Letter: Libraries open new worlds to readers

To the community,

When I was a little kid, I loved to read. My parents didn't have money for books, so every Saturday, we went to the library. I left with a huge stack, as many as they would let me take out.

When I was 10, I checked out a Times-Life picture book on the Himalayan mountain range – a world completely alien to my childhood in the Bay Area. That book changed my life: I moved to the mountains of Yosemite, Colorado, Alaska, and finally, Tahoe. (In between, I made it to the Himalaya.)



Kim Wyatt

Thanks to the library, I was shown a world I knew nothing about, but on some level it resonated and shaped my life. I want other kids to have that opportunity.

Funding for the South Lake Tahoe library will soon expire, yet access to information is more important than ever. Reading opens worlds, and for those without resources, the library is crucial. Our local library offers services to those who need them and is a shining light in our community. Not everyone can afford books or a computer, and the library is a lifeline.

Please vote yes on Measure L. For $20 a year, you might just

change someone’s life.

Kim Wyatt, Meyers

Editorial: Swanson for EDC supervisor

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

Politically savvy, connected locally and beyond, astute in policy and knowledgeable in how to make things happen – that’s the type of person Tahoe needs on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

There is only one person running for District 5 who has what it takes to do the job. That person is Angela Swanson.

One of Swanson’s strong suits is the ability to build consensus. She proved this on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board and continues to do so on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.



Angela Swanson

She is undoubtedly the most progressive of the six candidates.

She took it upon herself to get involved with the League of California Cities in ways that no other council member has. This brings a voice to South Lake Tahoe that is unique. While she is reimbursed for some of her travel, she does this on her own time. There is no question Swanson is committed to South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County as a whole.

Swanson is incredibly smart. She knows the issues. She listens. She can change her mind when presented with new information. She is passionate. She cares.

She can step onto the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board, California Tahoe Conservancy board (she was the city's rep), and Tahoe Transportation board (she is the current city rep) without needing to come up to speed. These are all boards that the Tahoe supervisor traditionally sits on, and they are more critical to Tahoe than the Board of Supervisors. This is why who represents District 5 is so critical – TRPA, CTC and TTD have more impact on the lives of those living in the basin than the Board of Supervisors.

Beyond those responsibilities, the primary roles of a county supervisor are to make sure county services are equitably supported throughout the territory and that there is economic stability to provide those services.

Swanson has proved herself to be fiscally responsible on the boards she has served. And she has an awareness of issues that go beyond personal experience.

We hope she can stay focused because at times she seems scattered, which causes her do things that makes us question her judgment. If Swanson can keep it together, she could be the most effective supervisor Tahoe has had – and perhaps the board has had.

However, Swanson has baggage, which gives us pause as we endorse her. She needs to take responsibility for her role in taking money from a man now serving time in prison on drug

charges and giving it to a nonprofit education foundation. While there was nothing illegal about the transaction, it raises questions about her ethics and judgment.

By now she should know perception can be much greater than reality. Everyone has made mistakes, had moments they wish they could do over. But Swanson has never publicly taken responsibility for her role in the questionable donation that came in a brown bag. It shouldn't matter if the DA cleared her – the public hasn't and she needs to acknowledge this.

Swanson will only succeed at the next level of political office if she grows up a bit, becomes more mature and takes responsibility for her shortcomings as well as her accomplishments.

While we believe Sue Novasel is electable, we don't believe she has the breadth of knowledge to tackle the job efficiently. And while she says she will give 100 percent to this job, it has been years since she has had a regular full-time job. The supervisor works more than 40 hours a week – it doesn't end.

Kevin Brown has clearly done his research and comes across as informed. But his ties to developers and other special interests make us question if he is the appropriate voice for Lake Tahoe.

Gerri Grego needs to get more experience beyond the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission. She also needs some moxie.

Teresa Piper needs experience to be taken seriously.

Kenny Curtzwiler can't say he is anti-government and then want to be on an elected body. This doesn't make sense. We don't need an outsider on the board.

District 5 will be best served for the next four years if Angela Swanson is on the Board of Supervisors. Vote Swanson on

June 3.

Letter: S. Tahoe Library is a well-used resource

To the community,

At the very bottom of your sample or absentee ballot for the June 3 primary election, you will see Measure L, which provides for a parcel tax which can be used only to support the South Lake Tahoe Library. It cannot be used for any other purpose.

Some background is in order. By 1994, because of state-mandated changes in the way counties could spend general funds, the number of days our library was open had dwindled to two days a week. In 1995, voters approved a small parcel tax, renewed in 2005, to support the South Lake Tahoe Library. For almost 20 years, our library has been open five days a week with sufficient funds and staffing to purchase new books and other materials, provide research assistance and present numerous programs for community members of all ages.

Now, in the 21st century, our library offers not only print resources, but a full range of downloadable books and popular magazines in multiple formats, on-site computers with Internet, and other exciting innovations. Patrons may access free online resources, such as encyclopedias, law books, auto repair reference manuals, and business development sites. In addition, online programs to strengthen job skills, prepare for tests and learn another language are available. All of these online resources are free and may be used from home as well as the library. Strong support for the children of our

community has continued. In addition to in-the-library programs for youth ranging from toddlers to teens, parents may check out a variety of kits featuring books and early learning materials.

As a result of the many resources available, our library is heavily used. Out of a total of 18,000-plus active library cards, over 14,000 belong to local residents. 130,000-plus books were checked out in 2012, a 23 percent increase over the previous 10 years. People are standing at the door when the library opens waiting for the computers and they are in use all day long.

The funding for this major community resource will soon expire. Measure L is not a new tax. Rather, for $20 per year, it will maintain the funding that has supported this major community resource. Increases will be based on the Consumer Price Index and cannot exceed 3 percent per year. The tax will last for 12 years, at which time the voters can re-evaluate in the light of then-existing conditions.

As community members, we will be making an important choice on June 3. Do we preserve our vibrant, full-service library by voting yes on Measure L? Or will we let the opportunity pass and revert to a branch much reduced in hours and services? I hope you will join me in voting yes on Measure L.

Kay Henderson, president South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library and chair for the Committee for South Lake Tahoe Library – Measure L

South Lake Tahoe

Letters: Douglas teachers want fair treatment

To the community,

The teachers in Douglas County have not received an increase in salary since a mediated agreement was reached in February 2008. The end result of that mediated process was 4 percent for 2007, and 4 percent for 2008, not compounded. That agreement was reached after the DSA [Distributive School Account] for DCSD was increased from $4,911 to $5,324 per student, an increase of 9.6 percent.

The mediator was able to move the parties once it was shown the DSA increased substantially and revealed through board documents that the administrative groups were approved raises well above 8 percent for the same time period.

Since then, the DCPEA (Douglas County Professional Education Association) bargaining unit's base salary has fallen from $35,712 to $34,957. That is a decrease of 2.1 percent. During the extreme recession in Nevada, DCPEA worked with the district to restructure the health plan and reduce the monthly contribution per employee by 13 percent. A total of ($1,062 per year per employee) rather than take additional cuts to the base salary.

The district was allocated a DSA increase of 10.76 percent YOY 2012-2013. This brings the DSA allocation to $5,885 per student, 10.5 percent higher than is was in 2008.

It is our opinion that the district has the means to fund a reasonable raise.

The final offer made by the district would have increased the base salary to $35,831. That would be an increase of less than $10 per month over the salary negotiated in 2008, six years

ago. In our opinion this is not a reasonable offer.

Why arbitration?

In Nevada, binding arbitration is the final step available to parties when they cannot resolve their differences. The DCPEA negotiation team requested to begin negotiations in January 2013. The district refused to meet on any issue until the legislature finished business in June. Since the legislative session closed, our team has met face-to-face with the district for multiple hours over a dozen times. In the full year since DCPEA asked to open negotiations not a single tentative agreement on any issue had been signed by the district.

The final face-to-face negotiation session in January 2014 ended in DCPEA declaring impasse when the district made their final offer of 2.5 percent and once again no TA's were signed on non-financial issues. However, neither the declaration of impasse, nor the arbitration scheduled for June 16-20 prevent the district from requesting further negotiation.

Sincerely,

Brian Rippet, Douglas County Professional Education Association president

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Opinion: Californians thumb their noses at marriage

By Joe Mathews, Zocalo Public Square

This month, The Accident gets hitched.

The Accident is my term of endearment (really!) for my baby sister Katie, who arrived, unexpectedly, 11 ½ years after me and seven years after my brother. She exchanged vows in L.A.'s San Gabriel Valley with her longtime boyfriend, Matt, in a big family wedding that (my mother would like you to know) is costing a fortune.

I thought this family milestone was a totally unremarkable story – hardly worthy of a column – until I came across some data on California and its families. In our state, a seemingly conventional marriage is now exceptional. And Katie and Matt—who, if encountered on the street, would appear to be fairly conventional millennial professionals—just might be radicals.

Marriage rates are declining across the country and the industrialized world, and married couples represent fewer than half of American households. In California, the trend runs even deeper: The state's marriage rate has reached almost European lows. There are fewer than six marriages a year now for every 1,000 Californians, putting the state at or near the bottom of the nation. (The rate in Arkansas, for example, is nearly twice as high.) Matt and Katie are swimming against a strong tide.

In California and around the country, people who are tying the knot are waiting longer to do so. The reasons for this are much debated, but one factor seems to be how long it takes people to get through school and find an economic footing. Such waits are particularly long in high-cost places like the Bay Area, where Katie and Matt live. My sister tells me that people there keep telling her that she's "pretty young" to be getting married. That's flattering but not true. She's 29, a couple years older than the average American (and Californian) bride.

A decline in marriages may not be worrisome in itself, but in California it has been accompanied by a rapid decline in the

number of children. The number of children under 10 in L.A. County dropped by 17 percent in the last decade. Some demographers have raised alarm that the sliding birth rate, in combination with diminished immigration, is producing a child shortage in the state. We need to produce more future taxpayers to buy houses and support the retirements of the old.

Read the whole story

Letter: Time to give where you live

To the community,

Today is the National Day of Giving. For 24 hours, people are asked to support nonprofit organizations that work to make their community a better place; Give Where You Live is El Dorado County's version.

You know that I believe art can change lives, and I'm writing to ask that you consider donating to the El Dorado Arts Council (EDAC). Newly elected to the board and at the moment its only South Lake Tahoe representative, I see firsthand the effect that this organization has had in our county through programming and grants for children, artists, writers, and other creative disciplines.

In addition, EDAC operates a dedicated ArtSpace in Placerville, which has been very supportive of Bona Fide Books and many South Lake Tahoe artists. EDAC has also funded local organizations like the Tahoe Tallac Association, the Tahoe Art League, and the Tahoe Arts Project, and I'd like to see it

able to do more.

If you'd like to support EDACs mission as a catalyst and arts incubator for all of El Dorado County – you can find out more about EDAC at the link – please donate here.

Thank you!

Kim Wyatt, publisher Bona Fide Books

LTN publisher's note: ***Several South Shore nonprofits beyond the ones mentioned here are participating in Give Where You Live, such as Bread & Broth, CalStar and Live Violence Free.***

Opinion: Safety tips to prevent dog bites

By Henry Brzezinski

With warmer weather and increased outdoor activities throughout the county, El Dorado County Animal Services is sharing safety tips with the public to prevent dog bites.

Between 300 and 400 dog bites typically occur in El Dorado County each year; most of these are avoidable.

It is critically important for members of the community to keep their dogs confined to their own property or on a leash when off property. Dogs running loose, particularly those acting aggressively, and all dog bites should be promptly reported to Animal Services. Animal Services strictly enforces county, Placerville and South Lake Tahoe leash laws.

If anyone is concerned about stray dogs or dog bites, they

should contact our office. Life threatening animal emergencies should be reported immediately by calling 911 or Animal Services.

We are fortunate to live in a beautiful rural county and dog owners often mistakenly believe it is acceptable to let their dogs run at large or that their dog won't cause a problem. But this creates a danger to the dog and other residents. Furthermore, the owner of the dog can be held financially liable if the dog injures someone. The county also has ordinances related to potentially dangerous and vicious dogs, with both costly civil consequences and/or severe criminal penalties.

Dogs can be unpredictable and even family pets that have never acted aggressively can bite. Children, particularly small children, are common victims and they can be seriously injured if the dog bites (causing severe injury, muscle tears, disfiguring lacerations and ultimately corrective surgery), so parents need to educate them about proper behavior around dogs.

To keep everyone safe, Animal Services recommends the following tips:

- If you have a dog, keep it properly confined on your property.
- When walking your dog, keep it on leash. Do not allow your dog off-leash at any time in public places, including sidewalks, trails, parks, beaches and other locations except for designated off-leash areas.
- Instruct young children to never approach dogs without adult supervision and the adult asking about the dog's behavior.
- Never attempt to touch a dog that is eating or in the possession of a bone or a treat.
- Use caution with dogs with puppies.
- Instruct young children not to scream or run near dogs.

- Do not tease or taunt a dog. Never pull an animal’s tail or fur.
- Keep your face away from the dog’s face when approaching or playing with them.
- Ask the owner’s permission first before approaching and petting a dog.
- When walking, consider calmly crossing the street rather than passing a dog, even when the dog is on-leash with its owner.
- If a dog threatens you, try to remain calm and back away slowly. Avoid eye contact with an aggressive dog.
- If a dog tries to bite you, put a barrier (a board, purse or whatever is available) between you and the dog and back away slowly and call for help.
- Be sure to maintain your dog’s current license and rabies vaccination, in case your dog gets lost or bites someone.
- Do not tether your dog; it promotes aggression and is illegal if done improperly.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Eight-five percent of dog bites are by un-neutered males.

For more dog bite prevention tips, or to report a lost, loose or aggressive dog, contact Animal Services at 530. 621.5795 on the West Slope of El Dorado County or at 530.573.7925 in South Lake Tahoe.

Henry Brzezinski is El Dorado County Animal Services chief.

Editorial: Fire prevention

projects save money in long run

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the April 29, 2014, Bakersfield Californian.***

It's the classic pay-me-now or pay-me-later situation.

A study released this month by the U.S. Forest Service, the Nature Conservancy and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy confirmed that treating fire-prone forests in the Sierra to prevent the increasingly prevalent "megafires" would have benefits worth two to three times the cost.

The study bolsters the case for a plan before Congress that would protect funding for critical fire prevention and restoration programs that have been short-changed in recent years to pay for fighting fires.

With the number and size of massive wildfires expected to increase again this year because of warming temperatures and drought in the West, it's more important than ever that forest managers have the money they need for thinning overgrown forests and conducting controlled burns while they have the opportunity.

That's particularly true at Lake Tahoe, where wildfire is considered the No. 1 threat to the clarity of the lake.

Read the whole story

Letter: Harrah’s-Harveys spend day at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Harrah’s-Harveys HERO members who volunteered at Bread & Broth’s dinner April 28 came prepared to work hard and make sure that the evening’s diners were warmly welcomed, served heaping portions of barbecue roasted chicken and given bags of food and leftovers to go before they left.

HERO is an employee-based program at Caesars casinos that encourages employees to participate in charitable events within their community. Fortunately for Bread & Broth, the Harrah’s/Harveys HERO members choose to host a B&B “Adopt a Day of Nourishment” sponsorship.

“It was so much fun. We would all do it again,” said Stephanie Bartholomew, a Harrah’s/Harveys’ games supervisor.

In addition to Bartholomew, the fun and friendly HEROs volunteers included Cindy Walker, Steve Campbell, Randy Sumner and Jackie Andrews. They particularly enjoyed working the serving line and had smiles for the guests.

Bread & Broth would like to thank and compliment Caesars for encouraging their employees to make a positive impact and help meet the needs of their community by participating in charitable events, such as feeding the less fortunate through B&B’s meal program.

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

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: Time to save Incline Flume Trail

To the community,

The Incline Flume Trail is an 8-mile route above Incline Village that mostly follows the route of a Comstock-era water flume. This is part of the same water system that the popular Marlette Flume Trail follows.

The Incline Flume Trail is not an authorized trail, partly because it crosses private property and partly because of the funds needed to conduct the required archaeological studies to make it a real trail. There is an opportunity before us to solve both those issues.

Washoe County is considering a proposal that would transfer the private land that the Incline Flume Trail crosses to public ownership. This is a huge opportunity for mountain bikers and other trail users. It would be a major step to make the Incline Flume Trail off of Mt. Rose Highway a legal trail. Donors have already pledged to fund the required environmental and historic preservation studies needed before the trail can be adopted into the USFS system.

Once the trail is legalized, we can begin much needed trail improvements and repairs as well as ensure continued maintenance occurs. The initial efforts to legalize this trail were focused on a re-route around the private land, however due to the terrain, it would not have been the ideal routing for the trail and it would have been very expensive and time consuming to construct. This land swap would provide for the best routing of the trail as well as the historic preservation of the bull wheel.

More information about the land swap can be found online.

Let the Washoe County Commissioners know how important trail access and the Incline Flume Trail are to you. Especially if you have ridden and enjoyed this trail, please take a moment to send an email or attend one of the upcoming meetings and let your voice be heard.

Please write to Washoe County Commissioner for this area, Marsha Berkbigler, mberkbigler@washoecounty.us or call 775.328.2005. Also it would be a good idea to include the Citizen's Advisory Board on that message at cab@washoecounty.us.

(Note: Washoe County addresses usually will not receive emails from Yahoo email accounts.)

Please consider attending the following meetings:

Incline Village/Crystal Bay Citizen Advisory Board Meeting: May 6 at 5:30pm at the IVGID meeting room, 893 Southwood Blvd., Incline Village.

Washoe County Commissioners Meeting, May 13 at 10am at the Washoe County Complex, Bldg. A, 1001 E. Ninth St., Reno.

Thanks for your support.

TAMBA