

# Letter: Ranalli thanks voters

To the community,

Both Colleen and I are humbled and grateful for the encouragement we have received over the past year. Thank you to all the supporters of El Dorado County and voters in District 4. I couldn't have done it without you.

This race was never about Michael Ranalli. This election was about changing the way our county operates, bringing common sense leadership, transparency, and integrity back into the county decision making process.

On day one, I am committed to "Preserving our past and Securing our future". I am confident that with your continued support and trust we can do just that!

See you around town.

Michael Ranalli, Lotus

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## Opinion: EDC's misplaced trust

By Larry Weitzman

After at least a dozen columns describing the mismanagement of El Dorado County business by county Chief Administrative Officer Terri Daly, the CAO resigned under pressure from the Board of Supervisors, who finally recognized that an immediate change was necessary.

The light bulbs finally went off when the BOS recognized that because of the actions of the CAO, EDC was facing perhaps a \$100 million deficit over the next five years, among other issues. It was beyond time for Daly's departure.



Larry Weitzman

But Daly still had friends on the BOS in the likes of Norma Santiago and Ron Briggs. On the day of Daly's resignation (I wasn't present in the closed session, but it must have been "resign or get fired") Santiago said after saying the BOS accepted her resignation, "Terri Daly was a loyal champion of El Dorado County employees." Santiago still doesn't get it.

First, according to the VanDermyden Maddux report, departments under the CAO, such as the Community Development Agency had some of the worst employee ratings. According to the report's data, if there were a climate of fear, it was located there. Perhaps Santiago thought she was a loyal champion of the employees because she hired lots of them and gave them big raises. But the CAO's job is not to be the loyal champion of the employees; the CAO is supposed to be the loyal champion of the taxpayers and residents of EDC. Daly didn't work for the employees, she worked for us; we are the ones who paid her salary and benefits of a quarter million dollars annually.

Daly in the last two years of her wasteful, spending tenure hired about 170 employees, most of them given jobs that did nothing for the citizens, with the plurality of them in her departments. Yes, Santiago was actually telling the truth; that is how you buy loyalty. If that wasn't enough, it was

Daly who gave most county employees a 15 percent raise during a time when most wages and incomes across America were stagnant or declining. They are less than they were six years ago. That's how you buy loyalty. Hopefully, the new BOS will understand their No. 1 priority is the taxpayers and residents of EDC.

If Daly were the loyal champion of EDC employees, why did she fire three good employees or otherwise force them out of the county. Greg Sly, Randy Rafoth and Larry Roth were all competent employees serving the residents of EDC, but as soon as they crossed Daly or the ACAO Kim Kerr, they were gone. Maybe Daly realized that their loyalty was to the people EDC and not to the CAO. Big mistake. Perhaps Daly was afraid of their competence.

Then there was a column in *Lake Tahoe News* on July 4 signed by the four members of the BOS. According to CAO records, this column praising Daly's performance as CAO, was ghost written by Stephanie McCorkle. Who hired McCorkle? That's right, Daly on a one-year \$25,000 contract. Who is McCorkle? According to the contract executed by Daly and McCorkle, she was "to provide expert communication consulting service for the Chief Administrative Officer." In other word, McCorkle was a PR person. One of her first jobs was to write the aforementioned column.

Billing statements obtained pursuant to the California Public Records Act showed an eight hour billing on June 23, 2014, that said, "CAO communication priority meeting. Met with Norma, Brian and CAO. Drafted op/ed for Mountain Democrat to clarify support for CAO from board."

Three other subsequent items also reflected significant work (almost two dozen hours) on this column. The column was a huge puff piece as it was mostly filled with half-truths at best.

If things were so good, why did Daly become such a pariah and

had to be effectively terminated by the BOS only four months later? That's because CAO Daly wasn't a loyal champion of the residents and taxpayers of EDC. Her power trip included excessive hiring, huge pay raises and an inability to administer county business such as purchasing motor graders. Daly was also in charge of a department that violated the California Public Contract Law at least 48 times (it appears ACAO Kerr who was head of the CDA is equally responsible as she signed most of the change orders) and in the forcing of good employees to leave.

As a result of Daly's spending she has left EDC in an untenable fiscal position with at least five years of projected budget deficits (especially since claiming that she was responsible in the July 4 column for four balanced budgets in a row) does not make up for being a loyal champion of EDC employees. That is supposed to be the job of county labor representative Local No. 1, Jere Copeland.

How soon will Santiago and Ron Briggs, who supported Daly and more than likely the July 4 column, publish a column retracting what they said in that column? Hopefully the new BOS will do a better job of vetting prospective employees. A simple Google search could have prevented the problems that have been created over the last four years.

News flash: It was reported by a high ranking respected public official that Kim Kerr has resigned her position as ACAO on Nov. 12 effective Dec. 26.

*Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.*

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# Editorial: Worst voter turnout in 72 years

**Publisher's note:** *This editorial is from the Nov. 11, 2014, New York Times.*

The abysmally low turnout in last week's midterm elections – the lowest in more than seven decades – was bad for Democrats, but it was even worse for democracy. In 43 states, less than half the eligible population bothered to vote, and no state broke 60 percent.

In the three largest states – California, Texas and New York – less than a third of the eligible population voted. New York's turnout was a shameful 28.8 percent, the fourth-lowest in the country, despite three statewide races (including the governor) and 27 House races.

Over all, the national turnout was 36.3 percent; only the 1942 federal election had a lower participation rate at 33.9 percent. The reasons are apathy, anger and frustration at the relentlessly negative tone of the campaigns.

Republicans ran a single-theme campaign of pure opposition to President Obama, and Democrats were too afraid of the backlash to put forward plans to revive the economy or to point out significant achievements of the last six years. Neither party gave voters an affirmative reason to show up at the polls.

**Read the whole story**

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# Editorial: Drought making Calif. more like Ariz.

**Publisher's note:** *This editorial is from the Oct. 13, 2014, Arizona Republic.*

For many years, California has stared at the prospect of long-running drought and effectively sniffed with contempt.

In the minds of many urban Californians, drought may be a burden and an annoyance, but hardly a threat to the coastal lifestyle.

Yes, the consequences of long-term drought, like urban brushfires and a decimated Central Valley farm industry, may be a concern. But the elaborate and enormous water-delivery network serving Southern California – including the state's "first in line" status for Colorado River water – would assure that water in the cities always could be had at a price.

That attitude seems to be changing. California drought researchers have concluded the state may be in the grip not just of "drought," but of a mega-drought. The environmental conditions that gave birth to the most populous state in the Union may have constituted a 150-year, wetter-than-normal anomaly. California now may be looking at its genuinely normal condition, which is far more arid.

**Read the whole story**

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# Letter: Cause and effect of dog waste in Tahoe

To the community,

Eutrophication – diminishing clarity due to excessive nutrient loading.

According to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the year-round or permanent resident population of the Lake Tahoe Basin is approximately 50,000.

There are approximately 50,000 year-round Lake Tahoe residents of which, in my opinion, 20 percent own and care for our canine guest, which suggest the number of canines to be in the range of 10,000 dogs living in the Tahoe basin.

It is expected that a 30-pound dog will eat approximately one-half pound of food per day, or 15 pounds of dog food per month. Assuming that 70 percent of the nutrients consumed is converted directly into energy the remaining 30 percent is left as waste.

Some math:  $10,000 \text{ dogs} \times 15 \text{ pounds/month} \times 12 \text{ months} \times 0.30 = 540,000 \text{ pounds of waste deposited per year.}$

In addition to the 540,000 pounds of waste from our local dogs we can add to that number the number of pounds of waste per year from our visiting dogs, which is an unknown quantity. Then we can add to that number the number of pounds of waste from our local and visiting cats, an unknown quantity. All of which push up the number of pounds of waste deposited per year.

My theory as to the cause of the algae blooms and aggressive growth of the Eurasian milfoil weed found in the basin is directly correlated to the waste produced from our pets. This

theory could be verified by studying the bloom locations and comparing them to the locations of our drainage outlets where the nutrient concentration would be greatest.

There are solutions to this problem and I encourage all of the residents of Lake Tahoe who own pets and also acknowledge this as a problem suggest a solution of their own.

Comments welcome.

Sincerely,

**Mark Allione, dog owner**

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## **Letter: Ameriprise spends time at B&B**

**To the community,**

Ameriprise Financial advisors, employees and clients recently came together to participate in the annual National Day of Service organized by Ameriprise in partnership with Feeding America, the nation's largest leading anti-hunger organization.

In the Lake Tahoe South Shore community, in support of the event, Rick Gross, private wealth advisor, organized the local Ameriprise Financial organization's Adopt A Day of Nourishment on Nov. 3 to assist Bread & Broth in providing nutritious meals for the one in six in our community who struggle with hunger.

Supporting Ameriprise Financial's effort to alleviate hunger especially during the holiday season were Roger Pratt,

financial advisor; Ryan Nauman, paraplanner; and Mark Klover, CPA (Olivio, Zicko and Klover). These three sponsor volunteers were a great help at the dinner bagging food for the to-go bags, serving on the food line, manning the dishwasher and helping with the cleanup.

“It’s great to be able to give back to the community,” Nauman said. “Everyone was very friendly and appreciative of the warm meal they had. Makes a person proud of the Tahoe community.”

Thanks to Ameriprise Financial’s affiliation with Feeding America and concern for the hungry, the less fortunate of our community can count on B&B to provide another meal to help ease the burden of hunger.

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

**Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth**

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## **Opinion: Supporting the troops, not the fighting**

**By Kathryn Reed**

I don’t understand war.

I don’t understand how killing people, destroying buildings and ruining large swaths of a country do any good. It might prove who has a better military, better equipment and better technology.

I’m not against having a military. I think we need to be prepared to protect what is ours because there will always be

those who want to take it from us.

I suppose I am more idealistic than I should be. It's not that I see things with rose-colored glasses, but I truly don't see how weapons solve problems – at any level of engagement. I don't believe violence is an answer to any problem.

Today is Veterans Day, so my thoughts turn to the men and women who have and continue to serve our country in the military.

My nephew is one of them. He is in Special Forces for the Army.

Chris is deployed right now. We don't know where. My sister and brother-in-law know what continent, but that's it. And they aren't telling the rest of the family. Based on what is going on in the world I would venture to guess it's Africa. And a further guess is ISIS or Ebola are what he and his brethren are dealing with.

He left this summer less than a month after his daughter was born. It's not like he could tell his boss no or even quit his job without severe consequences. He had no opportunity to take paternity leave. No chance to bond with Annabella. Chris is supposed to be back in March, but the military makes few promises.

When he has been deployed before – in times of war even if Congress never said that's what was going on – I would send care packages. This time they said don't send baked goods (which is what I like to send) because it could take a while before the boxes ever reach the guys.

I'm proud of Chris for doing what he is doing even if I don't really know what he is doing. It is a unique individual who can train for anything, accept orders and go do a job even while disagreeing with the mission. I couldn't do it. I'm too opinionated and always want to know the "why" behind things.

I support our troops and those who have been in the military. My family has had our share of those who have served. I just can't support the senseless death and destruction that seems to be what the military is all about.

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## Editorial: Plastic bag makers in denial

**Publisher's note:** *This editorial is from the Oct. 17, 2014, Fresno Bee.*

It's a true if gruesome fact that chickens that have been relieved of their heads sometimes run around for a while before they quite realize their irreversible predicament.

That appears to be happening to the plastic bag industry. It would explain why it hasn't figured out that the ubiquitous single-use plastic grocery bag has just suffered a killing blow. Its days are numbered.

The very day the governor signed a statewide ban on single-use grocery bags, Sept. 30, the industry filed papers to start the process for a referendum. If it qualifies by gathering enough signatures, it will delay the July 2015 implementation of the ban until it can be decided by voters during the November 2016 election.

Then, the industry will spend many millions of dollars to try to trick Californians into thinking that it's a good thing that billions of single-use plastic bags are clogging up our storm drains and rivers, tangling up in our native flora, filling up the oceans and doing God only knows what other environmental mischief.

# Opinion: Rehearsing for death

By Launa Hall, Washington Post

“Remember that activity when we all get in the closet and pretend we’re not even there, so our principal can’t find us?” I choose my words carefully as I prep my pre-kindergarten students for the lockdown drill scheduled for that afternoon. These drills have become routine at Arlington elementary schools, and at schools across the country. After the latest school shooting, on Oct. 24 in Washington state, schools will no doubt be running through drills yet again. What can we do about all these shootings?, teachers ask each other. Lock the doors, we’re told, and assume the worst is coming.

When you’re guiding 4- and 5-year-olds through a drill, your choice of words can mean everything. “Activity,” not “game,” because we laugh during games, and I can’t risk introducing laughter. I don’t say “police,” because some little kids find police officers scary, and I can’t risk introducing tears. Instead, even though our principal isn’t there this day, I want them to picture his kind but purposeful face when they hear the police officers and administrators hustling down the hallway, testing the doorknob of each room. I don’t say “quiet,” because I can’t risk them shushing one another while they are crammed together, practically sitting in each other’s laps. And because it’s not quiet that’s required for this drill, but rather complete silence. As silent as children who aren’t there at all.

After lunch we hear a fiddling with the loudspeaker. Our well-meaning assistant principal is nearing retirement, and certain

technologies, such as the many buttons on the intercom, are a strain on her. There is a low mumbling, which may be coaching from the office staff. More fumbling – perhaps a drop. Then, flustered, at last, the assistant principal says, “Lockdown, everyone, thank you.”

My eyes meet my assistant’s over the heads of our students. Usually, we get the announcement: “We are in a lockdown. This is a drill.” The assistant principal didn’t say the word “drill.” But of course it has to be. We were told about it in an all-staff e-mail hours ago. This is totally routine, I tell myself. I’m annoyed that I took even a split second to consider an alternative.

**Read the whole story**

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## **Letter:                    Meyers                    needs democratic process**

**To the community,**

The following issues and concerns were recently presented to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors regarding the Meyers Area Plan process, and they are reframed here for your readers.

I would like to say a few words to the Board of Supervisors members about the lack of process concerning the Meyers Area Plan. The facts are that the Meyers community was not always given published notice for Meyers Community Advisory Council (MCAC) meetings that involved the planning for Meyers community, and the MCAC took no notes and have no minutes from their meetings. This shows distrust for the process that you

are now going to be voting on.

The idea that government and their advisory groups did not follow California's open meeting laws (Brown Act) in the set-up of the MCAC clouds the validity of any proposed Meyers plan that the MCAC and all the agencies have agreed. The fact that the public was not formally involved leads people to believe that the interest of the community is not being listened too. Questions have been asked if outside special interest are more important than the desire of the Meyers community. The people of Meyers want to be informed and to be involved with the planning process.

In the meetings that were held by the El Dorado County and TRPA last spring, the community gathered and voted on heights of 35 feet, removal of the Catalyst Program (renamed Incentive Program), and less of an increase in density than the TRPA's 2012 Regional Plan update placed on Meyers. Now it appears the agency personnel have gone back on their word. The question is who do you represent, the people that vote you into office or corporations and special interests that stand to make millions off the decision you make?

What has happened to the local democratic process? We have on many occasions asked for an unbiased survey so that the entire community can be informed and involved. We want the agencies to have a process with clarity, and without double speak or inundation by acronyms. Do you all know what RPU, ERUs, CFA, CUP, and so many more mean? This is planner speak and is not intended for the public to try to decipher. We want clear language when it comes to policies that impact our lives.

Most of the people that I talk to enjoy the rural life that Meyers offers and want to see appropriate growth.

Transparency goes without saying. Government should pride itself on its ability to be open and honest with the public. After two years of poor public process, there is a cloud of

distrust with government and the agencies that governs us about the future of the Meyers community.

In short I would like to see you:

1. Scrap the Meyers Draft Plan until a Brown Act board has been selected that represents the community, then begin a transparent public process to update our community plan.
2. Wait for our new district supervisor to take office.
3. Have a validated survey on the issues that divide us, taken from the Meyers area community using an unbiased and honest survey.

**Joe Cardinale, Meyers**