Letter: LTCC gives time, money to Bread & Broth

To the community,

“Serving at Bread & Broth was fun and gives you a sense of fulfillment and being able to help those less fortunate,” said Randy Joslin, facilities director at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Joining Joslin at Bread & Broth’s dinner on Nov. 4 were Dave Burba, director of IT; Cheri Jones, director of enrollment services; Sue Saia, dean of students and academic support services; and Saia’s husband, Pete Gochis.

Bread & Broth would like to thank LTCC’s management team for donating $250 to sponsor the free dinner served at St. Theresa Church’s Grace Hall and the LTCC sponsor crew who stayed the entire evening and were eager to help the B&B volunteers in any way they could.

As the dinner service came to an end, Sue Saia said, “I’m so impressed with everything. Great food, great portions. The diversity of people who attend is amazing. I’d personally like to become a regular server.”

It was a great evening thanks to the generosity of the Lake Tahoe Community College’s involvement. The dinner guests raved about the mushroom stroganoff and roasted vegetables, the LTCC crew made jokes making others laugh. More than 90 community members received a nutritious, tasty and filling dinner.

Thank you Lake Tahoe Community College for your part in making South Lake Tahoe a caring community.

To help B&B as a donor or sponsor, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Time to support early childhood education

By Patrick Stelmach

While stumping across the nation recently in favor of early childhood education, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan discovered something interesting: More Republican governors than Democrats have increased funding at the state level for preschool programs.

Actually, this should come as no surprise. Strong early education programs enjoy majority support from Americans of every ideological bent – Democrats, Republicans, even self-identified Tea Party members support it. Why? Because providing a better, stronger education for our children is not a partisan issue.

Think about it. There is no Republican way to teach children how to read and there is no Democrat way to teach kids how to add and subtract. There is no Blue State way to teach geography and no Red State way to teach Social Studies. Education in America has always been a bipartisan effort.

But here's the problem. Democrat and Republican governors who want to provide expanded access to good childhood education programs face competition and constraints. Human service needs caused by the worst recession in more than a generation remain dire. Health care costs, exacerbated by our aging population, aren't going away. And good, quality pre-K programs – the kind every American would want their kids enrolled in – do not come

cheap.

All of this spells the need for a new state-federal partnership. And that's the idea behind legislation filed this month in Congress. The Strong Start for America's Children Act, sponsored in the House by Reps. George Miller, D-Martinez, and Richard Hanna, R-N.Y., and in the Senate by Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, would help states and local school districts improve and expand high-quality, full-day preschool programs for 4-year-olds with the goal of making sure they are ready to learn.

The need for this is now – and any cop, prosecutor, business leader, teacher or economist can tell you why. When children participate in high-quality early learning programs in the first five years of life, they do better in school, get higher-paying jobs, rely less on social programs and contribute more to the economy. Such programs improve health; reduce the need for special education, educational remediation and welfare; reduce high school dropout, juvenile justice and incarceration rates; and increase home ownership, employment and economic productivity.

It's not just about helping children, although for many of us, that would be a desirable outcome by itself. It's also about making our economy stronger and our workers more capable of competing in a global economy. Think of the prosperity that will flow from a strong education system if the U.S. 10 years from now found herself with the world's best and strongest early childhood education programs.

So what can we do? A good place to start is to encourage Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Granite Bay, to climb on board and support the new legislation. It's an opportunity for Rep. McClintock to not only reflect the will of his constituents, but also bypass the partisan gridlock in Washington and do what's right for his district and for our children.

Patrick Stelmach is state organizer for California Fair Share. California Fair Share stands for an America where everyone gets their fair share, does their fair share, and pays their fair share; and where everyone plays by the same rules. Find out more online.

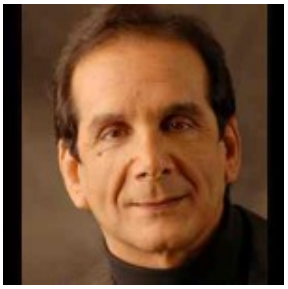
Opinion: Obama full of rhetoric

By Charles Krauthammer, Washington Post

The Obamacare website doesn't work. Hundreds of thousands of insured Americans are seeing their plans summarily terminated. Millions more face the same prospect next year. Confronted with a crisis of governance, how does President Obama respond?

He campaigns.

"I've got one more campaign in me," he told grass-roots supporters – a series of speeches and rallies, explains the *New York Times*, "to make sure his signature health care law works."



Charles Krauthammer

Campaigning to make something work? How does that work?

Presidential sweet-talk persuades the nonfunctional Web portal to function?

This odd belief that rhetoric trumps reality leads to strange scenes. Like the ShamWow pitch, Obama’s nationally televised address trying to resell Obamacare. Don’t worry about the website, he said. I’ll get it fixed. And besides, there are alternatives, such as an 800 number he promptly gave out. Twice.

You half expected him to offer a ShamWow special: Add the mop and get a free year of Obamacare! But the 800 number was more than bad form. It was bad substance. Turns out you can give all the information you want to the person at the other end of the line — or to your friendly community “navigator” — but that person must enter your data into the very same nonfunctioning website.

Read the whole story

Letter: Time to remember the Four Freedoms

To the community,

On Jan. 6, 1941, FDR delivered his Four Freedoms speech to Congress. Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, freedom from fear. After his speech, FDR requested a pamphlet for publication on the Four Freedoms.

The Four Freedoms should be the national standard for America. However, today we are way off the mark. We have regressed.

In 1947, the National Security Act created, among other things, the CIA. The CIA has become a covert agency that listens in on citizens' phone conversations and reads citizens' emails. Of course, it gets help from its blood brother the FBI. According to Oliver Stone, "NSA intercept and stores … 1.7 billion emails, phone calls and other communications each day." President Harry S. Truman feared that the CIA could turn into a Gestapo. Bottom line, Big Brother has big ears.



Bill Crawford

On worship. Hate crimes are alive. Many are aimed at religious groups. Seems know nothing has been reborn.

On freedom from want. It appears that the homeless numbers are growing, meaning the police must use force in many of the nation's cities to patrol or break up homeless camps. But it's a given that people need shelter, a roof over their head. Also, food banks, etc, are increasing in numbers to meet the needs of the millions who would go hungry. It seems that we need national programs to hopefully remedy the sad situation. President Abraham Lincoln said the government should do for the people what the people cannot do for themselves. That sounds reasonable, especially since we spend billions on the far away wars and military activities. Wars that will cause us to have a national debt for ages to come.

On freedom from fear. We do have our wars so fear of something must have hold of us. Here at home we have the beginning of a police state, i.e. the CIA and FBI. And according to the

British Observer, "… more Americans have been killed by firearms over the past 45 years than in all the wars the U.S. has been involved in since its birth." As the poet said, "Man's heart is in his weapons."

Amen.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Letter: Bijou playground becoming a reality

To the community,

Bijou Community School PTA is building a huge new playground for both the school and community. As the only playground between Rufus Allen and Kingsbury Grade, this is a much needed improvement to South Lake Tahoe.

And the generosity of this community has been amazing! Thank you so much to all of you who have contributed to this project:

Bijou Students and Families (PTA)

Edgewood Co.

American Centuries

Vail Resorts (ECHO)

Marcus Ashley Galleries

Anonymous Donors

Jon Hetherton Insurance-Farmers

Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel

El Dorado Community Foundation

Village Center Shopping Center

Wulstein Financial Services and Company

The Dameral Family

Biospirit Day Spa

Environmental Incentives

Jim and Paula Gansinger

Environmental Inspection & Construction

The Bridge Language Academy

Brian & Michelle Hogan

Corporate Nevada

Winters Electric

Tahoe Pool Services

Riva Homes

CTL Forest Management Inc.

David and Terri Jinkens

Lakeside Inn

Dooley Riva – G + W Engineers

Cardinale Way Toyota

South Tahoe Crossfit

Alpine Carpet One

Blue Angel Cafe

Boulder Exterminators

Thank you LTUSD for loaning us money to get the project started. We will repay you ASAP.

If you are interested in helping us complete this playground, please email khaven@gmail.com. We have already raised $93,000 of the $102,000 that we need. We only have a few thousand of this project to go.

The playground will be installed in the spring/summer 2014. Help out if you can.

Kathy Haven, Bijou PTA

Letter: Bringing awareness to pancreatic cancer

To the community,

It is another November and for the last couple of years, that means I join other advocates across the county in declaring November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month.

I attend local city council meetings where proclamations are presented, distribute pancreatic cancer awareness posters and fliers, join others from the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network in continuing to encourage our legislators to pass bills for cancer funding and being connecting with volunteers and survivors promoting pancreatic cancer awareness and action.

My involvement started when my mother, Jeanette Criner, has diagnosed with this dreaded disease over five years ago. Unfortunately, she lost her battle with pancreatic cancer seven months after her diagnosis.

I have stayed involved with the cause to honor her memory and knowing that if she was still here she would be a dedicated advocate with others fighting this deadly cancer.

Pancreatic cancer is one of the deadliest forms of cancer, the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. with only a five year relative survival rate of 6 percent and within the first year of diagnosis, 73 percent die. My mother was one of those statistics so I chose every year for the last three years to share her story so these statistics have a face, a person behind the numbers.

I have written about her story before, her active life here in Lake Tahoe, enjoying her gardening, hiking and family time, still working but looking forward to “semi retirement” and continuing her extensive travels to her other favorite place, Australia. Then the devastating news, I remember that late summer day like it was yesterday, she told me she might have pancreatic cancer and the biopsy was scheduled the next week.

Once we knew, suddenly everything changed. I, along with my dad and husband, we became her main caregivers. Overnight, the roles reversed, for she was the rock, the center of our family and now she had to adjust to a different role, in the fight for her life. Despite her tenacious demeanor, her determination to survive this disease, her treatments and the support of her medical team, family and friends she lost the battle far too soon.

My mother’s death, like all the others who have lost their lives to cancer, creates a void that can not be filled. This is never more painfully obvious than when it’s a birthday, the holidays or other special events. She never got the chance to

attend her grandchildren’s college graduations. She never heard the news that her oldest granddaughter became engaged to her college sweetheart, a young man she knew before I, her mother, ever did. We have lost her wisdom and guidance in dealing with the difficulties that life throws our way. She is remembered and missed everyday by those who loved her and I know that if she was here today she would be a volunteer and advocate for others as she always was in life. She was always encouraging and supportive, giving of her money and her time and believed that was her obligation in this world. Her example encourages me continue to join others in promoting awareness and fighting for research funding, finding early defection methods, expanding and improving treatments options and, maybe, one day, a cure for pancreatic cancer.

Thank you,

Denise Rury, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: What mass murderers want

By Ari N. Schulman, Wall Street Journal

Public shootings have become a familiar American spectacle in recent years, and two more occurred in recent weeks. The details are still unfolding, but so far these episodes seem to fit the general pattern. At Los Angeles International Airport, a young man entered a public area and started firing. Three days later, in the midst of intense media coverage of the first event, another young man did the same at a shopping mall in suburban New Jersey. One penned a note beforehand about his actions, the other a manifesto. Only the L.A. shooter appears

to have meant to kill others, but both apparently planned to die in highly publicized blazes of terror.

Someday soon, we are likely to awake to news of yet another rampage shooting, one that perhaps will rival the infamous events at Columbine, Virginia Tech, Aurora and Newtown. As unknowable as the when and who and where of the next tragedy is the certainty that there will be one, and of what will follow: The tense initial hours as we watch the body count tick higher. The ashen-faced news anchors with pictures of stricken families. Stories and images of the fatal minutes. Reports on the shooter's journals and manifestos. A weary speech from the president. Debates about guns and mental health.

Underlying this grim national ritual, and the pronouncements from all quarters that mass shootings are "senseless," is the disturbing feeling that these acts are beyond our understanding. As the criminologist and forensic psychiatrist Park Dietz writes, we talk about these acts as if they arise from "alien forces." So we focus our efforts on thwarting future mass shooters—catching them through the mental health system, or making it harder for them to get guns, or making it easier for others with guns to stop them. Some enterprising minds have even suggested that schoolchildren be trained to gang-rush them.

But the criminologists and psychologists who study mass killings aren't so baffled. While news reports often define mass shootings solely by body count, researchers instead look at qualitative traits like the psychology of the perpetrator, his relationship to the victims and how he carries out the crime. Building on Dr. Dietz's seminal 1986 article on mass murder in the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, researchers have used these characteristics to develop a taxonomy of mass killing outside of warfare. The major types include serial, cult, gang, family and spree killings.

But it is another kind that dominates the headlines: the massacre or rampage shooting. Whereas the other types of mass murder usually occur in multiple incidents or in a concealed manner, massacres occur as a single, typically very public event.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Time to discuss the cost of war

By Jackie Speier

I know someone who worked 15 straight months without a vacation. This isn't that remarkable, perhaps, save for the fact that this person was a platoon sergeant in Iraq. He didn't want to leave his men, although some left him on a gurney. He says point-blank, "If I'd been over there for my country, I would have left sooner, but I stayed because of my men."

This attitude of protecting those who fight with you is an aspect of being a veteran that is not easily understood by the public. I sometimes get the impression that, viewing war from the comfort of a living room, people believe our troops are waving the flag while they search for terrorists in the desert. The reality is much different.

Our men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan were solidly committed to keeping each other alive. The same could be said for those who served in Vietnam.

Ari Sonnenberg is an Iraq platoon sergeant who says he excels

at getting his unit out of an ambush. He left combat four years ago and the ambush-evasion skills are as strong as ever – it's the other coping skills (marriage, a job, sleeping) that remain a challenge. He's turned to artistic expression to help him regain his life.

Last month the Commonwealth Club of California hosted a public forum in San Francisco to share the experiences and views of those who have served in our military services. I put together the program for "The Art and Soul of Combat Veterans" because I firmly believe we need a stronger dialogue on the cost of war – not simply the dollars spent but the taxing of the human soul.

We hear talk of limited wars and political pledges to avoid putting boots on the ground, but still our troops are killed or suffer lifelong injuries while the regions where we sacrificed lives – our troops' and those of innocents – often return to their lawless state after we leave.

The American public, especially Congress, should hear more about combat from those who aren't paid to represent a point of view. We need to hear directly from the unsung heroes.

Take Korean War veteran Pete McCloskey Jr., who served in Congress from 1967 to 1983. He is a former Marine, awarded the Silver Star for heroism and twice awarded a Purple Heart. He told me recently that if more members of Congress were military veterans, we'd be less likely to send our troops into harm's way.

But veterans are fading from Congress – in 1977 there were 412 in Congress compared with 104 today.

I've never served in the military, although I know violence, having been shot by a People's Temple cult member. I went to Afghanistan in 2010 to see the civil turmoil. The message I heard was simple and direct: the Afghan people wanted us out of their country.

It is unrealistic to expect our citizenry to witness the dialogue first-hand in war zones. But there are opportunities in our country to at least hear perspectives from those who have taken fire, seen death and destruction, and returned home to live with their memories.

Our program featureed three veterans who have turned to art to deal with their struggles. Sonnenberg, the platoon sergeant, paints and takes photographs related to the burdens and the hope he brought home with him. His personal goal is to get through each day.

Michelle Wilmot was both an Army medic in Iraq and a member of an elite women's unit – Team Lioness – that conducted high-risk house raids and searches for explosives. But some of the hostile forces were women who served with her. She endured ridicule and harassment over her ethnicity – Pacific Islander. What she has to say is conveyed in her paintings and writings.

Drew Mendelson was an artillery officer in Vietnam. He's had more than 40 years to adjust to life at home, but Vietnam, at times, is still as vivid to him as yesterday. That comes through loud and clear in his new book, "Song Ba To." He teaches writing as a means to personal recovery for those seeking help at the Sacramento Vet Center.

The perspectives of these three combat veterans are but a few of the divergent views coming from our veteran community. I know that some who served might not agree with parts of the dialogue. And I expect dissent among the public, from those who fear more terrorist attacks and the continued threat of weapons of mass destruction, to those who think we've overstepped our role as global enforcers of peace.

But I trust there is strong agreement that there is a tragic cost to our engagement in global wars and that we, as a free society, must devote more resources to understanding the full ramifications of that cost. As we know, it will be with us for

generations to come.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Hillsborough, represents the 14th Congressional District. She serves on the House Armed Services Committee.

Opinion: S. Tahoe has obligation to manage parking

By Garry Bowen

As the 15-year debate about paid parking hopefully nears an end, as yet another of the misguided subject matters that have occupied public discourse here for far too long, the presentation on the outcomes of its progress so far was illustrative, not so much as a final answer to the ongoing furor, but of thinking that might actually allow necessary change.

As we are a gambling town (with looming better success elsewhere) I'm reminded of the comment made by the legendary "Baghdad-by-the-Bay" San Francisco Chronicle columnist Herb Caen years ago, about "metered-parking" there: "They're betting your own 25 cents against your $25 that you don't make it back in time." A rather provocative way of looking at it.

But in today's world, the idea that designated places to park need to be managed is more and more a given, especially as citizens expect maintained services with a reduced workforce. In case anyone needs a reminder, South Lake Tahoe has undoubtedly taken on more responsibility in the current beautification efforts that have resulted in the increased popularity of El Dorado Beach, now known as Lakeview Commons,

but also with the roadside improvements of the Caltrans projects from Trout Creek to Ski Run and beyond.



Garry Bowen

Managing the influx of traffic that goes along with that increased usage (what popularity means) without assuming the additional “charge” of properly maintaining it would quickly render the improvements as another blight subject to even more derision as to “why not?”.

Given the current paid-parking structure among our corporate citizens (and, yes, including our own parking garage in that “row”), as most charge at least $25/day (with in/out privileges), it may be useful to review previous parking scenarios, in times with way more traffic than today.

As but one example, where the former Embassy Suites now sits, Harrah’s Tahoe had a 500-car valet parking operation (governed under its California corporation, Harrah’s South Shore Corp.), as Police Chief Brian Uhler made his presentation Tuesday in terms of transactions (per metered area), I found it useful to think back on the business of the above mentioned parking “space”, as someone saw fit to replace it with a 400-room hotel, each one of which can only be rented once/day. In short, about 20,000 transactions/week were done in Harrah’s parking valet operation, given that there were about 12-15 attendants per day parking and retrieving, for free, with those unlimited in/out privileges.

“America’s All-Year Playground” was made eminently available to any or all of those not wanting to spend all their time

inside a casino, as is today's wish, simply by redeeming your car via a little plastic tag tendered with the elegant doorman, then brought, in most cases, within a minute or so.

As the traffic in town was easily enough to uphold such an operation as above, what did they do about moving around the town, exploring and visiting other places and people? It was not a concern, as that traffic was diffused among many other popular locations (restaurants, beaches that were accessible to all, trailheads, etc.) evening out with the choices that people made as to where they wanted to go. Today, we have a more limited selection with ever-more focused access, such as the emergent popularity of Thursday night Live at Lakeview events, and the ever-popular use of the myriad barbecue pits, even more so as the result of the great new look at the Commons.

The shift in perspective and focus on South Shore issues that folks have not had to think about before, understandably set their heels in the way it was, thinking that they are somehow being put-upon in the inevitable shift, curious when some of those same people have joined in the call for the obvious need for change. But they have not fully understood the difference between what it was and what it will need to be, especially when they don't acknowledge the vast shortage of a high-level of traffic, and the coming need to replace that with particular places of interest that have not existed before – and to facilitate doing it without the nightmare of choked-up demand, when the newly-realized supply comes into question.

There was one number in the chief's presentation that caught my eye, under the category "Residential Permit Zone": it went from zero in one year to 199 in the next, presumably reflecting the simultaneous introduction of Lakeview Commons popularity with the management of the newly-needed and introduced parking management scheme, as that might also presumably be the major source of soreness, given that that popularity has caused change along with any presumed

heartburn.

In that case, it is probably not parking management that is the culprit, although I myself have issues with early overzealousness and need to refine training: it is the interruption of the cozy relationship associated with the laid-back days when not as many wanted to enjoy a particular facility.

No mention was made, for example, of the extraordinary bike valet service rotated among various volunteer groups in the city; had several hundred people not chosen to ride their bikes to the large and fully-occupied events, I believe the same Al Tahoe people would be stepping up to demand better management of the neighborhoods due to the immense number of cars occupying areas in Al Tahoe way beyond a several-block peripheral, had everyone there brought a vehicle instead.

That would be the nature of the coming emphasis on walkable/bikeable communities: offering other choices that can be made, if offered, toward more balanced traffic flow for access by all.

It is those other offerings that constitute well-managed transportation, as in today's world those options are increasingly important, especially in places which are notoriously car-centric. As those other offerings are patronized more, a certain stability can also be offered – but absent the stick of some being OK with paying, as they're used to, then the carrot of maintaining newly-realized attractions will become a serious burden, but rather just part of doing business in offering better and attractive amenities.

When Bill Harrah entertained the big-boat hydroplane races in his short-lived operation of Zephyr Cove, this writer was charged partially with organizing the traffic-flow and parking for that event – as then, and to too much of a degree even now, everyone wanted to bring their car along, particularly

since there were more in the audience than transit could bear.

Déjà vu?

Garry Bowen has a 50-year connection to the South Shore, with an immediate past devoted to global sustainability, on most of its current fronts: green building, energy and water efficiencies, and public health. He may be reached at tahoefuture@gmail.com or (775) 690.6900.

Opinions: Breaking gay rights political boundaries

By Frank Bruni, New York Times

Elliott Management's lofty offices in Midtown Manhattan look north, south, east and west across the borough's thicket of skyscrapers. But the most intriguing view I got during a visit there last week was of something else: the changed gay-rights landscape and its implications for the Republican Party.

I sat in a 30th-floor library with the hedge fund's founder and chief executive, Paul Singer, a billionaire who was one of the most important donors to Mitt Romney in 2012, gives generously to a range of Republican causes and prefers to do this with a minimum of media notice. He's wary of speaking with journalists, so much so that I've seen the adjective "reclusive" attached to his name.

But here he was giving an interview, my second with him in 16 months, because the focus both times was gay equality. It's a subject important to him. In this case, he was announcing a new project to be funded, at least at the outset, by him and

other conservative donors but to be run by the Human Rights Campaign, an L.G.B.T. advocacy group in Washington, which is much more closely affiliated with Democrats. The initiative will be dedicated to fighting the victimization of gays and lesbians internationally. But it will also show that there are Republicans — not a majority, but an increasingly impassioned minority — who are intent on progress and justice for L.G.B.T. people. They won't surrender that cause to Democrats, and they believe that Republicans who do so are resisting a future that's both just and inevitable.

"Unless America engages in a terrible, terrible retreat from freedom, towards fascism, communism, whatever — some totalitarian harsh state — this seems inexorable," Singer told me, meaning equal rights, including the spread of gay marriage, for which he has campaigned with particular energy.

"Social conservatives have and should have a place in the inner circle of what it means to be a Republican," he said. But, he added, "There needs to be room for conservatives who have different views on some of the social issues."

Read the whole story