Letter: Brown is best candidate for supervisor

To the community,

I met Kevin Brown one day walking out of the Cantina about two months ago.

He greeted me outside suggesting I was the “Mayor of Meyers” as he put it.

Baffled, and never before hearing such a proclamation, I asked him where he got that silly thought. He told me a sheriff’s officer friend of his told him that because my involvement in the Meyers plan.

I wasn’t sure why Kevin would want to talk to me and it wasn’t until after I got in the car that I realized by his card he was a candidate for El Dorado County supervisor.

At that time I was already buried with my own politics in battling the local agencies over the new Meyers Area Plan. I wasn’t sure I wanted to engage another issue.

I met Kevin a few weeks later at Ernie’s Coffeeshop for lunch to hear what he was about. We talked about Tahoe’s local politics and issues and it quickly became evident that this guy was actually intelligent and had done his homework.

• Kevin Brown is already experienced and accomplished with what he has done for his Pollock Pines community. He has served on numerous community boards resolving issues for children, people with disabilities and supporting businesses and economic development.

• He wants to unite our Tahoe communities together for efficient problem solving.

• Kevin wants to ensure our public safety agencies (fire, sheriff, and police departments) are adequately staffed and have the right equipment to serve us.

• He has stated more than once that he wants to fight for us to prosper economically and yet still preserve a rural community environment.

He has already taken some action to assist the Meyers community regarding the new area plan. I'm sure Kevin will be right there fighting for what's right for the city communities as well regarding the loop road and other issues.

Now then, admittedly I was skeptical that anyone living off the hill might not have "our" Tahoe residents' best interests on his agenda. But after a second and third meeting with Kevin I realized his intentions were quite the contrary.

I made a point of listening very closely at the first Meyers supervisor candidate forum a few weeks ago. Kevin was clearly the most balanced with his answers to the questions and seemed well informed with Tahoe issues.

He is most likely to remain just removed enough (and not having political ties in Tahoe) to afford locals the most honest representation for a true benefit to our communities.

Kevin Brown's intention to appoint trusted individuals to the agency boards speaks volumes to me with regards to not allowing himself to be directly influenced by local governing agencies.

To this day – Kevin has never asked me for my vote.

Kevin has a wife of 22 years – Kathy, who works with him at his glass shop business in Placerville. He has three boys and daughter as well.

My judge of character is he's an intelligent guy that just wants to do the right thing and give back to local

communities. He doesn’t come across as a self-motivated political climber.

My intuition has always been pretty darn good – so I’m supporting him and hoping you will too.

Please vote for Kevin Brown for El Dorado County Supervisor June 3.

John Adamski, Meyers

Letter: Kingsbury Crossing helps Boys & Girls Club

To the community,

The Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe is pleased to announce they have received a generous donation from Kingsbury Crossing. Kingsbury Crossing has a history of helping out the Boys and Girls Club when they are able to.

They donated tables, chairs, blinds, vases, mirrors, framed pictures, and coffee tables. Thanks to Kingsbury Crossing the foyer now has a waiting area for parents to sit and socialize.

The new donation completes the teen room and ties everything together. The teens have been working hard on renovating the teen room and are finally done.

Thank you very much Kingsbury Crossing for your generous donation.

Kelly Garrity, Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club

Letter: Lions Club helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Lions Club members “help wherever, whenever and however they can” and that is exactly what the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club members did at Bread & Broth’s May 12 dinner.

Representing the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club at the meal were Rich Dart, Josh Welch, Tom Deputy and Maureen Kirkland, chapter president. These Lions Club members took the opportunity to help people in need by volunteering alongside the B&B volunteers before, during and after the dinner.

With their $250 donation for B&B’s Adopt a Day of Nourishment sponsorship and their volunteer support, the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club hosted a Mexican dinner of beef and bean burritos, Spanish rice, tortillas, fresh guacamole and salsa prepared by B&B’s talented and versatile cooks. Nearly 100 diners enjoyed the tasty dinner and took home bags of foods donated by local grocery stores and businesses.

“It’s a wonderful and rewarding experience for the community” was Maureen Kirkland’s description of the dinner event. Thanks to generous and involved sponsors like the Lake Tahoe South Shore Lions Club, Bread & Broth is able to provide meals every Monday and Friday evenings to all who enter our doors

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

Carol Gerard Bread & Broth

Letter: Political signs in public right-of-way

To the community,



Leona Allen

The months leading up to an election are always an annoyance to me, particularly because of campaign signs.

I’m not really sure they serve a purpose other than to waste resources and create litter. I’m curious, however, if all of these politicians really received permission from the property owners where their signs were placed. I see signs on county, state and federally owned property. Can you honestly tell me that Caltrans and the El Dorado Department of Transportation agreed to these signs being placed?

I think not.

Politicians: please follow the law.

Leona Allen, Meyers

Opinion: We can solve Tahoe's clarity problems

By Jeff Cowen

I have had the pleasure of serving as a spokesperson and community liaison for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency for eight years and I have witnessed a lot of change at the agency and in our communities.

As I leave TRPA to join my wife in running our family business in South Lake Tahoe, I wanted to share with you some of the simple truths I have gleaned from hundreds of public meetings and many conversations with each of you.



Jeff Cowen

First, Lake Tahoe has a water quality problem. It seems obvious, but many of the conversations I have witnessed over the years seem to lose this fact. We all want something from Lake Tahoe, but we need to give back in order to keep things in balance.

Next, cooperation reduces regulation. Problems don't go away just because we can't agree on how to address them. So why not be involved and work together on the solutions?

Now, on to my farewell tips to the community:

Get defensive and do your BMPs. After the Angora wildfire burned 254 homes to the ground, defensible space was on

everyone’s mind. Soon after, enthusiasm waned. Now we seem to have forgotten that thinning trees and replacing wood roofs are critical to making our neighborhoods safer and protecting Lake Tahoe. May is Wildfire Awareness Month in the Tahoe basin and all local fire protection agencies are asking that we again take up the banner of wildfire threat reduction. It is not a question of if, but when a wildfire is going to visit us again.

Get a site assessment on your property. Eventually, everyone needs to know how much land coverage they have and how much they are allowed to have. In the Tahoe basin, this information is just as big a factor to a property’s value as the number of bathrooms. A coverage assessment is also the first step to taking advantage of new land coverage exemptions under the Regional Plan Update. Your property may already have this information on file, but if it doesn’t, don’t let the filing fee deter you. Knowledge is invaluable.

Get out of here once in a while. Tahoe’s awesomeness is better understood with fresh perspective. Just as many learn from TRPA how to successfully balance the human and natural environments, we benefit from the input of others.

Stick to the plan. Every year, a little bit more of the Regional Plan gets updated and it is working. Restoring an entire watershed with tens of thousands of private homes tucked into nearly every corner will take generations to complete. Even though I am one of TRPA’s biggest cheerleaders, I am also a small business owner and a homeowner who understands the regulatory process from both sides. I can say with some authority that the Regional Plan that so many of you supported is worth taking the time to implement.

If we stick to the plan, we can ensure that this is the generation that solves Lake Tahoe’s water quality woes. The next generation may have issues of its own to grapple with, but at least their lives will still revolve around a clean and

pure Lake Tahoe.

Debate, but be willing to compromise. Lake Tahoe doesn't care if you are rich or poor, left or right, paddleboarder or wakeboarder. The actions of every one of us matter equally in this fragile watershed, so in order to save it we need to move beyond our differences and focus on what we share. There will always be voices that try to sway with hardline opinions and fear of the unknown. As I have watched decisions get made over the years, I have learned that solutions do not reside in extreme positions.

Finally, I am grateful to everyone who has ever asked me a question, offered input, or blown off steam to me about TRPA over the years. I and everyone at TRPA love to serve others and we owe it to you to continually listen, learn, and improve. Yours in service, Jeff Cowen.

Jeff Cowen will be with TRPA through the end of June.

Editorial: Measure L – vote yes in June

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News convened an editorial panel of six South Shore residents to decide on this endorsement for the June primary.***

Twenty bucks doesn't get you much these days unless you are at the South Lake Tahoe Library.

For that amount of money you get unlimited access to books, periodicals, an array of events, time on computers and the ability to pick the brain of the experts who work behind the

counter.

In all of those resources a whole new world could be discovered – life beyond the confines of Tahoe, as well as imaginary places. Books stimulate the imagination, they educate us, they relax us and they challenge us to think differently.

Libraries are the great equalizer. The cost is the same for everyone – free. This is because property owners pay the taxes to keep them going.

But they are also an equalizer in that they provide access to information. Even in this high-tech world we live in, not everyone has a personal computer or smart phone. Nor does everyone have the means to purchase books.

Even for those who do have the money to buy books, the library is still a resource. So many people don't want to buys books so the libraries "rent" them. These days they can even be checked out as an ebook. Many people who are in book clubs choose the library over the bookstore.

Audio books are also available. These are great for long car rides or for those whose eyesight isn't what it was.

Programs are offered starting with infants. Study after study proves that reading to children will better prepare them for school, and thus life. For adults whose first language is not English, these programs help teach them a new written and verbal language as well.

The library is constantly coming up with creative ways to reach people. The "appy hour" was developed to help people with smart phones learn how to use various apps.

Then there is the Friends of the Library that brings in authors to give readings and sign books. This nonprofit group is an extension of the library and is able to provide events

beyond what the county can do.

But the problem is the tax that supports the library is about to expire. If it does, it means the South Lake Tahoe Library would have to cut hours and programs, and one day may not exist.

We can’t imagine our town without a library. That is why we whole-heartedly support Measure L.

Measure L will be on the June 3 ballot. It is specific to the South Lake Tahoe library. It asks residents to continue paying the $20 year fee per parcel. This is not a new tax, but would be continuing the one already in place. The amount could go up based on the Consumer Price Index of no more than 3 percent per year. It will never exceed $28.50 per year. It would expire in 12 years. It will require two-thirds of the voters’ approval for passage.

Opinion: Forests vulnerable to climate change

By Robert Hudson Westover

Forests significantly contribute to our quality of life, but climate change is adversely affecting natural resources in rural and urban areas across the U.S.

A report released by the White House, the National Climate Assessment, explores many related issues including how a warming planet affects our forests.

With contributions from U.S. Forest Service scientists, the report is one of the most comprehensive examinations of

climate change and its effects on forested land. It concludes that a warming climate will complicate future management of public, private and tribal forests.

“Climate change is currently triggering multiple, sometimes contrasting, responses from our forests,” said Dave Cleaves, U.S. Forest Service climate change adviser. “Longer growing seasons and gradually warming temperatures are helping trees grow faster in some areas, but in other areas, these longer and warmer growing seasons increase late summer moisture stress and reduce tree growth.”

The Forest Service integrates climate change awareness, mitigation and adaptation into the management of its 193 million acres through the Climate Change Performance Scorecard. For example, this tool has encouraged national forests to identify vulnerable water resources, plant more climate-resilient tree species, research carbon storage capacity and more.

Some of the other ways the Forest Service manages wildlands includes reducing the potential for large crown fires expected in a warmer climate by removing hazardous fuels and managing for lower stem densities in dry forests, managing forest genetic diversity to increase resilience to a warmer climate and restoring riparian areas adjacent to streams to ensure cold-water fish habitat during summer low-flow periods.

Public and private forests in the U.S. will increasingly be vulnerable to ecosystem changes and tree mortality through fire, insect infestations, drought and disease outbreaks. At the same time, the need for healthy forests will only continue to increase. Forests provide an expanding opportunity to support emerging bioenergy markets and carbon credit systems. It is likely such uses will interact with the demand for wood products, healthy watersheds and recreational opportunities. There will also be continued economic pressures encouraging a shift from forestland to agricultural or urban land uses.

According to Linda Joyce, a Forest Service scientist, and one of the authors of the report, climate-smart management practices are being developed and implemented, and the agency is maintaining its focus on retaining forests as forests restoring forest health and resilience, and reforesting private and federal lands.

However, Joyce emphasized that implementation of climate-smart management practices can be increased only through effective integration of scientific information in management of our national wildlands.

Robert Hudson Westover works for the office of communication for the U.S. Forest Service.

Letter: Agencies steamrolling over Meyers

To the community,

We have two important items to share:

> Despite our community's concerns over public process, the agencies proceeded to hold a meeting [May14] with the Meyers Community Advisory Council (MCAC) without inviting the public.
>
> In this meeting, it was stated that contrary to what our community has been told, we cannot truly limit new development maximums in our Meyers Plan because TRPA will not allow it.

We believe more public meetings – with proper notice and advertisement – are needed to address other plan issues. Also,

we feel the agencies should follow through on their promises that we can truly decide our community's own future.

(That's the short version. For more details see below).

Otherwise, we were told the updated draft Area Plan will be released to the public next week to follow environmental review requirements. Also, we want to thank the California South Shore Chamber of Commerce for working hard to help our community and business owners. We also encourage other community members who agree to contact the agencies, Supervisor [Norma] Santiago, the newspapers, etc., and ask for a better, open public process for Meyers.

More details:

With less than a day's notice, we learned of an MCAC meeting being held by TRPA and El Dorado County to discuss the updated Meyers Area Plan draft. Although apparently not open to the public, a handful of community members were able to attend and allowed to raise concerns and questions. (Note: the full MCAC was not in attendance).

As has been our concern all along, we pressed for more public engagement, more open, public meetings, and the chance for the full community to better understand, and work through, the remaining unresolved issues in the Meyers Plan – before it's pushed forward to the legal/environmental processes (the farther along it gets, the more difficult it becomes to change it).

Most of you may recall Supervisor Santiago and others telling us that we get to decide our own plan. However – we learned [Wednesday] that this is not quite correct.

Although the Meyers Area Plan can include limits on larger future developments (such as commercial floor area, new hotel rooms called Tourist Accommodation Units [TAUs], etc.) in order to support small businesses, TRPA staff told us the

Meyers community cannot include language in our Area Plan to truly limit new developments in Meyers because it is TRPA's "Regional strategy" to allow the transfers and conversions of development (which allow new commercial, tourist, and other development in Meyers beyond the Area Plan's stated caps).

Unfortunately, there are several regulations in TRPA's Regional Plan that support the larger, corporate-type developments that it appears most of Meyers does not want, but that will affect us even though not mentioned in the Meyers Area Plan. We believe that the agencies should follow through on their promise and let the Meyers Community decide what type of new businesses and what kind of community we want for our future.

Sincerely,

Meyers residents and business owners

Letter: Library fee is food for the brain

To the community,

For the price of for lattes or four beers or three glasses of wine a year, voters can keep our library open five days a week.

Many of us are fortunate enough to have home computers and Internet, which means that we can download audio books and ebooks for no cost with our library cards. There are many students and others who are not as fortunate. Keeping computers and Internet available for those who don't have home

access is important. Good schools, a library, and beauty improve a community. Beauty we have, the library we could lose. This community uses our library every day: 1,700 people visit our library every week, 130,000 items are borrowed every year and 14,000 locals have library cards.

Rather than buy a best seller that we'll read only once, we can borrow from the library, at no cost. Current newspapers, magazines, & a great collection of DVDs are available. Even my dog appreciates the free audio books as I take her for longer walks when I'm listening to a story.

About 25 years ago our library lost much of its budget and the hours were reduced to two days a week. There's a very real chance that this could happen again. Please vote yes on Measure L to keep our library open at its current level.

Diana Hamilton, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Calif. cities not faring as well as state

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

The state budget is largely financed by personal income taxes, and thanks to an improving economy and a temporary tax increase approved by voters two years ago, it is enjoying surpluses after years of deficits.

Indeed, the big conflict in the Capitol this year is over competing priorities for billions of extra bucks.



Dan Walters

Gov. Jerry Brown wants to devote most of the extra money on debt repayment and reserves, but his fellow Democrats in the Legislature want more spending, ranging from universal pre-kindergarten to health and welfare services.

Cities, however, are not sharing in the income tax cornucopia because their budgets are based on sales and property taxes, and neither is generating the big gains that an up-cycle brings to the income tax system.

Residential and commercial construction, a source of property tax gains, remains somewhat sluggish. Ditto for retail sales as consumers, still reeling from the effects of recession, remain skittish.

As officials in cities large and small begin work on their 2014-15 budgets, therefore, they are seeing very tight times ahead, not only because of modest revenue growth, but because they face rapidly escalating costs for retiree pensions and health care.

Read the whole story