from the county auditor for the past nine months warning the BOS that spending is exceeding revenues and prompt action to reduce spending is imperative. Veerkamp suggested the formation of an ad hoc budget committee in September 2014. He stated in an open BOS session, “We’ve got major budget issues. I’d feel much better getting all those other things to a committee and make sure we get multiple minds on this and develop a plan, a prioritized plan and the 15/16 (FY budget) deficit is the target. And I understand it. I have seen deficits all my career tied to the county. But we have to be very real about it and we have to start addressing it now. Not six months from now, not a month from now. Now.” An ad hoc budget committee was formed in which Veerkamp became the de facto chairman, with the express purpose that “this committee will provide recommendations to the BOS regarding funding sources and expenditures of funds.” Those exact words were stated as the purpose of the committee on the application form.

The result of the committee was a page and a half, 10-point set of government speak budget guidelines and at a recent BOS meeting Veerkamp stated its purpose was “long range budget planning.” Veerkamp has a very short and self-serving memory. The ad hoc committee’s purpose was not just spending cuts for the next fiscal year of 15-16, it was for immediate cuts to the current budget to stop bleeding $1.3 million a month. On July 1 this will accelerate to $1.7 million a month when the last 5 percent raise of the Terri Daly and Veerkamp 15 percent raise which was approved on Nov. 5, 2013, kicks in. Hence, the Veerkamp deficit.

Reviewing the CAO Pamela Knorr FY 15-16 budget is more of the same. Salary and benefits will continue to grow, seniors will face a loss in services, there will be no improvement in other county services, and as I have written in the past, hang on to your wallets as fees (targeted taxes) are going to go up.

The senior cuts discussed recently are in the proposed Knorr budget. These are miniscule cuts that previously provided huge benefits. Senior lunch programs and Perks Court transitional housing, gone. However, the overstocked and overstaffed Knorr CAO office with its $1.8 million of new analysts and administration staff is left intact. Cost of fee based county services, like building fees and recording fees are going up. Does the public get more sheriff's deputies or assistant district attorneys that provide public safety and law enforcement? Forgetaboutit. In fact, of the new county hiring, all of public safety that is historically the main purpose of county government had two new net employees in the last two years.

What is amusing is how CAO Knorr tries to lay the "blame" for this budget on the BOS when she writes in her proposed budget, "These decreases are related to the proposed 6.25 percent cut instruction by the BOS for general fund programs." The 6.25 percent across the board cut was a recommendation directly from CAO Knorr. It was part of a presentation by the CAO dating from Feb. 24, 2014. The CAO has completely ignored solving the problem by attacking the cause, overspending and overhiring. While the buck stops with the BOS, the CAO is driving the ship and demanding authority to do so; especially after claiming at a recent BOS meeting (April 28) "section 304 of the EDC Charter gives the CAO the responsibility to prepare the budget and the BOS the right to modify it."

Yet at a Jan. 6 BOS meeting Knorr tells the BOS, "Your real need is to stop spending." Four months later the same Knorr tells the BOS you are a policy body and it's the CAO's job to do the budget claiming the power under section 304 above. Her fix is a 6.25 percent cut while trying to claim it wasn't her idea. Knorr appears to have two faces. Real leaders accept responsibility for their recommendations. The 6.25 percent cut will not solve the problem.

While the CAO claims the deficit for FY 15-16 is down by $10 million, leaving only $10 million more to go, most of the savings will prove to be illusory, except for the loss in senior programs. Those savings won't amount to more than a single analyst in her office as will be explained in a future column. In a year or less, the entire county surplus will be gone. At that point and only then will needed layoffs occur. And layoffs and firings should start at the cause, which should also start at the top, the very top.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.