Letter: Bringing books to hospital

To the community,

My Girl Scout gold award project is called Easy Access Books mini-library program. The project began after realizing the difficulty for community members without permanent residence to obtain a library card and access books.

Therefore, I created a mini-library in the lobby of the Barton Community Health Center to provide patients access to books and reading material. With the help of the Barton Auxiliary, the Barton Attic Thrift Store, and generous donations from employees and community members, the library has been fully stocked since April.

The response from the Community Health Center patients has been positive as the books have been flying off the shelves. Book donations will continue to be collected by dropping off gently used books on Mondays in the hospital's front lobby.

I'd like to thank the community for your support.

Sarah Novak, South Lake Tahoe Girl Scout Troop 607

Letter: No doubt Pierini is best for DCSO

To the community,

With the race for Douglas County sheriff nearing an end I

would like to offer the following observations:

First, I have repeatedly heard that Dave Brady wants to cut the volunteer programs, calling them “non-essential.” I am one of the 200-plus volunteers currently serving the sheriff’s office; I am a citizen patrol officer. By being able to recruit, train and retain people that are willing to donate their time Sheriff (Ron) Pierini saves Douglas County taxpayers approximately $1 million per year. The various volunteer services allow the sworn deputies to devote their attention to real-time public safety. I cannot understand why Mr. Brady would want to eliminate programs that do so much good and save so much money.

Second, Mr. Brady has constantly hammered his point that we are not safe in Douglas County because of the ineptitude of Sheriff Pierini. This is absurd. Sheriff Pierini is one of the most competent head of a law enforcement agency I have ever known … and I’ve known several. He is highly trained – as is his entire department – and possesses great acumen as a street cop and as an administrator. I believe his deep and abiding love for and dedication to the residents of Douglas County are what drive him. I’ve been greatly impressed by his proactive approach to crime deterrence and prevention, and his aggressive approach toward gang activity is an excellent example. Recently I heard someone say that we have a gang problem here because they saw some graffiti on a wall. I spent a lot of time investigating gang-related homicides in Phoenix before retiring and returning home to the Carson Valley. I can assure all that we do not have a “gang problem” here.

Third, Mr. Brady has said that DCSO should reduce salaries and benefits of command staff and raise salaries and benefits of officers. How? DCSO has nothing to do with these items. They are set by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners. Mr. Brady was a commissioner for six years. Does he not know this?

Finally, Mr. Brady wears a DCSO uniform in his campaign ads as

if he is still affiliated with and endorsed by the sheriff's office. He also has a DCSO badge emblazoned on his posters and website. I find that to be manipulative, disrespectful and at the very least a gross misdemeanor for impersonating a law enforcement officer.

I have seen firsthand the high quality of leadership exhibited by not only Sheriff Pierini but his entire command staff. The morale in this department is incredibly high, and the dedication and professionalism are a reflection of the sheriff. For months we have heard Mr. Brady deliver a message: in him lies "hope" for the uninformed, huddled masses of Douglas County, and he will save us by bringing "change" to the sheriff's office. Personally, I have had enough "hope and change" lately to last a lifetime.

Tom Martel, Minden

Letter: Measure F is good for the economy

To the community,

Why should we care about investing in higher education in our local, state and national communities? According to a 2013 report by the Economic Analysis and Research Network in Washington, D.C., "States can build a strong foundation for economic success and shared prosperity by investing in education. Providing expanded access to high-quality education will not only expand economic opportunities for residents, but also will likely do more to strengthen the overall state economy than anything else a state government can ever do."



Karen
Borges

Additionally from the same report, “There is a strong correlation between the educational attainment of a state’s workforce and median wages.”

South Lake Tahoe has been searching for a solution to spur its economic development. A well-educated workforce is our key to prosperity.

Please vote yes on Measure F for Lake Tahoe Community College.

Karen and David Borges, Borges Chiropractic, Karen Borges is on the LTCC board of trustees

---

Opinion: Colleges should invest in software, not buildings

By Donn Davis, Washington Post

For decades, America’s colleges and universities have been on a massive spending spree, building new dorms, student centers, sports complexes, and academic buildings. Despite all these expenditures, the key metrics are not much better. Graduation rates haven’t increased at the pace of much of Europe and Japan. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation

and Development, the percentage of young Americans who are less educated than their parents exceeds other leading nations.

What if the leaders of our colleges and universities had channeled just a fraction of this edifice-complex capital into technology improvements instead?

In technology terms, higher-education has spent massive amounts in “hardware” while dramatically under-investing in “software.” Software is the technology, tools and systems that make any business or organization more effective and efficient. Ask any of the tens of millions of students back on campus this fall at any of the thousands of universities and colleges: “How has technology been used to improve the classroom or enhance the learning experience” and you will get a blank expression. Technology has infused and changed every part of this generation’s life – except for education.

Despite an increase in edtech spending, up 11 percent from 2012 to $13 billion, 62 percent of that is still spent on laptops, tablets, and netbooks, which can only service one student at a time and quickly become outdated. With more and more students in the position to provide their own devices it is important to not overspend on hardware and allocate money to software programs that can run on multiple devices and be used by thousands of students at once. Schools will still need to provide a small pool of school-owned devices to be borrowed but this mentality will reduce costs.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Calif. water bond is good for Tahoe

By Julie Regan

As we count down the days until the Nov. 4 election, we are in full information overload. Mailboxes are exploding with proposition mailers. Measures seem to run from A to Z. It would be easy to say forget about it all. And that would be a big mistake. Here's why.

Despite this being a non-presidential election cycle, there are some important initiatives on the ballot for Californians. And making your voice heard at the local and state levels is possible by casting your vote.



Julie Regan

Proposition 1, referred to as the California Water Bond, may seem of remote interest to us in Tahoe who are removed from the north versus south state water wars. But the bond is actually important to the Lake Tahoe Basin. The proposition includes grant funding for environmental restoration projects and direct funding for the California Tahoe Conservancy.

The subject of water is notoriously controversial in the American West. Mark Twain has scads of quotes about it including this one: "High and fine literature is wine, and mine is only water; but everybody likes water."

We like it so much in fact that we are running out of it. State water supplies are in dire straits and Lake Tahoe just dipped below its natural rim. If the drought continues, Tahoe's winter economy will be severely harmed and our shores will be threatened by new and existing invasive species. Add to these factors a changing climate and we could have the perfect storm for water quality and water quantity.

If passed by voters, Proposition 1 would authorize $7.5 billion in general obligation bonds for state water infrastructure and watershed restoration projects. While we won't see a new line item on our property or income taxes for Proposition 1, the bonds would become part of California's overall debt obligation. The bond is designed to invest heavily in the aging water infrastructure of the state and protect its many watersheds. A significant portion of the bond, $1.5 billion, is designated for protecting rivers, lakes, coastal waters, and watersheds.

Lake Tahoe could see the return of funding which has run out for environmental projects in the Lake Tahoe environmental improvement program (EIP) if Proposition 1 passes. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency leads the EIP in partnership with nearly 50 different implementing agencies including the Tahoe Conservancy and other California state agencies. The EIP, in combination with sound land use policies and other factors, has driven one of most significant improvements in the Tahoe environment in decades – the stabilization of lake clarity and an end of the precipitous decline that plagued us for decades. California water bond funds are essential to continue the state's commitment to protecting Lake Tahoe and to continuing this progress.

Overall, the passage of the California Water Bond would mean additional dollars for investment in many environmental restoration projects for the Lake Tahoe Region which also drives infrastructure, construction, and other jobs in our local economy.

With the future of funding for environmental restoration and EIP projects uncertain, the California Water Bond would provide a secure funding source. Money received through this bond could also be used to leverage funding from other sources, including federal, and private.

As a local homeowner, I feel the pain of taxes and consider every new measure and proposition carefully. Please do the same. And please think of the future. Warren Buffet said it best: “Someone’s sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

Julie Regan is the chief of external affairs at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and works with the states of California and Nevada, along with the federal government, in her role in government relations.

Opinion: Crowd gets credit for soccer win

To the community,

After a mistake late in the second half by our goalkeeper, the LTCC men’s soccer team found themselves down 2-0 with 6:46 seconds left to go in the game. Coyote players lay on the pitch with their hands over their faces in shock that we had let in a second goal, and defeat seemed imminent.

And then something happened.

The crowd started cheering.



Lake Tahoe Community College's men's soccer team feeling dejected on Oct. 17. Photos/Provided

I thought to myself on the sidelines, "Wow, that's a nice gesture since their team is being beat 2-0." Everyone on the bench and on the field thought the game was most likely over.

And then the crowd go even louder. Coyote howls were echoing throughout the field. I couldn't believe it – most American sports fans would have started to trickle away, sensing defeat. And yet no one in that crowd moved to leave. Instead, they stood and cheered even louder!

Writing this brings back all the emotion I felt – to think that our fans would stick it out and stay there on the field with the sun setting and the wind blowing, and yet they were there, still cheering on their Coyotes.

And a funny thing happened. The guys started to believe. They started to believe that they were still in the game. I spoke to many of them afterward, who said the turning point in those last few minutes was the crowd.

We scored a goal to make it 2-1.

And then we scored again in the last few minutes to tie the game 2-2. It felt like a victory.



It’s a celebration – with the crowd getting much of the credit.

I have never experienced such a comeback in all my coaching career.

Thank you fans and to LTCC for being there and sticking it out with us. It was an incredible experience.

My quote of the week: While there is still breath in our lungs and blood in our veins, if there is still time on the clock … we believe. We believe we can do the impossible. We believe in a miracle. And we believe that our fans are the greatest in all of college soccer!

With Friday’s tie, the LTCC Coyote men’s team is now No. 1 in the Golden Valley Conference. Playoffs, here we come!

Benjamin “Coach” Wade

Opinion: EDC wrong to encourage secrecy

By Dave Jinkens

In a stunning step backward from transparency the El Dorado

County Planning Commission, holding a difficult to attend morning weekday workshop on the draft Meyers Area Plan at City Hall in South Lake Tahoe on Oct. 16, recommended that any new Meyers Area Advisory Council formed by the Board of Supervisor after adoption of a Meyers Area Plan not be subject to California's Open Meeting Law, the Brown Act.

Three county supervisor appointed planning leaders present want any Meyers Area Council to work "informally" without notification requirements provided in state law for the news media and general public. Concerned Meyers Area residents present at the meeting were shocked at this disavowal of the public notification process by these county appointed leaders and their staff.



David Jinkens

The problem to date with the process used by the county of El Dorado in developing a Meyers Area Plan is that it has not a been transparent process. It has not complied with the customary and commonly used requirements of local government to notify the media and the general public under the Brown Act of area plan meetings, and it appears to be guided by back-door small group and special interest lobbying of county officials and staff outside of the public view.

The process used to date is not open and inclusive to the entire Meyers community. Sadly, some County government officials and staff to date have left the unfortunate impression that they know best what is good for Meyers, and they will decide what is best, not the community.

Concerned Meyers residents who have for months urged the Board of Supervisors and county staff to have a broader community-based and inclusive public input process were disappointed to learn their calls for democratic reform in the process have been ignored and will be perpetuated even after a new plan is adopted.

“If there is one thing the broader community appeared to support without question, it was that the future Meyers Advisory Council would be subject to the Brown Act,” said Meyers area resident Jennifer Quashnick.

Meyers resident and business owner Angie Olson said, “We were surprised to see the county staff present this as option to the Planning Commission, and even more so when they selected the non-transparent, non-public option.”

The South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce board of directors supports Meyers area residents and property owners who want a communitywide and unbiased Meyers survey to determine Meyers community views on a new plan. The South Tahoe chamber board does not wish to tell Meyers area residents what they need or want in a new plan. California’s South Tahoe chamber supports the right of Meyers Area residents to make that decision themselves in a democratic and transparent way.

In the end, it is the Meyers community as a whole that needs to decide their future, and they need their voice to be heard and listened to by county officials and their staff. The hope remains that the full Board of Supervisors will ultimately embrace open and legally noticed meetings and an inclusive Meyers Area Plan process.

On Oct. 28, the county of Board of Supervisors will hold a workshop on the Meyers Area Plan at City Hall in South Lake Tahoe and Meyers residents and property and business owners are encouraged to attend.

For more information about the concerns of Meyers community

members, go online.

Dave Jinkens is the government affairs liaison volunteer for the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce.

Letter: Vote Laine for South Tahoe council

To the community,

Our city needs Brooke Laine on the City Council. Her integrity, experience and business background are assets we need to keep.

She was born and raised in South Lake Tahoe and is passionate about the future of our community. She's committed, and she can do the job.

We urge you to vote for Brooke Laine for City Council Nov. 4.

Carolyn and Mort Meiers, South Lake Tahoe

Letter: County taking action on Meyers

To the community,

Reporting from the Oct. 16 El Dorado County Planning Commission meeting:

After a member of the Planning Commission commented that he gives more weight to the comments of the public members who were able to attend today (vs. the public feedback provided at all previous meetings, the community "vote" on height last spring, the surveys collected by both the EDC and our community), the Planning Commission recommended the following to the Board of Supervisors for our Meyers plan:

1. Do not create a Meyers Advisory Council that is subject to public process rules (e.g. the Brown Act) – in other words, keep it as an informal group, "encourage them" (but do not require) to post agendas, do not require minutes, etc.

2. Move the maximum height to 42 feet (majority community response to date = 35 feet max);

3. Move the maximum density (units per acre) for tourist units (hotels/motels) back up to 40 units/acre for entire community center (majority community response to date = 15 units/acre or less);

4. It was uncertain, but they appeared to discuss re-considering the extras for the incentive project (aka Catalyst Project) in the Plan. We will confirm but it appears they decided to leave this decision to the Board of Supervisors (at the upcoming Oct. 28 hearing).

Our concern continues to be a transparent, clear, public process for our community. We are concerned that the community input to date was mostly ignored. How many people simply had to work Thursday morning and could not attend?

We strongly encourage you to attend the Oct. 28 Board of Supervisors meeting. If you cannot attend, then please send comments in advance – we are happy to provide email addresses and/or mailing addresses.

Thank you,

Jennifer Quashnick, Moya Saunders and Angela Olson, Meyers residents

---

Letter: Knights of Columbus help B&B

To the community,

The St. Theresa Church's parish council of the Knights of Columbus hosted Bread & Broth's Adopt A Day dinner on Sept. 29. According to the principles of the Knights of Columbus, there is no better way to experience compassion than by helping those in need.

Through their donation and volunteering at B&B's Monday evening dinner, the Knights of Columbus helped feed a nourishing meal to over 115 needy community members. From 3-6pm, Knights of Columbus members Earl Scilingo, George Westinghouse, Steve Elder, Tom Finn and Romeo Alaoen volunteered to help with the evening's dinner.

This energetic group helped with bagging the giveaways donated by local stores, greeted and served the dinner guests, manned the dishwasher and helped with the cleaning and stacking of the tables and chairs.

"It's time to give back, especially when I see the children in need," said Scilingo. "Breaks my heart."

In addition to families with children, B&B dinner guests include the working poor, elderly on fixed incomes as well as the homeless. Despite the economic upturn, many community members are still in need of assistance.

Thanks to the compassion and dedication of organizations like the Knights of Columbus, B&B is able serve those in need.

“I like to serve the community,” said Westinghouse.

Judging from their actions that can be said of all the member of the Knights of Columbus.

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

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth