Letter: LTCC helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

“Outstanding meal! Outstanding staff! Outstanding experience!” was the consensus of the four Lake Tahoe Community College leadership team volunteers at Bread & Broth’s dinner on June 9.

During a lull in the serving line, Alba Morales, administrative assistant to the dean; Sue Saia-Gochis, dean of students and academic support service; and her husband, Peter Gochis and their daughter, Courtney Sais, all agreed that they were having a wonderful time serving a hot, nutritious meal to all of the guests at B&B’s dinner.

In addition to thanking this fun-loving and hard working sponsor volunteer group, B&B would like to thank the LTCC leadership team for donating $250 for sponsoring their second Adopt A Day of Nourishment this year. As a nonprofit, all volunteer program, Bread & Broth receives its funding from the many Adopt A Day sponsors and anonymous donors who generously give so that B&B is able to provide a full-course dinner every Monday at St. Theresa Church’s Grace Hall and a soup/pasta meal every Friday at Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church.

On June 9, 92 guests attended B&B’s dinner of roast beef, green beans, mashed potatoes, green salad and a variety of desserts. Twenty-six guests came back for seconds and many “to go” cartons were handed out. All of this was the gift of the Lake Tahoe Community Colleges leadership team and the many B&B volunteers who all share their concern for the less fortunate of our community.

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

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Steering toward more Tahoe bike paths

By Joanne Marchetta

A dream of the future has a way of inspiring people to achieve seemingly impossible feats. The goal is emblazoned in the imagination and obstacles are swept aside by an unwavering vision. A marquis objective in the effort to make our communities more walkable and bikeable is a dream many people in the Lake Tahoe Basin have been working toward for decades – a single, connected bikeway encircling the entire lake.

By working together we have seen more and more pieces of this dream take shape. Since 2011, nearly 30 miles of bike trails, bike lanes, bike routes and sidewalks have been constructed. Key stretches remain to be completed and while many projects are in the works, finalizing this dream will take the steadfast determination and imagination of each of us.



Joanne Marchetta

The massive undertaking of the Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway

along Lake Tahoe's East Shore is a prime example. Eventually, this bikeway will span 30 miles and connect Stateline to Crystal Bay. A north demonstration project is expected to begin construction in 2015 to connect Incline Village to Sand Harbor State Park. This section alone could see more than 2,000 one-way cyclist trips on a peak summer day.

A two-mile south demonstration project from Kahle Drive in Stateline to Round Hill Pines Beach is already complete. But between the two are many miles of terrain, stream and road crossings, and a patchwork of land ownership.

There is no doubt that completing a bikeway around Lake Tahoe can be done. It will take strong public support and a collective willingness to overcome the constant challenges of funding, sometimes slow progress, and seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Are we up to the challenge? Do you share in the dream? You don't have to ride daily to understand the economics of cycling for an area like ours. Basinwide, cyclists today contribute an average of $14.1 million annually to the area's economy. We are not the only ones to realize this. Completing a connected bikeway around the lake and improving safety for bicyclists and pedestrians on our roads and highways will give us a competitive edge and provide a world-class, environmentally-friendly recreation amenity that could be as important as our ski areas.

What residents can do

Public officials need to hear from you. Great ideas are not automatically a priority. I encourage you to visit your commission or council regularly, as well as the boards of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Tahoe Transportation District, to voice your support. With more than 70 percent of the land in the basin in federal ownership, letting your representatives know the importance of this effort is also

essential.

We also need to be creative in the arena of funding. The town of Truckee recently passed a quarter-cent sales tax measure to support bike facilities. In Placer County, some transient occupancy tax, or TOT, is used to build and maintain trails. Solutions cannot solely be sought through public funding, however. The donor-supported Tahoe Fund is a creative source of private funding that is becoming essential to Lake Tahoe environmental projects.

You can also take part in the Tahoe Bike Challenge. Right now the annual event is in its second week of activity and the results are impressive. Last year, participants logged 18,800 miles of bicycle commuting which kept more than 35,000 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the basin's air. Behind the statistics of the Tahoe Bike Challenge is a message to TRPA and our partner agencies in the basin: we owe it to you to continue delivering more bike trails, bike lanes and safe routes to walk. Keep sending that message.

Maintain the momentum

Fortunately, this dream is not starting from scratch. Strong partnerships have been delivering pieces of this bikeway for years and progress is still going strong. Other than the Stateline-to-Stateline projects in Nevada, this year and next more sections along the West Shore will be complete. The Meeks Bay Bike Path will link Sugar Pine Point State Park and Meeks Bay Resort; and a separated shared-use path is being constructed in Homewood to finally close a long-standing gap.

On the South Shore, Caltrans and South Lake Tahoe are continuing work through the heart of town installing new sidewalks, bike lanes, bus shelters, lighting, and water quality improvements. Also, the existing separated path network in South Lake Tahoe, much of it more than 20 years old, is undergoing complete rehabilitation.

All of this momentum is progress. Let’s keep the dream alive.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Editorial: Big Food spoiling school lunches

Publisher’s note: *This editorial is from the June 7, 2014, Sacramento Bee.*

School lunches shouldn’t be a partisan political issue, but congressional efforts to keep kids hooked on pizza and tater tots have turned them into exactly that.

It’s a shame, given all the hard work that has gone into fighting childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes in this country. And it’s heartless, given the lifelong health risks that beset the one out of three American teenagers and children who are overweight or obese.

Just four years ago, Congress wisely passed a law requiring stronger federal school-lunch standards – leaner proteins, lower-fat dairy, and more fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

The standards weren’t handed down from on high by food Nazis; they were based on recommendations from the Institute of Medicine and imposed by the Department of Agriculture. They made sense.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Dads need to be engaged on a global level

By John Friedrich

I became a father eight years ago on the eve of Father's Day. The love that filled me when I first gazed into my daughter's eyes was immense. I thought then of how universal that experience is, and how the depth of love of our children is surely greater than all that divides us.

If we joined forces for the good of our kids, I imagined what we could do. As Jimi Hendrix once said, "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace."

We fathers often express the love for our children by doing our best to provide for them, and to protect them from harm. We'd jump in front of a speeding train or wrestle a grizzly in a heartbeat to save our kids.



Rosie and John Friedrich

Yet there is a present and growing danger to our kids that we have failed to confront – the denigration of the life support systems of the planet caused by our disruption of the climate. Unless we're OK with the prospect of leaving our kids an

inheritance of increasingly violent storms, severe droughts, extreme heat, terrorizing wildfires and rising oceans, we need to put the love of our children into action to turn the tide on climate change.

If 97 out of 100 doctors told you your child is in critical condition, and that you must take immediate action to save her life, and the other three said “don’t worry about it,” what would you do? The answer is obvious, yet we together have ignored the warning of the 97 percent of credentialed scientists who tell us in no uncertain terms that burning fossil fuels is altering our climate and damaging the health and well-being of our kids; and that it’s going to get a whole lot worse if we don’t change our collective ways.

The good news is that a wave of parents is waking up to the stakes for our kids. Much of this is being led by moms groups, but dads are increasingly stepping up to the plate. Fathers like author Mark Hertsgaard who together with mom Lisa Hoyos co-founded Climate Parents to mobilize parents and grandparents to take action on climate change and clean energy. Dads like Michael Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club, who says, “Our kids will grow up in a world where clean energy is cheaper that dirty fuels. A 100 percent clean energy society is within our grasp.”

As Iowa state senator and father of Rob Hogg puts it, “because we care about our children, we must care about climate change. It’s the defining issue of our generation.”

So fellow dads – enjoy that barbecue today and the time with your families. Take a moment to look your kids in the eye and commit to joining together with other parents to create a world that is worthy of all of our children.

John Friedrich works with Climate Parents, lives in Meyers and is the proud father of Rosie.

Editorial: Time for Calif. to manage groundwater

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the June 2, 2014, Sacramento Bee.***

This has to be the year that California finally starts to regulate groundwater. It has to be.

Not since the drought of 1977 have water resources been in such dire straits. To cope, the state is taking drastic steps when it comes to surface water. Last week, the State Water Resources Control Board ordered more than 4,200 "junior" water rights holders in the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds to stop pumping water from streams and warned that, if things got worse, "senior" water rights holders might see restrictions as well.

This move will only put more pressure on farmers and water districts to turn to groundwater – a practice that has already had dramatic, and disturbing, results.

Wells have run dry; overdrafting of groundwater has caused the land to sink – up to 28 feet in some places in the Valley; and aquifers aren't getting recharged.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Misogynistic ravings inspire a powerful Twitter response

By Petula Dvorak, Washington Post

Yes, all women have been harassed.

Yes, all women have been judged by our looks, not our merit.

Yes, all women have been around men who have discounted, denied and demeaned us.

Yes, all women are outraged by the misogynistic ravings of Elliot Rodger, the narcissistic 22-year-old who went on a killing spree in Santa Barbara because women didn't respond to him the way he believed he was entitled to have them respond.

Rodger vowed to slaughter the magazine-beautiful blondes who didn't want to have sex with him. He posted rants in online forums where – surprise, surprise – that kind of misogynistic bile was unremarkable and other men ratified his hatred.

Women heard Elliot Rodger. And they began flooding Twitter by the hundreds of thousands with their responses, using the hashtag #YesAllWomen.

"I've spent 19 yrs teaching my daughter how not to be raped," one mother tweeted. "How long have you spent teaching your son not to rape? #YesAllWomen"

"Because I wasn't 'asking for it' when he hit me," another tweeted, "and I shouldn't have to defend myself a decade later. #YesAllWomen"

"#YesAllWomen b/c we are called fat, ugly, and slutty/threatened w/rape all the time online, & we are told to

‘just ignore the trolls.’”

Read the whole story

Publisher’s note: ***Petula Dvorak is a 1988 graduate of South Tahoe High School.***

Letter: Bike donation helps Boys & Girls Club

To the community,

Thank you to One Medical Group for donating 15 bikes to the Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe.

We were lucky enough to receive eight girls bikes and seven boys bikes with matching helmets. They are single-speed Huffy bikes.

We plan to utilize these during our summer program to teach the members bike safety and how to properly ride a bike as well as integrating them into our programs. Often during the summer months the members enjoy riding their bikes at the club, however many either do not have properly working bikes or do not have the ability to transport their bike to the club for the day. With this generous donation, more kids will be able to ride bikes at the club and develop proper bike riding skills and knowledge.

We would like to express our gratitude to One Medical Group for this generous donation, and for giving the youth of South Lake Tahoe this great opportunity.

Kelly Garrity, Boys & Girls Club

Opinion: Electric ratepayers are being used

By Dave McClure

Liberty Utilities, owned by Canadian utility giant Algonquin Power, is on a mission to raise our rates for electricity to feed their insatiable appetite for more profits. Look out California Lake Tahoe residents, businesses, and homeowners as the foreign corporation spins their message that rate increases are necessary for “safe and reliable service.”

Don’t be taken in by their siren’s song.

Remember the last general rate case in which Liberty claimed only a modest 4.6 percent increase beginning January 2013? We wrote that it was deceptive because the 4.6 percent accounted for only $3.75 million of their approved $12.5 million. The rest of the increase ($8.7 million) was temporarily offset by a refund of over-collected wholesale power costs. That refund will end next year resulting in a huge rate increase.

On top of that rate increase Liberty has applied to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to retroactively collect more than $2 million from vegetation management expenses from 2012. And there are other projects Liberty will be asking for “rate relief” or increased rates to add to their profits.

The largest of these is an unnecessary $50 million boondoggle called “the 625/650 line upgrade.”

Liberty admits this project will cost ratepayers about $7.5 million more per year. Where can you invest money today for a 10 percent after tax (yes, we pay their taxes) guaranteed by state government regulators?

If it could get worse, it does. This monstrous project is not technically justified, and the North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance has hired an expert utility engineer with 25 years experience with Southern California Edison to bring technical honesty to this CPUC proceeding.

Liberty carried this project forward from Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPP) based on a technical report from 18 years ago. At the time SPP owned the Nevada and California service territory and conceived this loop upgrade to better serve their customers in Truckee and Incline Village.

Liberty is putting the entire cost of SPP's project on the backs of Liberty ratepayers. In addition, one leg of the loop is in the Lake Tahoe Basin (from Tahoe City to Kings Beach) calls for the largest tree removal (25,000 trees) and road building project in the Tahoe basin's history.

The independent expert has shown their technical studies are obsolete, deeply flawed, and carefully edited to try and prove their case. For several years Liberty has been delaying – holding hostage – a necessary but relatively inexpensive upgrade in an "all or nothing" strategy. We have suggested a staged alternative that may preclude any need for environmental damage to the Lake Tahoe Basin. Liberty is not cooperating with our data requests, because they just want fast track approval from the CPUC.

It's time to fight for justice, honesty, and technical reality. It's time to tell the foreign owners to end their campaign of misinformation and stop pillaging the Tahoe Basin. We are not their sheep. Never in the modern history of Lake Tahoe has there been so egregious an attack on our outstanding

national resource, and on all of Liberty's 49,000 California ratepayers, for a project with a clearly false technical basis – only corporate spin, fear, and "we know what is best and we'll take care of you" rhetoric.

We need Tahoe residents to send this message to Liberty Utilities, to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency prior to their approval, and to the California Public Utilities Commission.

Dave McClure is president of North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance.

Letter: Laxalt is more than just a name

To the community,

There's a saying among lawyers that you need to show your case not tell it. While busy telling us that Adam Laxalt's campaign is all about his last name, Jon Ralston shows us something quite different. As Ralston concedes, Adam Laxalt is, "A graduate of Georgetown University, Adam stayed in Washington for his law degree, too, then landed … jobs with Bolton, an undersecretary of state at the time, and then-Sen. John Warner from Virginia before a five-year stint in the Navy, including a deployment to Iraq as a judge advocate general."

Ralston could have added that as a JAG in Iraq, Adam held a significant post in detainee operations, putting away jihadist insurgents trying to kill American soldiers and Marines. He could also have stated that Adam served as a Navy and federal prosecutor and then taught law and leadership to future U.S.

Navy and Marine Corps officers at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. The point being, if Adam Laxalt were named Adam Smith, to borrow another of Ralston's jibes, he would still be a great candidate.

I've known Adam and his family since we were first year law students at Georgetown. I was in his wedding and he was in mine. Adam could have pursued a partner track at a big Washington law firm. His credentials – and family name – would have made that pretty easy. Instead he went to Iraq.

While Adam spent time in Washington, he was never of it. When he got out of the Navy, he married a great woman that he met at church. He moved to Nevada to raise his family and work in the private sector. It is hard to picture a path more commendable for someone asking voters to entrust them with public office. And yet somehow this path has less merit to Mr. Ralston than that of Adam's opponent – a 38-year-old career politician, running for another step-up office to the Governor's mansion? As a quarter-century professional observer of Nevada politics, perhaps Ralston should give Nevada voters a bit more credit.

Adam is no doubt honored to carry his family name. From the days since we first met, Adam's finest memories were of spending time with his grandfather and family up at Marlette Lake in the Sierra Nevadas. And who could not love spending time with the unmatchable personalities at Sen. Laxalt's annual lamb fry, when the Basque tradition of Nevada's mountains came to Washington?

Almost all will agree that Sen. Paul Laxalt is a great American. He was the vanguard of the western Republicans that changed America and made the Reagan Revolution possible. Robert Laxalt is Nevada's greatest novelist. Dominque Laxalt conquered Nevada's basin and range as an immigrant Basque sheepherder when Nevada was the frontier, west of the west.

Adam Paul Laxalt will carry on the legacy of that name. But let’s not be mistaken, Adam set out on his own path long ago.

Michael McClellan, Newport Beach

Letter: Public speaks through its votes

To the community,

Voting is the opportunity for government to be brought into alignment with the wishes of its citizens. Voting is that precious American right to elect candidates to public office who will govern and shape the future of the community.

The local election results tell us that our California chamber is on the right path. Our high energy and experienced voluntary board of directors have our ears to the ground and a sense of what the people of our community are thinking. The voters want a voice and appear to be listening to our message.

As California’s chamber of commerce, we will continue and redouble our efforts to create community where there is opportunity and prosperity for all and where government officials respects the voice of its residents and protects the rights of property owners and existing business owners and operators. We want to work with like-minded individuals and organizations to achieve these goals.

Finally, I want to thank Peggy Bourland and the Keep Tahoe Tahoe group for their extraordinary effort to qualify a measure for the ballot on public parking. They exercised their rights and the people have spoken. I also want to thank the

City Council for agreeing to place the matter on the ballot. It is now time city government officials and the community to engage in a truly collaborative process and devise an acceptable parking management program that has broad community support.

George Alm, president South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce