Letter: Sponsor helps provide Bread & Broth meal

To the community,

Another great dinner was served by Bread & Broth on June 30 thanks to the generosity and help of Getaway Reno/Tahoe. Owner and publisher of Getaway Reno/Tahoe, Todd Poth was “quite impressed to see the need in the community and glad that we could help at least a little bit.” Poth and his Getaway Reno/Tahoe crew Meghan Burk, communications director, and Jessica Schnoll, marketing director, (Zephyr Cove Consulting) served more than 100 meals to the dinner’s thankful guests.

“When you hear someone say, ‘thank you so much, I haven’t eaten in four days’, said Burk, “it makes you stop and think about how everyday you should be grateful for the simple things in life, like a full belly.”

Burk is also a regular B&B volunteer and frequently experiences firsthand the need in our Lake Tahoe South Shore community at the Monday evening dinners.

In addition to helping the less fortunate in our community, Getaway Reno/Tahoe does a fabulous job of providing Reno/Tahoe area information, attracting travel and tourism to our community. Bread & Broth would like to commend Getaway Reno/Tahoe for all of their efforts to promote South Lake Tahoe and support B&B’s efforts to ease the hunger within our 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: Government unions tee up Calif.’s bankruptcy

By Bill Frezza, Forbes

Half a billion dollars. That’s how much the California Teachers Association and the powerful Service Employees International Union have spent on California politics since 2000. The unions’ return on that “investment”? A legislature totally beholden to them for political support and campaign contributions.

Here’s another mind-boggling number: Half a Trillion Dollars. That’s an estimate of the unfunded public pension liabilities racked up by California’s state and municipal governments due to overly generous pay and defined benefit pension plans lavished on unionized government employees.

If you thought the bankruptcies of Stockton, San Bernardino, and Vallejo were entertaining, break out the popcorn to watch the next fiasco California’s famously progressive citizens voted themselves into. That first wave of municipal bankruptcies demonstrated that the odds of the state’s public pensions paying out at full value are virtually zero. The donnybrook that breaks out when the rest go sour is going to be a monster movie scale spectacle.

Jim Lacy, former Chief Counsel for Technology at the U.S. Department of Commerce and General Counsel to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, has been sounding the alarm. His new book, “Taxifornia”, lays out the numbers and illustrates them in horrifying detail, with stories you just can’t make up—like rank-and-file firefighters making $348,000 a year who can retire at age 55 at 90 percent of salary.

Meanwhile, California's poverty rate has soared to become highest in the nation (almost one in four Californians now live in poverty, according to the Census Bureau).

As my guest on last week's RealClear Radio Hour, Jim makes the case why the rest of us should care about California's taxpayers becoming ATMs for retired school teachers, bus drivers, police, and firefighters. "Because it's happening throughout the rest of the country," Jim explains. "The Detroit bankruptcy is based on the same premises." Coming soon to a theater near you!

California has the highest state income tax in the nation, the highest state sales tax, the highest gas tax, and some of the highest corporate and property taxes. Yet, all that cash is barely enough to cover current expenditures. Governor Jerry Brown's claim of a surplus would disappear in a heartbeat were the state to follow generally accepted accounting principles.

Read the whole story

Opinion: El Dorado County on the right course

Publisher's note: ***El Dorado County officials were not able to provide a record of this opinion piece being discussed in open session during a Board of Supervisors meeting. Therefore it was done so in a serial meeting, which is a violation of the Brown Act – California's open meeting law.***

To the community,

We ask the public to join the county Board of Supervisors in

our commitment to create a renaissance regarding the county's reputation. For starters, Terri Daly has been working at our direction for almost four years and we want you to know that we support our chief administrative officer who is working effectively to advance critically important initiatives to modernize county government so it can be something we leave in good shape for the next generation.

It is time for a cultural transformation in El Dorado County and we want everyone on board. Collaboration is what leads to effective problem solving. It's what leads to innovation. We simply can't create the exciting future we want for El Dorado County without first establishing a positive culture to the benefit of employees, businesses (new and established) as well as our citizenry.

We are committed to improving communication channels – enhancing the frequency and extent to which we provide external outreach to stakeholders and the media. We want and need the public's involvement, and open communication will help get us there.

Without an informed public, we miss opportunities to "think outside the box." Without a motivated workforce, we fall behind neighboring counties capitalizing on competitive economic incentives and the type of "idea storming" that comes from colleagues and leadership working well together and displaying mutual respect.

We have directed the CAO to focus on five areas where we want available resources to net a return on our investment for the future:

• Human resources and risk management

• Information technologies

• Facilities

• Department accountability and culture

• Economic development

The CAO, at our direction, recently delivered on a recommended budget that keeps costs in line while embracing priority-based budgeting enabling government to reassess priorities in order to make sound, long-term funding decisions. The process clearly establishes the priorities of the county, then develops practices, processes and procedures that fund and advance those priorities. It puts into motion a mission-driven organization with local government leaders who are seeking service excellence, transparency and a strong desire to achieve the results that are truly important to their community.

We give our administrative team high marks for the following:

• Producing a responsible balanced budget for four years in a row, and successfully bringing the county out of the recession with healthy reserves and no debt.

• Trimming facilities costs by saving $600,000 a year through termination or renegotiation of over-market rates on building leases (savings will continue annually starting this year).

• A total of $6 million in one-time savings with construction efficiencies achieved that no one thought possible in the building of a new Animal Services Shelter.

One of our top priorities is the roll out of a workplace action plan that will transform the organizational culture of the county. Why should our citizens care about an internal culture change? For good reason. If we can tackle long-simmering workplace issues, employee morale will improve. Already, the Health and Human Services job turnover rate has improved from 50 percent to 15 percent; enabling us to better

serve those clients. Customer service is improving.

New companies eyeing the El Dorado Hills Business Park and other commercial space are more inclined to bring jobs here because the professionalism and motivation of county employees will continue to improve. We'll also retain and attract employees empowered to create vibrant organizations serving the best interest of its citizens. With the labor market improving, we need to hang onto our best and brightest talent and be poised to attract more. Luck won't improve the county; it will be preparedness and meeting opportunity.

The above action plan gets under way as a grand jury report comes out taking a close and critical look at the County Charter. It proposes specific and controversial recommendations. We need to be cognizant that discord will keep us stagnant and unprepared if all it does is keep us looking in a rearview mirror whilst other counties around us power out of the recession. There is a process in place to address the issues. A Charter Review Committee, convened every five years to consider changes to the Charter will examine the recommendations.

Also, the Board of Supervisors will officially respond to the grand jury report within the mandated 90 days. We'll also respond to the Charter Review Committee's recommendations. After that, it could be up to the voters to cast the final say over any modifications to the County Charter – potentially as early as the general election in November.

Let's let the administrative teams including the elected officials do their jobs. The Board of Supervisors keeps our taxpayers' interests in the forefront of our actions.

Until then, look forward, not in the rearview mirror, because the future demands we do so or El Dorado County may be left behind in the dust of counties more willing and able to move ahead. Join us as we build a better reputation for a county

with so much to offer and the people who can make it happen. Together we can truly make a difference as we leverage the unique and amazing resources that make El Dorado County a great place to live, work and play.

Supervisors Norma Santiago, Ron Mikulaco, Brian Veerkamp and Ron Briggs

---

Editorial: Supreme Court puts women, workers at risk

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is form the June 26, 2014, Los Angeles Times.***

The U.S. Supreme Court faced the challenging task of weighing one person's right to free speech against another's right to be protected from harassment when it reviewed a Massachusetts law requiring 35-foot buffer zones around abortion clinics. Unfortunately, the court got the balance wrong when it voted Thursday to strike down the law.

As important as the First Amendment is, courts have long recognized that it may be restricted, within limits. Americans may protest, plead, hector and even offend, but they have no inalienable right to falsely shout "fire" in a crowded theater, play obscene movies on Main Street or intimidate or bully others going about their lawful business.

The Massachusetts buffer zones were established by the state Legislature after years of violence and intimidation by abortion opponents outside clinics. The fatal shooting of two clinic workers in Brookline, Mass., in 1994 by an abortion opponent spurred the original 2000 buffer zone law, which was

eventually found by Massachusetts officials to be inadequate to the task of stopping opponents from intimidating clinic visitors – which is why they put a stricter law in place in 2007.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Rules are necessary – even at parks

By Brian Uhler

June marked the beginning of summer, and with it the arrival of visitors and the summer concert series known as Live at Lakeview.

As a community and specifically as a police department we recognize the value of helping our visitors have a nice time in our beautiful town. The Live at Lakeview event is enjoyed by visitors and locals alike.



Brian Uhler

For the last two years, our officers have had a rather low-key approach to the summer series, not wanting to impact the fun and doing our best to gain voluntary compliance to the rules at the Lakeview Commons and other city parks. In previous

years, those who visited Live at Lakeview didn't necessarily respond to the low-key approach, which not only included cops in "friendly, non-enforcement, reminder mode," but also announcements by organizers on the speaker system.

The rules that are most applicable are:

- No drinking alcohol in public (SLTCC 18-9)
- No smoking (SLTCC 18-81)
- No dogs (SLTCC 18A-11).

We have heard a clear message from the community, City Council, and those who attend the event, "there's too much smoking and drinking" and by smoking, I mean smoking of all sorts. To a lesser degree, people have complained of the dogs, too.

These laws are in place to make our city's parks inviting and friendly for all, but especially for kids and families.

Some have argued that public music events automatically mean that people are going to be smoking marijuana and drinking because that's just the way it is at a concert. To this, I want to point out some key differences:

Concerts are not "public" and are not usually free.

Concerts are attended by people who enter the event fully understanding the type of crowd and likely behavior (not passers-by, families who happen to be at the public park, or parents with small children).

Concerts usually include a private security force.

In the first event of the year, we had five officers assigned. Twenty-four administrative citations were written. During the event, foul language was directed toward the officers; one person argued that the temporary, extra signs didn't include the specific City Code sections (the permanent signs did have the sections); and another person indicated that since the

sign said “please” it was viewed as being optional.

Your police department looks forward to keeping this event fun and friendly for all who attend throughout the rest of the summer.

Brian Uhler is the police chief for South Lake Tahoe.

Editorial: Conservation is a group effort

Publisher’s note: *This editorial is from the the June 21, 2014, Sacramento Bee.*

It’s looking like a long, hot summer – and it’s going to be even more parched if Californians don’t get with the program.

State officials reported last week that residents and businesses are falling woefully short of the 20 percent water conservation goal in Gov. Jerry Brown’s emergency drought declaration in January that he reinforced in April. The statewide reduction was a pitiful 5 percent between January and May, compared with the same period the preceding three years.

Among the state’s 10 water regions, the Sacramento Valley leads the way with 10 percent savings, but then again it has further to go than many areas to be water-efficient. Residents in Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer and Yolo counties are stepping up, reducing their combined water use by 18 percent from February through May, compared with the average for 2012 and 2013.

Read the whole story

Letter: Yacht club serves at Bread & Broth

To the community,

On June 23, the Lake Tahoe Windjammers Yacht Club took the opportunity to help people in need at Bread & Broth's evening dinner served at St. Theresa Church's Grace Hall.

By sponsoring an Adopt A Day, the LT Windjammers Yacht Club funded the hot, full course meal for the 96 guests who attended the dinner. While enjoying the nutritious meal, the evening guests also enjoyed socializing in a safe, inviting environment.

"It is a wonderful experience to give back to the community. There are a lot of people in the community down on their luck and it is wonderful to be able to assist them," said Ernie Jones, commodore for the LTWYC.

Joining Jones were fellow LTWYC members Russ Noorda, Ann Jones, Diane Martin and Laurel Schmidt.

This energetic crew kept really busy bagging giveaways, dishing out roasted herb chicken, sweet potatoes, veggies and fruit and green salads, and helping the B&B volunteers with the evening cleanup.

Bread & Broth would like to thank the Lake Tahoe Windjammers Yacht Club for their incredible service at the evening's dinner and their $250 donation to cover the dinner's costs. LTWYC's Adopt A Day sponsorship helped lessen the hunger of many members of the Lake Tahoe South Shore community, making their day a little bit better.

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

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Is a coup taking place in El Dorado County?

By Larry Weitzman

There is a movement in the county that could be called a coup d'county, a takeover of county government under the absolute rule of the county chief administrative officer. And it looks like this movement is lead by the county CAO, Terri Daly, her followers and minions. Maybe EDC executives will become like those executives in Bell. Only recently (July 2013) did Terri Daly seek from the BOS and receive an annual salary increase for the HR director of $33,000, an increase of 22 percent.

Here's what going on. In order to create a furor in the county, the CAO's office using the law firm of Van Dermyden Maddux and our $140,000 created a now questionable survey that claims that the county employees live within a "culture of fear" with the chief culprit being the county auditor, Joe Harn, alleged to be a "mean bully" who won't cave to other people's pressure when they want to use county money, perhaps improperly. Of course what was claimed about the auditor wasn't true, as the survey showed the real problem in the county was in the department headed by Kim Kerr, the Community Development Agency which according to the survey had a satisfaction rating of 22 percent. What was the employee satisfaction rating of the auditor's department you ask, about

the highest in the county at 92 percent, the same as the county library.


Larry Weitzman

But it was the beginning of a campaign to rid the county of its long time auditor, an auditor who won’t let anyone in the county waste the people’s money or use it incorrectly. Harn has saved the county tens of millions of dollars over his tenure (Harn has taken the county from a $20 million deficit to a $54 million surplus). The real bully in the CAO’s office from the Van Dermyden survey data is the assistant CAO, Kerr. It was hoped that all this notoriety plus a lot of advertising by the opponent would cause Harn to be defeated in the June election.

Well, that didn’t work as most people in the county are aware of Harn’s excellent work and work ethic and he won the last election by a landslide, by 11-12 percentage points, similar to the two Ronald Reagan landslides over Carter and Mondale. So the next move by the coup was to nullify the elections of elected county officers, the auditor-controller, tax collector-treasurer, surveyor and county recorder clerk.

The method by which the Board of Supervisors and CAO would achieve this was through the El Dorado County Grand Jury and then implementing their recommendations via a Charter Review Committee to reform the County Charter (its main governing document) to eliminate the aforementioned elected department heads and make them appointed. Appointed by guess who? That’s right Daly, the CAO.

When studying the grand jury report, it can be seen that the grand jury did not study the Van Dermyden Maddux report and it admits it did not investigate allegations made against the auditor-controller but did take unsubstantiated “testimony” from obviously biased “witnesses” without any cross examination. This GJ just went through motions because the results of the report were pre-ordained from the beginning. Sounds like another Daly kangaroo court. And that becomes more evident when reading the report’s findings and recommendations which do not appear to have the underlying facts to back them up. Such a situation would and should invalidate the report. But that doesn’t stop this repetition of Jan. 30, 1933. Just take a look at the GJ proposed rewrite of the EDC Charter which was forwarded to the Charter Review Committee.

Amending the Constitution of the United States normally takes years just to get a proposed amendment through Congress before ratification which can take even more years, but with respect to the foundational document to the EDC Charter the attempted coup is happening in weeks . The Charter Review Committee is required to meet only twice with only one meeting of substance and it might be the last meeting, although there could be one more. That’s a lot riding on one or two meetings with limited time for the public to speak. But that goes with the territory here, as the proposed Charter changes are the elimination of democracy within the county, as the changes would give effectively complete control of the county to the CAO. After a recent short discussion with the Charter Review Committee Chairman Kris Payne, I have some hope his apparent lack of bias and common sense will prevail and the coup will be stopped in its tracks.

A summary of the changes to the charter as proposed by the GJ would do the following. All hiring and firing within the county would now belong to the CAO at her complete discretion pursuant to the GJ’s proposed charter change of Section 401. Currently department heads are now hired and fired by the BOS.

So if the auditor were to say no to the CAO or one of her minions, and with the CAO's new power to hire and fire (they will all eventually be minions as all department heads will serve at the pleasure of the CAO), bye bye auditor. The auditor who is supposed to protect the taxpayer's money will no longer be a junkyard dog; he/she will be a basset hound (no offense to the breed). It would become a true spoils system, a real crony county. Daly has already hired several of her friends, giving them fat raises, like Pam Knorr, the HR Director, and Kerr.

Perhaps the CAO would appoint an unqualified or worst yet scheming tax collector-treasurer. Maybe the new tax collector-treasurer would make investments using a political insider's investment broker or worse sell off the delinquent tax rolls as one of our outgoing supervisors perhaps wanted to do. Maybe that outgoing supervisor plans on getting that job by appointment. His lack of qualifications and a one-year wait as required by the current county Charter may prevent that.

In another power grab by the CAO, is a proposed language change in Section 304 (a) of the Charter. It was only one word by it's a powerful word. Instead of reading "304 (a) Coordinate the work of all offices and departments, both elective and appointive, and devise ways and means to achieve efficiency and economy in all counties operations," the word "coordinate" was changed to "Direct." That would give complete control of the entire county to the CAO even over the district attorney, the sheriff and the assessor. The CAO would already have complete control of the auditor-controller, the tax collector-treasurer, recorder-clerk (maybe the CAO could force the back dating of recorded documents or allow an unqualified candidate on the ballot) if those offices were to become non-elective and appointed by the CAO. The proposed GJ Charter change Section 401 would have already removed from the BOS the hiring and firing of department heads and given that power and pleasure to the CAO.

Additionally, the GJ's proposed Charter change Section 404 would allow sole discretion as to what is a department head to the CAO. Proposed Section 404 clearly states, "The position of department head shall be designated by the CAO."

You will hear the concept of these changes turning a CAO into a county executive officer like a strong mayor concept. But even in Placer County where they have a CEO instead of a CAO, there are the same elected officials that we now have in EDC. Placer citizens elect the auditor-controller, the treasurer-tax collector and the recorder-clerk, registrar. According to the Placer County organizational chart, the BOS along with the CEO under them is just one of the seven equal spokes of government responsible to and elected by the citizens.

What is proposed here reminds me of a coup, similar to the coup that took place on January 30, 1933. That's what happens when people cede too much power to one person.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Opinion: Calif. working on water bond

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

With the state budget behind them, the Capitol's politicians are turning to water, always California's most divisive political issue – but particularly so during a very severe drought, as a state Senate debate and vote demonstrated last week.



Dan Walters

They are trying – some harder than others – to write a new water bond to replace an $11.1 billion proposal placed on the ballot in 2009 but already postponed twice and widely believed to face voter rejection.

Six would-be successors are floating around the Capitol while private negotiations among politicians and myriad stakeholders seek a magic mix that could win two-thirds legislative votes and stand a decent chance of voter approval.

A $10.5 billion version stalled Monday in the Senate, falling five votes short as Republicans refused to vote for it. Anticipating the outcome, Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg said during the debate, “It’s not a loss. It’s the beginning … of successful negotiations.”

Gov. Jerry Brown, seeking re-election as a debt-reduction zealot, has been clearly reluctant to have any debt-increasing bond on the ballot, either for water or schools.

Read the whole story

Editorial: El Dorado County Charter revision all about giving CAO power, neutering supervisors

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the June 27, 2014, Mountain Democrat in Placerville.***

> *Neutering the board*
>
> *Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*
>
> – Lord Acton

The El Dorado County 2013-14 Grand Jury's attack on elected officials contains a multi-page effort to turn the members of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors into factotums for the chief administrative officer, the *Mountain Democrat* learned this week.

This detailed rewriting of the El Dorado County Charter is not the work of this grand jury, as evidenced by its superficial "investigation" of the so-called "proliferation" of elected officials. This rewriting is so detailed it would not have been done by any grand jury present or past. It is clearly the work of the current chief administrative officer. Its aim is clear – to neuter the Board of Supervisors and arrogate all power to herself.

In a series of cross-outs and additions, the duties of the Board of Supervisors, as detailed in the County Charter, are whittled down until the supervisors are turned into mere figureheads. And this is being rushed through the Charter Commission by "staff" before three new supervisors are elected

– one in September and two in November.

Under Section 204 of the charter, the Board of Supervisors can "review, and accept, reject or modify all performance evaluations performed by the chief administrative officer." That is crossed out.

"Except as otherwise provided for herein, non-elected department heads shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. (The board shall) appoint, suspend or remove all department heads except those for whose selection or appointment this charter makes other provision. Appointments shall be made on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications as determined by screening and selection procedures comparable to those used for classified management personnel." All that is crossed out. No appointment power for the supervisors. No screening and selection of department heads. Let the CAO appoint friends and sycophants without normal recruitment procedures.

The previous cross-outs were all under the heading of "The board shall."

Under the heading of "The board may," is the total elimination of the board's ability to "Create, abolish, consolidate, segregate, assign or transfer the powers and duties of any appointive office, department, division, board or commission to the extent not in conflict with this charter." All that is crossed out. The power of the board to reorganize county government is totally eliminated. In its place the CAO can dump an out-of-favor department head simply by eliminating that person's department or transferring it to someone else.

In pursuit of "information, advice and assistance" the board can "require the attendance of any officer or employee of the county to attend any meeting of the board." In place of "any officer" the CAO inserts herself or anyone the CAO assigns to attend. Again, a usurpation of board powers.

Section 211 is a single paragraph about “communication” that simply calls to the board to communicate with department heads or officers by “formal board action,” though individual board members may seek out information. This paragraph is changed to eliminate board direction to “department heads” and substitutes “elected officials.” This is merely bizarre.

Under Section 401 that outlines the powers and duties of department heads, boards and commissions, the CAO inserted a whole new paragraph that gives the CAO sole power to “appoint, suspend or remove all department heads.” That is reinforced by Section 404 about appointed department heads. Here “they serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority, the Board of Supervisors” is crossed out and their appointing authority becomes – you guessed it – the CAO.

The coup de grace, of course, is the proposal to wipe out elected department heads from the County Charter and take away the voters’ right to ever elect anyone except those that can’t be eliminated because they are prescribed in the state Constitution – sheriff, district attorney and assessor.

For the nine people running for the three seats open on the Board of Supervisors, be forewarned: If the CAO has her way, you will be spending a lot of money running for something that is simply an honorific with no power. For the four still sitting on the board, you are sitting ducks, who will be turned into rubber decoys.