Opinion: Placer County needs Laura’s Law

By Jennifer Montgomery

Every day we encounter individuals – complete strangers, close friends and even family members – who are languishing on our streets and in our neighborhoods. Many suffer from serious mental illness, but due to a host of reasons have been unable to participate in treatment programs. They spiral downward until they are ultimately hospitalized or incarcerated, only to be released back into our communities to begin the cycle of despair and neglect all over again.

It is well past time that we as a society acknowledge their treatment needs and use the tools we have available to help them. Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), also known as Laura’s Law, is one tool that can help. It has been proven successful in Nevada and Yolo counties and 45 other states, and needs to be considered by all California counties.



Jennifer Montgomery

Laura’s Law, approved by the state Legislature in 2002, was named for Laura Wilcox, a Nevada County student worker who was killed by a man who had refused mental health treatment. He entered the county’s Behavioral Health offices and opened fire in January 2001. Laura’s Law reformed the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act which had previously prohibited judges, families and

physicians from compelling the severely mentally ill to accept treatment.

Laura's Law permits counties to create AOT programs allowing for court-ordered (if deemed necessary and if all stringent criteria are met), voluntary, outpatient treatment for a select group of very mentally ill individuals – treatment that can be initiated by a family member, roommate, therapist, police officer, or physician, among others.

Since the law was brought to my attention when I was sworn in as a county supervisor in 2009, I have been a proponent of Laura's Law. I know from personal experience that effective treatment can be life-changing for individuals with serious mental illness. I have a family member who has struggled with mental illness since she became a teenager almost 60 years ago. When she is appropriately treated – on her medications and in counseling – she is smart, delightful, funny and well connected with the world around her.

But often – too often – she "chooses" to go off her medications and her downward spiral begins, over and over and over again. She is the perfect candidate for Laura's Law – not yet to the point of being deemed 5150, requiring involuntary treatment, but to the point of needing help that is beyond her immediate reach.

Chairman Jack Duran and I have been working together to show that Laura's Law is not only implementable in Placer County, but is the right tool to add to our mental health "tool belt" and that now is the right time to bring this forward.

AOT is a proven, evidenced-based practice that produces excellent results. In Nevada County AOT has been shown to reduce incarcerations by 53 percent, homelessness by 54 percent and psychiatric hospitalizations by 43 percent, while saving $1.81 for every dollar invested in the program. New York State's implementation of the similar "Kendra's Law" AOT

program, produced nearly identical results. Furthermore, such programs help engage individuals into a voluntary lifelong recovery process and give them hope for a brighter future.

Opponents of AOT argue that any involuntary treatment will trample on the rights of the mentally ill. However, Laura's Law is voluntary and when we ignore the treatment needs of this sensitive population, we effectively abandon them to the streets, leading to increased incarcerations, hospitalizations, homelessness and conservatorships. Such outcomes have far more draconian impacts on these peoples' lives, with enormous and real impacts on their civil rights and the rights of others.

Orange, Los Angeles, and San Francisco counties have recently joined the ranks of Nevada and Yolo counties by choosing to implement Laura's Law. Later this summer, our Placer County Board of Supervisors will be considering the implementation of such a program in Placer County.

As the *Los Angeles Times* noted last May, "Laura's Law will not stop every tragedy or protect every person in need of care. But it will save some lives and prevent some suffering."

I wholeheartedly agree. Please join me in bringing Laura's Law to Placer County.

Jennifer Montgomery is Placer County's supervisor for District 5.

Opinion: Bottled water makes

less sense in a drought

By Michael Hiltzik, Los Angeles Times

As California's drought really starts to bite – the mandatory water use restrictions approved by the state last week are just the beginning – questions are bound to be raised about the indescribably wasteful use of water to retail bottlers.

The sale of bottled water to most Americans, who have access to cheap and safe tap water from municipal systems, is a marketing scam, and environmentally devastating besides. As Peter H. Gleick of the Oakland-based Pacific Institute showed in 2007, it took the equivalent of 17 million barrels of oil to produce the plastic bottles for American buyers in 2006. That would be enough to fuel 1 million American cars and light trucks for a year.

"Bottled water requires energy throughout its life cycle," Gleick has written. "Energy is required to capture, treat, and send water to the bottling plant; fill, package, transport, and cool the bottled water; and recycle or dispose of the empty containers."

Consider the unnecessary energy usage in shipping, say, Fiji Water to these shores from a Pacific island dictatorship 5,000 miles away, all to satisfy the marketing thirst of the product's distributors, Lynda and Stewart Resnick of Beverly Hills. And while you're cradling that shiny square bottle in your hands, keep in mind that 30 percent of Fiji's 800,000 residents don't have access to clean drinking water themselves.

Read the whole story

Opinion: KY Jelly a management tool in EDC

By Larry Weitzman

In late January 2013 an email was sent to many county employees by Kim Kerr who listed her title as ACAO (assistant chief administrative officer) and interim Department of Transportation director.

The body of the email had three points, one about recruitment, a series of bullet points about training opportunities, but it was point No. 2 that was a bit mind blowing and inappropriate. It was a copy of an article that Kerr chose to attach to her email which was titled and contained "Three indispensible tools for local government managers." She went on to tell the reader how this article will allow you to decide how to prioritize the interruptions and better control your day. At a minimum it will limit discussion. As you will read later, it sure will, especially as one of the tools is a tube of KY Jelly, a lubricant that's sole purpose is to ease the pain caused by the insertion of objects into certain body cavities.



Larry Weitzman

The article was written by a retired Air Force Maj. Gabe Gabrielsen, who after retirement worked as a county administrator and is now a guest speaker at conferences and consultant. It appears on his website from which it was copied. Gabrielsen describes the three indispensible tools as

an egg timer to limit subordinates from taking too much of your time, two bicycle handle bar grips to grab so the subordinates can get a grip when they are excited or flustered, and finally a tube of KY Jelly to ease the pain when things don't go your way or Gabrielsen couldn't help the subordinate. In a phone call with Gabrielsen, he said that sending this article to your employees or subordinates unsolicited might be a bit inappropriate, at least without explanation.

If you are not familiar with KY Jelly, it is a sterile lubricant that is used medically to allow or ease the insertion of devices into certain human body parts. It is commonly advertised on television to be used in a sexual manner. Kerr also thinks it is an indispensible county government management tool. As said in the 1942 movie "Casablanca" by the character Capt. Louis Renault (played by Claude Rains) "I'm shocked, shocked …"

Many people could and would interpret the tube of KY Jelly some other way, a way that is entirely inappropriate in a working environment. Showing someone a tube of KY Jelly would be an insult or an off color put down to many people. Such as if you don't like the way things are, here is a tube of KY Jelly. I will refrain from giving you my interpretation as it's definitely not even close to appropriate. To others it could be thought of as sexual harassment. You get the idea.

Reading this article on the Internet at your own choice is not the problem, but sending it to your employees as three indispensible tools to manage your time is another issue and then sending it to your employees that you as the boss are going to use the three indispensible "tools" as described in the article against your employees makes it even worse. That becomes almost unbelievable. What makes Kim Kerr so special to conduct county business in such a condescending, crude, off color and insulting manner?

When someone complained about this email with the attached article as being offensive, highly inappropriate and sexually harassing it eventually cost him his career and reputation with the county via the Terri Daly kangaroo court. It may eventually cost the county millions if and when litigation is commenced.

What did CAO Terri Daly appointee, Karl Knobelauch, the director of Human Resources find with respect to the article? He found after an alleged "thorough investigation and analysis," Daly appointee and subordinate Knobelauch (also from Amador County) concluded that the sending of the article to employees and telling them to read it did not rise to a violation of the county's policy prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the workplace. But Daly and Kerr continued with their planned elimination of the complaining party who was eventually forced to leave. But it's not over as we shall see soon.

Kerr's modus operandi didn't start here or in Ione. According to one of my interviewees, while Kerr was employed by Humboldt County she was suspended for 30 days for harassment. The spots on a leopard do not change. Without a release from Kerr, Humboldt County will not release the records. It is just like John Kerry who promised 10 years ago to sign and file a Form 180 to release his naval records. He has yet to do it.

This incident is just another indication that if there is a culture of fear, harassment and retaliation in the county, it lies with the ACAO whose CDA department has the lowest satisfaction rating in the county at 22 percent. Using the Van Dermyden interpretation of that number means that 78 percent of the CDA employees are unhappy and probably live in fear, just as the employees of the city of Ione did for four continuous years when Kerr was the city manager. It turned out that hell at one time was located only 30 miles south of Placerville only to find it rising.

Carlson correction

In one of my recent columns I was misled by Daly more than I realized. In my first conversation with Daly, she implied that Bernard Carlson's investigation of Kerr occurred before Kerr was hired and that Daly asked Carlson to do it. I have now learned that Carlson's investigation of Kerr was done on his own as a result of the Amador Grand Jury findings. He mainly interviewed business people and found many interviewed thought that thought Kerr did an OK job and was perhaps unfairly targeted by the grand jury. Of course it is unknown if those interviewed had the detailed information that I uncovered such as the CPA audits, failed bank reconciliations, misdirected deposits and the depletion of the Local Agency Investment Fund. It may be that Daly tried to use Carlson for more cover and intentionally mislead me.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Letter: Wyndham works Bread & Broth line

To the community,

At four o'clock, as the dinner guests lined up for Bread & Broth's meal on July 14, the three sponsor crew members from Wyndham Vacation Ownership had already spent the last hour packing 65 "giveaway bags" with fruits, vegetables, can goods and bread and were now preparing to serve over 95 guests for the next hour and half.

Then at 5:30, the sponsor crew spent the next half hour cleaning tables and stacking chairs and table before their

sponsorship evening ended.

Bread & Broth would like to thank the dedication and commitment of the hardworking crew from Wyndham Vacation Ownership and the financial donation of $250 from the largest international vacation ownership company.

“We feel fortunate being a part of a global company that encourages the employees to be involved in the local community, “ said Sue Harley, recruiter for Wyndham Vacation Ownership. Joining Harley in assisting the B&B volunteers were Brian Bourdage, trainer, and Joan Ferro, sales administrative manager.

“Bread & Broth puts on a phenomenal meal and we are grateful to share the experience. We look forward to coming back,” added Harley.

B&B appreciates and thanks Wyndham Vacation Ownership and its employees for their commitment to the South Shore community and we look forward to working with them to feed the less fortunate at the their next “Adopt A Day of Nourishment” sponsorship on Sept. 15.

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

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Community house a good addition

By Jennifer Montgomery

On July 15, I was incredibly proud to represent the county of

Placer and to represent the greater North Lake Tahoe area at the media tour of the New Community House (CoHo). CoHo will house the North Tahoe Family Resource Center, Project Mana, the Tahoe Safe Alliance, Placer County HHS employees and potentially some state of California Human Services staff.

Along with our nonprofit partners, Placer County has been a ready and willing partner in this public/private effort. Due to great vision in budgeting and planning by the Placer County Board of Supervisors, we had the opportunity to allocate $1 million to help leverage the project. These are tax dollars that came through First 5, the Mental Health Services Act, and from the transient occupancy tax (hotel room tax) collected locally in the eastern end of Placer County. These dollars helped with the acquisition and remodel of the building as well as with installation of much needed public infrastructure like sidewalks and storm water retention basins.



Jennifer Montgomery

Private groups like the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation and community leaders like Theresa May Duggan and Dave Ferrari (among many others) worked to create a remarkable model for meeting community needs through an innovative public private partnership. The services available at CoHo go well beyond what the County traditionally offers and we believe it will result in getting families and individuals more quickly onto paths of self-sufficiency and will keep them there longer.

Not only is CoHo about taking care of people when they are in

need, but it is about growing and celebrating that which is strong in them. CoHo intends to help individuals and families connect with resources like parenting and nutrition classes, educational opportunities and community building events. CoHo is about building strength, connectivity and individual self-reliance before crisis strikes.

In a time of limited government resources and increased need, it is these very types of innovative models – models that combine public and private dollars, models that combine multi use spaces into one center – that gives me great hope that solutions can be forged – are being forged – in the most creative ways, when dedicated, focused people come together.

I know that the rest of the BOS and county staff are also very proud of this model and are talking about it as a proactive, alternate way to offer services and stretch our limited public and private dollars.

I truly look forward to the day that when asked about community house, I can reply, “which one?”, referencing the fact that there will be a community house in each and every community. But for now we celebrate our own community house and the amazing individuals and entities that made it possible.

Congratulations to us all!

Jennifer Montgomery represents District 5 on Placer County Board of Supervisors.

Letter: Tourist thankful for care received in Tahoe

To the community,

On June 20, I fell at the Emerald Point Lookout and tourists (two or three families) assisted me by stopping the bleeding to a head wound I had and called the ambulance.

With the arrival of the South Lake Tahoe ambulance, came a team of great EMTs. They secured my safety (with my purse in the ambulance with me) and transported me to the Barton Hospital.

Every nurse, doctor, and emergency worker made me safe and saved my life. After a CAT Scan, it was determined that I had a brain bleed. Immediately, they arranged for me to be transported by air flight to Reno.

The rest of my life I owe to each healthcare worker in your area and the special tourists visiting your area that came to my aid.

I am now home in Texas and will add value to the world for the time that was given to me.
Martha E. Couch, Texas

Letter: EDC advised to get spending plan in order

Publisher's note: ***The following letter was given to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on July 22, 2014.***

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The construction of a new sheriff's headquarters is long overdue and much needed. We must get our sheriff and his staff out of the clearly unacceptable facility in which they now protect and serve the public. Thus, I recommend that your board place on the July 29 agenda a discussion of the preliminary financing plan for the new sheriff's headquarters.



Joe Harn

It is my understanding that the cost of the sheriff's headquarters could be as high as $50 million and that construction may begin in about a year. If the cost is in the $50 million range, this will require the largest borrowing in county history. Regardless of the form of borrowing that the county ultimately chooses (bonds, certificates of participation, or some form of capital lease), we should discuss asking our citizens for conceptual approval of this borrowing in an advisory vote this November.

In November 1990, the voters enacted Measure A, the intent of which was to require voter approval for future borrowing in connection with the construction of new county facilities. Since at this time the county has not determined the appropriate form of borrowing for this project, I believe that we should discuss the matter at the July 29 board meeting. This will give the county time to get this advisory vote on November ballot.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Joe Harn, CPA and El Dorado County auditor-controller

Letter: How to stay connected during an emergency

To the community,

Thank you to everyone who kept in touch with us via social media Sunday during the extended power outage. Almost 15,000 of you saw our postings on Facebook. During the power outage the police department issued “Reverse 911” calls with updates on the situation. Unfortunately, the calls were not received on land lines which were connected to answering machines because of the power failure and were primarily received on cellular phones.

As a result, the city is asking the public to sign up with their cellular numbers.

To register to receive “Reverse 911” calls to either or both your home landline and your mobile phone line, go online. It is very easy to sign up and you are allowed to sign up two different phone numbers and two different email addresses along with your physical address.

The El Dorado County Alert Notification System has made it easy to register your chosen contact information through the systems Self Registration Portal. You can then receive notification on your cellular telephone via phone call or text, or at your email address. It’s up to you. To register

your emergency contact information or just to find out more information about the system, go online.

Social media via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram proved to be the most effective way to inform the public of Sunday's emergency situation. You can find the links to the city's Facebook and Twitter accounts on our home page. Scroll to the bottom of the page, look on the right side.

Please feel free to share so we can keep even more community members connected during an emergency situation.

Thank you!

Tracy Franklin, public information officer for South Lake Tahoe

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Opinion: TRYP sets the record straight

By Shannon Eckmeyer

A statement made in an opinion column claiming the Tahoe Regional Young Professionals (TRYP) is "behind" a project relating to the Meyers Area Plan has given me the opportunity to explain to the community what the organization is actually about. While TRYP serves the needs of professionals throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin looking to engage in their community, TRYP does not take a stance on political or planning issues.

The mission of TRYP may be to connect members to the community and network together, but we have evolved to so much more. As a proud member of the board and executive committee, I have been able to see our group grow substantially over the past

two years and foster leadership within the basin.



TRYP started as the brainchild of our founding board members over three years ago who wanted to see a change in the Lake Tahoe community. These brave forefathers spent countless hours in pursing the establishment of an organization that could truly connect young professionals. Traditionally known for its younger transient population and well-established baby boomers, Lake Tahoe was never seen as a welcoming home to its next generation. Until now. TRYP currently has well over 100 active members throughout the region who are quickly becoming the pillars of the Lake Tahoe community.

Our civic engagement committee works hard to track and share information where people can learn more and think for themselves on the many different issues facing our community. TRYP presents opportunities to empower Lake Tahoe's generation autonomously and also in collaboration with local organizations. TRYP recently partnered with the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce to host a panel for the El Dorado County supervisor candidates. It is unfortunate one of those very candidates does not understand the mission of TRYP or work to find information before associating us in a recent opinion piece in *Lake Tahoe News.*

Not only does TRYP provide different membership and networking events, but we are also active in volunteering, fundraising, and giving back to our community. TRYP provides leadership scholarships to members. We organize monthly volunteer events and host the Winter White FUNdraising event every year. The event is truly spectacular and one that I invite the community to attend in November. It is a night that is full of fun and aimed at raising money for a local nonprofit. Last year TRYP raised over $4,000 for the Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club.

Our organization is truly crafting the upcoming leaders and decision makers for Lake Tahoe. We are creating an environment that supports our community's professional talent so they want to stay, raise a family here, open their own business here, and contribute to our economy. We want to be proud of the Lake Tahoe community we care so deeply about and use it as an example to surrounding areas. I urge everyone in the community, no matter what your age is, to come see a TRYP event in action. Our mixers are the second Wednesday of every month and our professional development workshops are the third Wednesday. To learn more about membership and sponsor opportunities please visit our website and reach out with questions to TahoeTRPY@gmail.com. We want you to get involved and help us to continue to empower Lake Tahoe.

Shannon Eckmeyer is member relations director for Tahoe Regional Young Professionals.

Letter: Curtzwiler admits mistake

Publisher's note: *The name of the group is actually Tahoe Regional Young Professionals.*

To the community,

Correction to the letter I sent to *LTN*. I stated that Jason Drew is a member of the Tahoe Young Professional Group. That is incorrect, Jason Drew is not nor has been a member of TYPG.

Kenny Curtzwiler, Meyers