# Letter: Businesses give back to help less fortunate



Julie Lowe works with the children of Kenya. Photo/Provided

**To the community,**

On behalf of the Zawadisha Fund, we would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all the local community members who shopped or purchased services at the following businesses during May's She Is Beautiful Lake Tahoe:

BioSpirit Day Spa, Bliss Skincare Studio Elevate Wellness Center, Gaia-Licious Global Gifts, Mountain Yoga and Zen Birth Services.

These businesses gave a portion of their sales to the Zawadisha Fund, whose mission is to empower, entrust and expand opportunities for women. Zawadisha is Swahili for "to give a gift" and we believe the best approach to development is a "hand up", not a "hand out." The Zawadisha Fund provides small business loans to female entrepreneurs in Kenya.

Our model allows us to build strong relationships with our members who have informed our innovative program which now includes (in addition to loans): financial literacy workshops, a matching savings program, self-defense education, and

preventative health measures such as locally-sourced ceramic water filters and mosquito nets.

“Living in a small town makes it easy to stay isolated from the global environment. This annual program brings our attention to the fact that our small donations create a ripple effect in the lives of people thousands of miles away,” said Melinda Choy of Elevate Wellness Center.

The proceeds from She Is Beautiful Lake Tahoe will fund loans for approximately 20 women. Our members will now be able pay their school fees, start to build savings to escape a cycle of poverty, and be leaders in their households and communities.

If you would like to learn more about our work and how to get involved, please email jen@zawadisha.org or visit our website.

Thank you again to all of our generous businesses for making social change in our world.

Sincerely,

**Julie Lowe, founding board member the Zawadisha Fund**

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# Opinion: Conservancy turning public land into paychecks

**Publisher’s note:** ***The following was read into the record June 20 at the California Tahoe Conservancy meeting by Tahoe Vista resident Ellie Waller and was subsequently submitted to Lake Tahoe News.***

From a recent email from [CTC worker] Bruce Eisner [it] stated, “A small number of Conservancy’s ‘asset lands’ are in residential areas….”

Of particular concern on just the North and West Shore:

1.47 acres 8644 Speckled, Kings Beach

1.38 acres 359 Chipmunk St., Kings Beach

9.21 acres off Ward Creek, West Shore

And what I’m personally concerned about, as I live in Tahoe Vista ( as do you [board Chairman] Larry [Sevinson]) are 5.76 acres on Queens Way and 14.56 acres above Estates Drive (my actual neighborhood ) adjacent to the North Tahoe Regional Park. This 15-acre property is public lands accessible and utilized all year-round for hiking, biking, cross county and skate skiing and access to the balance of the North Tahoe Regional Park and Forest Service lands. CTC staff stated, “In the case of the 14 acre parcel, 15,000 sq. ft. of potential land coverage remains to support construction of a home in the event the parcel is ever marketed and sold under the Asset Lands Program Guidelines.”

From the guidelines: “Managing the Conservancy’s properties is a complex task. Aside from their sheer numbers and small sizes – most are no bigger than 1/3 of an acre – parcels are often scattered throughout already-developed areas, creating the potential for conflicts between open space and residential uses. The Conservancy’s Property Management Program was adopted in September 1986 and guides land management of Conservancy-owned lands. In contrast, these Program Guidelines will provide direction regarding the circumstances and considerations for land that is considered for transfer from Conservancy ownership.”

Where is the 15,000 square feet potential for building on this lot located as not to conflict with the open space and public

accessibility?

Any future potential sale similar to the parcels you are currently offering for sale (Sherman/Glenwood) would limit the public's existing access. How is limiting this public access justified? The 9.21 acres off Ward Creek (West Shore) – the public heavily uses this parcel for hiking, ski skating, cross country skiing and access to the balance Forest Service lands. How is limiting this public access justified?

If these properties are sold as an individual ownership one house, one guest house, will they be restricted from fencing in the property for public access? These properties are beautiful forested lands that should be maintained for public access as the original CTC mission used to state.

This leads me to the program itself. It doesn't seem to be very well thought out. Easements are not in the same category as the other lots and would be better served by Conservancy ownership and more cost effective than full fee title ownership. The public has been led to believe the Conservancy lots are just that – lots to be maintained in perpetuity as open space. The Queens Way 6-acre lot is a prime example of why homeowners purchased in that neighborhood having a large open forested area across from their homes.

The program needs to be re-visited. At the very least, homeowners in the vicinity of the proposed properties for sale should be noticed several months before, not just 10 days before the potential sale and should have the right to comment about your proposed sales activities.

In a recent article by the executive director it stated: "Under the guidelines, we will consider selling parcels only where they are not needed to achieve our conservation or recreation goals, or where state ownership is no longer necessary to achieve the goals of the original acquisition. The Conservancy may also consider selling a small number of

other parcels in South Shore, including several parcels along U.S. Highway 50 in the Meyers commercial core area that we purchased for a visitor center that is no longer planned, and a couple of highly urbanized parcels at the "Y."

"Sales of these commercially-zoned parcels would not only provide revenue to the Conservancy to invest in high priority projects and programs, but would support the development of sustainable, walkable and bikeable town centers. In the west and north shore, the Conservancy has purchased several developable parcels to acquire land coverage for mitigation purposes or for bike trails or other projects. At this time, we have no plans to sell or exchange any of these parcels. In any future sales or exchanges, any sensitive areas on these parcels would also be permanently protected."

"We also acquired a parcel at the corner of Coon Street and State Route 28 in Kings Beach for the sole purpose of generating revenue to support ongoing maintenance of Conservancy parkland adjacent to Kings Beach State Recreation Area".

These comments should be fully discussed and vetted at a public hearing.

From the asset land guidelines: Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation

These Program Guidelines for Conservancy Asset Lands are consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation.

• The Conservancy is authorized under Government Code Section 66907 to "select and acquire real property or interests therein in the name of and on behalf of the State, for the purposes of protecting the natural environment."

• Pursuant to Government Code Section 66907.1, "the Conservancy may acquire interests in land by means of land exchanges."

• Government Code Section 66907.2 provides for the Conservancy to “accept and hold real property or any interest herein acquired through gift, exchange, donation or dedication.”

• Pursuant to Government Code Section 66907.8, “notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Conservancy may . . . sell, exchange, or otherwise transfer any real property or interest therein, or option acquired under this title to local public agencies, State agencies, Federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, individuals, corporate entities or partnerships for management purposes pursuant to terms and conditions approved by the Conservancy.”

Please explain “management purposes” versus building in town centers and recreation areas.

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# Letter: Chamber says thanks for fun mixer

**To the community,**

TahoeChamber would like to thank Lake Tahoe Cruises & Zephyr Cove Resort for a spectacular Business After Hours Mixer.

The crowd assembled in the special events tent, which was beautifully decorated with floral arrangements and specialty linens. The food prepared by Executive Chef Jeremy Acuna was decadent, the staff were very friendly, and live music by the Tahoe Moonshine Muggers made the evening complete. The Tahoe Paradise offered great views of the shore and featured a delicious arrangement of cheese, as well as a Signature Cadillac Margarita.

Thank you to the community, chamber members, volunteers, and staff at Zephyr Cove for another successful BAHM.

**Jessica Cunningham, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce**

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# Opinion: CTC crosses the line with taking of property

**Note:** ***The following letter was read into the record at the June 20 California Tahoe Conservancy meeting by Lake Tahoe News Publisher Kathryn Reed.***

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

I am Kae Reed and I am a homeowner in South Lake Tahoe who lives next to a Conservancy lot.

Susan Wood and I have owned this house since April 2003. In that time the Conservancy has mostly been a good neighbor; removing trees as necessary. In turn, we pick up errant trash and dog poop left by others on the side of the property that might actually be in the city's right-of-way.

I may not get through all of this in my allotted time, so I will leave a copy, or feel free to read it in full on *Lake Tahoe News* [today].



CTC has literally staked a claim to what homeowners thought was their property for the last 10 years. Photo/LTN

What brings me to the podium is an encounter I had with two of your staff members on Tuesday. One was Jeff Miller, associate environmental planner, and the other guy's name I don't remember; definitely a subordinate to Miller.

After my encounter with them, a headline for a column flitted through my head – it was "Conservancy in the business of taking private property." It might still be something like that.

I went out front when I saw them standing around like most government workers, just staring and not doing anything. Reminded me of Caltrans. But I digress.

They said someone else at the Conservancy had been by and asked them to come by. They asked where I thought the property line was. I told them it was one of two markers in the front – that depending on who from the Conservancy came out I was told something different. They said I was all wrong and that in fact the property line was much closer to my house. They said they were going to revegetate the land that we had disturbed.

I said not so fast. Prove it. They came back with a measuring device and metal detector. As they were doing their thing, I was leaving messages for CTC Deputy Director Ray Lacey and the

city’s board rep Tom Davis.

The worker bees had me come out and see the metal marker in the middle of the Conservancy lot and how 60 feet toward my property would be our shared property line.

They could not find the property marker dividing our lots. They said they did. But the metal detector did not ping while I was there. They said someone would be back to dig it out. They had already left a sizeable hole and literally put a stake in the ground to claim that as CTC property.

From the hole to the closest previous marker that CTC staff has said was the property line is 5 feet. Yes five. If you go back the 100-plus feet of how deep the parcel is, that would have the CTC taking more than 500-square-feet of land. Considering our house is only 1,150-square-feet, if this were a structure they were commandeering, it would be just less than half of our living quarters.

What made this experience even more unpleasant is that I was told I had until that afternoon of June 18 to move what was allegedly on CTC property. What is on there are rounds of wood and a wheelbarrow. Wood is our primary heat source and I split most of it by hand. The disturbed land is some wood shards and sawdust from when the chain saw comes out.

I was able to talk to Ray Lacey that day. He said he was going to have an independent assessor figure out where the lot lines are. While this is great, it does seem like an incredible waste of taxpayer money.

I wonder if I didn’t have Lacey’s number, know who he is or that if he didn’t call back, that I could call his boss, Patrick Wright, if the CTC would have just taken my property this week. People who have the “right” names and numbers should not get special treatment. And the government should not screw people who don’t have connections.

Tom Davis also swung by to see the situation. He seemed a bit surprised by the lot line assessment of the CTC, but I'll let him speak for himself.

Even if the measurement comes back that the CTC dudes were correct, the lack of due process and the manner in which the CTC goes about taking private property is horrendous. Jeff Miller said he had been by before but no one was home. He never left a card, no letter was sent, no phone call made, no appointments made. It wasn't like I was playing hard to reach.

At least the U.S. Forest Service when it has an encroachment issue with a neighbor sends letters before they drive a stake in the ground.

Miller could have made this a teachable moment. He could have said why cutting wood there was a bad thing.

Instead he said his colleagues would be out to plant more of the thorny wild roses that have overtaken most of that lot. When Davis saw the parcel he said he thought the lot needed cleaning up. I laughed and said staff thought more needed to be planted.

Two weeks ago we had a defensible space inspection. The South Lake Tahoe fire captain said those wild roses were way too close to our fence. Now I'm not sure if I should remove them or not – I don't know who owns what and if I would be destroying government property.

I do know planting more vegetation closer to my house, as the CTC wants to do, would go against the definition of defensible space.

Assuming the property lines are redrawn to what the CTC guys said were true earlier this week, why the change now after we've been here 10 years?

I can't wait to find out what happens to the shed that we use

for wood storage. It was there when we moved in. A few inches of it may be creeping onto CTC territory.

All I was left with was a sour taste and having the same question I have of TRPA – why does either one of your agencies exist and what good do you really do? Shame on you CTC for allowing this to happen.

Maybe it's time for South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Placer County to manage the urban lots in their jurisdictions – and to even own them. Get the state out of back yards and side yards. Less government would be a welcome change in all our lives.

Thank you for your time.

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# Opinion: Making a case for secret marriages

**By Joe Mathews, Valley Public Radio**

Pssst. Wanna know a secret?

I'm going to let you in on confidential marriage, an only-in-California concoction that is little known but deeply relevant to today's debates about marriage.

Confidential marriage is in most respects the same as any old legal marriage—solemnized and binding. But confidential marriage licenses, unlike the regular marriage licenses, are not part of the public record. And confidential marriage is limited to couples who are already living together (although

no proof of cohabitation is required).

In this marrying month of June, with the U.S. Supreme Court about to rule on same-sex marriage in California, now is the right time to ask: How and why did Californians get this strange marriage option? And what does it mean for us today?

Confidential marriage got on the books in February 1878 as a way for churches and pastors to legitimize couples who were already living together out of wedlock. The state had lots of common-law marriages between people who—often because they lived in remote areas away from churches and courthouses—couldn't sanctify their unions. Pastors, who got the exclusive right to solemnize confidential marriages, saw it as getting couples right with God. The state liked it because it clarified inheritance rights for children. Couples liked it because no one could find out they'd been living in sin.

"The confidential marriage statute is a bit of Victoriana, designed as were so many expressions of that era, to preserve the illusion if not the fact of respectability," according to a 1984 state report on those early beginnings.

The institution remained unchanged—and little used—until the 1970s, when legislators made it easier to perform confidential marriages, expanding the type of people authorized to sanctify such unions beyond the clergy. Californians liked that confidential marriages didn't require blood and rubella tests—or the resulting waits. Conservatives, appalled by the spread of cohabitation, thought confidential marriage might encourage couples to enter the holy institution secretly while keeping up appearances with marriage-skeptic friends.

All of this led to a surge in confidential marriages. In 1972, the first year of state recordkeeping, about 1,200 confidential marriages took place. In 1982, 58,000 couples entered into confidential marriages, approaching one-third of

all marriages in California. Wedding chapels in Lake Tahoe and San Bernardino County took business from competitors in Reno and Las Vegas by touting the speed, privacy, and lack of blood tests. ("One Stop Instant Weddings," was a common billboard ad.) When brides and grooms asked about the requirement that the couple were living together as husband and wife, clerks in El Dorado County would reply, "Honey, if you've ever been to bed together, you qualify."

The growth of confidential marriage spurred reports of abuses. More than 100 bigamists in San Diego were said to have used confidential marriage licenses to avoid detection. Sailors on leave in Los Angeles, dead and under-age people in Orange County, and all sorts of other sketchy types were getting married confidentially—and often disappearing.

In 1984, a legislative effort to eliminate confidential marriage came up one vote short in a key Assembly committee. But subsequently, new laws got enacted to make confidential marriage more like regular marriage, apart from the fact that confidential marriage licenses can only be obtained with a court order or by one of the spouses. After the state stopped requiring blood and rubella tests for public licenses, the numbers of confidential marriages dropped.

Still, for some, such as paparazzi-evading celebrities, confidential marriages remain appealing. In recent years, about one out of five marriage licenses issued (41,816 out of 223,265 in fiscal year 2011-12) was confidential, according to California Department of Public Health estimates.

Confidential marriage could see another boost if the U.S. Supreme Court comes out for same-sex marriage. Wary of societal prejudice, some gay couples may prefer to marry without bigoted family members or bosses being able to find out.

But the real power of confidential marriage could come into

play if the court leaves Prop 8 in place—or issues a ruling that leaves the question of same-sex marriage open in California. In that case, I would submit that—as a temporary measure until full marriage equality arrives— a fitting compromise would be for the state and its voters to grant same-sex couples a constitutional exemption to marry confidentially. That would give the title "marriage" to gay unions—but allow conservatives to say that it is not the same as traditional marriage. (Conservatives who resist this compromise as "redefinition" of marriage should be reminded that confidential marriage is itself a redefinition they have supported.)

Such a prospect may sound to some readers like a matrimonial "separate but equal." But in many ways, such marriages are separate—but better. For those who want their marriage publicly known, nothing requires couples to keep a confidential marriage confidential; you can televise your ceremony if you want. Confidential marriage licenses are a few bucks cheaper ($85 in L.A. versus $90 for a public license). Cloaking a public record makes it a little bit harder for you to be targeted by marketers or, for that matter, identity thieves. And confidential marriage is kind of cool in that it connects today's couples to a noble, historic institution that served people who wanted to define family on their own terms.

Indeed, California might be wise to sell confidential marriage around the country as a special benefit that you can't get anywhere else (though, to be fair, Michigan has a less confidential form of secret marriage). Privacy-loving people might come here from out of state to marry and honeymoon, and our economy could use the boost. And if more couples settle here and start families, so much the better. California is getting older, and needs more children.

Heck, maybe we all should embrace confidential marriage. Yes, there's something clean and handy about public records. But isn't mystery what keeps marriage alive?

*Joe Mathews wrote this Connecting California column for Zocalo Public Square.*

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# Letter: Gardnerville group helps at Bread & Broth

**To the community,**

Bread & Broth would like to thank St. Gall Catholic Church's Faith Sharing Group from Gardnerville for sponsoring the June 10 Adopt A Day of Nourishment.

As part of their ministry, the Faith Sharing Group wanted to help those in need and chose to support Bread & Broth's efforts to provide a hot and nutritious dinner to the hungry of the South Lake Tahoe community.

After the dinner's guests were served, one member of the Faith Sharing Group, Claudi Broquist, wrote, "the experience, for me, was very humbling. To see all these people, of all ages and backgrounds come together for food and friendship was amazing to me. I wanted to 'hug' them all."

Fellow group members Bill Broquist, Barb and Don McRoberts, Jack Stemplinger, Sue Ewald, Lea Morgan and St. Gall's Father Paul McCollum joined Claudi in helping the B&B volunteers provide a hearty, well balanced meal at the evening's dinner.

The Faith Sharing Group members were a very hard working group and thanks to their help, the B&B volunteer crew had the hall and kitchen cleaned up in record time. Bread & Broth is very fortunate and grateful to St. Gall's Faith Sharing Group and all our sponsors who have over the past 24 years supported our

efforts to feed those in need every Monday at St. Theresa Church's Parish Hall and the South Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church on Friday's for the last four years.

If you would like to support Bread & Broth's program, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

**Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth**

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# Opinion: Funding will be Tahoe's next major challenge

**By Joanne Marchetta**

The goal of a restored Lake Tahoe is a shared vision for many organizations. This goal unites TRPA with the work of the public and private sectors, the community and property owners, and businesses and environmental groups to name just a few.

Achieving restoration takes collective will and, to be frank, substantial investment. Repairing what happened before is a critical part of the strategy to return Lake Tahoe to its famed clarity and restore the full range of ecosystem functions.

Our legacy land use impacts are significant: three-quarters of Tahoe's marshes have been developed and 90 percent of existing homes and businesses were built without environmental design.



Joann
Marchetta

TRPA recognizes that plans and regulations are mere frameworks; without more, they won't restore an entire ecosystem. Correcting past harms requires capital as well as vision. There has already been substantial investment in restoration projects under the collaborative Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). More than 540 acres of marsh and meadow land have been restored. Stormwater infiltration measures, which are critical to reducing the fine sediment going into the lake, have been installed by thousands of properties owners and hundreds of miles of roadways have been retrofitted for erosion control by public agencies.

Still, TRPA and EIP partner agencies have more to do and core funding strategies that have underpinned the restoration so far are coming to a close.

TRPA's central role in part is to use the best scientific information to direct funding for the greatest environmental benefit, but we also need to persuade myriad funding sources it is worth investing in Tahoe's restoration and protection. While we've successfully secured funds in the past, there is a new fiscal reality today. Restoration has come from a mosaic of resources that reflects the broad importance of Lake Tahoe. Of the $1.6 billion invested in the EIP from 1997 to 2011, 32 percent came from federal partners, 46 percent from the two states, and 22 percent from in-basin agencies and private property owners.

Lake Tahoe's spectacular environment supports a $5 billion

regional economy, so it has never been difficult to connect environmental investments to the prosperity of the region. What is changing today is the broader political and economic landscape in which public funding will be less reliable and in which a broader range of sources are needed and some new ones must be cultivated.

Rather than being daunted by the challenging funding climate, TRPA is inspired by new findings that show these investments are paying off.

According to reports published by UC Davis, the decline of lake clarity has stabilized and in 2012 the average annual clarity measurement was the best it has been in 10 years. With more than 60 percent of TRPA's environmental targets in attainment or showing improvement, now is the time to push on, but progress depends on new and continued sources of funding.

Besides promising data on the restoration efforts, an updated Regional Plan is now in effect that is more supportive of public-private partnerships and encourages private investment in environmental gains. Under the Regional Plan, local government area plans are coming online that will make Tahoe's town centers more bikeable and walkable, new incentives are available for private restoration of sensitive land, and improvements in the permit process for homeowners will encourage environmental upgrades such as stormwater best management practices (BMPs) to the region's many older buildings.

TRPA is not leaving public funding stones unturned either. Our congressional leaders are actively working to reauthorize the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act which will help secure additional federal funding for the lake. There are state bond initiatives authorized or planned along with other possible appropriations.

However, support could increasingly come from crowd funding

and private endowments such as the Tahoe Fund. The Tahoe Fund is a non-profit founded in 2010 to become a major source of private funding for environmental projects. The fundraising efforts have so far raised nearly $1 million and supported key projects. The Tahoe Fund is also a prominent supporter of Lake Tahoe's greatest source of crowd funding – the Lake Tahoe license plate programs of both states. Simply by signing up for an attractive license plate, people in the furthest reaches of either state can become proud financial supporters of the EIP.

Regardless of the challenges that we face in the fight to save Lake Tahoe, the solutions cannot come from one source, one agency or one group. We all have a role to play and I encourage you to look for your opportunity to invest – if not your money, then yourself – in Lake Tahoe's continued restoration.

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

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# Opinion: LTUSD tennis policy cheats taxpayers

**By Kathryn Reed**

I'm usually a supporter of user fees even when I've already paid for "the thing that is being used" through some sort of other tax.

That is why I am not up in arms about the thought of paying

for parking at Cove East or Lakeview Commons – the two areas in South Lake Tahoe I will frequent most that will have meters.

(I'm still a firm believer a flat annual or seasonal fee of some sort for all city parking areas should be available. This could be similar to what the U.S. Forest Service does with its beach parking permits.)

That is also why I don't have a problem paying $5 for a tennis court at Zephyr Cove. I don't even pay taxes in that county, so this is a sweet deal. I could also pay a flat fee of $70/season for unlimited access to those six courts.



Kathryn Reed has an easier time finding a public court out-of-state than in S. Lake Tahoe. Photo Copyright 2013 Carolyn E. Wright

Douglas County has a guy operating the facility. What the county takes in is put in a separate pot for repairs to the facility. And Rob Wheatley, who was awarded the bid to be concessionaire there, has to sweep the courts of pollen, make sure the nets are not sagging and gets the pine needles off the courts. That's why I don't have a problem paying $5 – the county has funds for big-ticket items, and the tennis pro can make a living and does the day-to-day stuff.

But what has me seeing green fuzz and wanting to treat LTUSD

officials and their affiliates like a line judge in a Serena Williams match is what is going on at South Tahoe High School.

This summer it's $7 for no more than 90 minutes of playing time. The courts aren't even open until 1pm on Sundays.

Justin Clark, the guy making money off the public courts who has a handshake deal with the school district to give back some of his cash for improvements, says get a court time using the district's online service. District staff says it's not ready.

I say the whole thing is all a bunch of manure.

When I pay my twice-annual property taxes I am paying for three Lake Tahoe Unified School District bond measures. The newest one is for the $64.5 million facilities bond. Part of that bond included the resurfacing of the six high school courts.

Those courts are closed more than they are open to the public.

I grew up playing on public courts in the Bay Area. Much of the time I was playing on the high school courts – long before I was a student there. There were no locks. And yes, some skateboarders went on the courts.

That is the refrain LTUSD Superintendent Jim Tarwater chants on a regular basis as to why he doesn't want the courts open all the time – fear of skateboarders mucking up the courts.

Those are public courts. It's time to let the public in. If there has to be a fee, make it reasonable, have a fair process so it's not just the high school tennis coach who has a chance to make money on the courts, and if he can't be there, then unlock the courts.

Or maybe it's just time to shop for bolt cutters.

# Letter: Harrah’s-Harveys employees give back to community

**To the community,**

Harrah’s-Harveys casinos generously sponsored a Bread & Broth Adopt-A-Day of Nourishment on June 3 at St. Theresa Church Grace Hall.

B&B is very thankful for their support in helping to feed the needy of our community. Their donation of $250 provided the evening’s guests with a delicious dinner consisting of baked ham accompanied by scalloped potatoes, green salad and fruit salad prepared by B&B’s first-week volunteer cooks’ team.

In addition to funding the dinner, Harrah’s-Harveys HEROs were on hand to assist the B&B volunteers with the dinner. HEROs is a volunteer group of Harrah’s-Harveys employees whose goal is to give back to the community throughout the year by fund raising and supporting causes which benefit the community. For this B&B Adopt-A-Day event, Sara Anderson, Pat Frega, Debbie Neall, Randy Sumner and Darlene Winkelman represented the HEROs employees. They were a “wonderful, experienced crew of volunteers” according to Nora Jones, the B&B volunteer coordinator for the evening.

As a community service organization, Bread & Broth is very grateful to have sponsors like Harrah’s-Harveys- casinos and their community minded HEROs employee organization hosting an Adopt-A-Day. Their involvement helps B&B feed the working poor, families in need, elderly on fixed incomes as well as those living outdoors in our community.

If you would like to support Bread & Broth, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

**Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth**

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# Opinion: California needs more water storage

**By Dianne Feinstein**

Flying over California recently on my way back to Washington, I was dismayed to see how bone-dry the state is so early in the summer season.

There was virtually no snowpack. Lakes and reservoirs are circled with rings of barren, dry soil. And plumes of smoke from forest fires dot the skies, something that will worsen as the fire season progresses.

The message is clear: We must do more to prepare for increasingly harmful dry years by capturing more water in wet years. In short, California needs a lot more water storage — and we need it now.

The dire state of affairs was confirmed by David Hayes, outgoing deputy secretary for the Department of the Interior, at a recent budget hearing. Despite a promising start to the water year, Hayes testified, “This is the driest January-through-April period in California’s history in the last 100 years.”



Dianne
Feinstein

Farmers, of course, are acutely aware of the situation. Water allocations for some of the largest South-of-Delta Central Valley Project irrigation districts stand at just 20 percent of their contract amount. Declining reservoir levels suggest that next year will be even worse.

Complicating matters are pumping restrictions mandated by the Endangered Species Act. Despite being found scientifically deficient by a federal court and the National Academy of Sciences, these restrictions continue to have a negative effect on water supplies throughout the state.

The Bureau of Reclamation is putting together a plan to address this year's water shortages based on water transfers that could increase the water supply for South-of-Delta contractors to the equivalent of a 40 percent allocation.

These one-time patches, however, are not an adequate solution. Absent state action, it is my view that we may be faced with the possibility of more far-reaching changes, such as modifications to the Endangered Species Act.

Expanding and improving California's water storage capacity is long overdue. The last time we saw significant state and federal investments in our water storage and delivery system was in the 1960s, when the state's population stood at 16 million. Today, that same system supports 38 million individuals and will need to support 50 million by 2050.

If we don't take significant and rapid action, I fear

California is at risk of becoming a desert state.

The need for additional storage is hardly a revelation. More than a decade ago, legislation passed that authorized the Bureau of Reclamation to do feasibility studies on expanding or building four reservoirs: Shasta, Sites, Los Vaqueros and Temperance Flat.

A draft feasibility report on raising Shasta Dam was completed last year. It found that raising Shasta Dam by 18.5 feet – at a cost of $1.1 billion – would yield up to 133,000 acre-feet of new water.

Good news, but the eight years it took to complete the draft study was entirely too long. Even worse, final feasibility studies aren't scheduled to be completed by the Bureau of Reclamation until late 2016.

Building or expanding these four reservoirs would result in hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of additional water storage, benefit urban and rural communities and increase the pool of water available for releases that benefit fish species. Waiting a decade or more for these studies is unacceptable. The Bureau of Reclamation must complete these studies, and they must do so now.

California's Legislature also must do its part by updating the long-anticipated water bond and ensuring that it includes adequate funding for water storage.

The current water bond, which was approved by the Legislature in 2009 and scheduled for the November 2010 ballot, has been repeatedly postponed.

The bond includes $3 billion to improve state, regional and local surface storage; groundwater storage; modernizing reservoir operations; and conveyance to improve interregional system operations. But with an overall cost of $11.14 billion, it will be difficult to win voter support.

With only three months left in the session, it is important the Legislature work to craft a scaled-back bond that provides robust water storage funding.

Because the full benefits of expanded storage capacity can't be realized without the ability to move additional water supplies, it is also vital to complete the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. This long-term state and federal effort to restore the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is essential if we are to acquire the regulatory approvals necessary for new water transportation infrastructure.

As chairman of the Senate subcommittee that funds the Bureau of Reclamation, I have done what I can to address California's water challenges.

Over the past few years, the Senate has approved bills that permit additional water transfers, authorize and expedite groundwater banking plans, require drought management plans and set a deadline to complete the Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

But there is still a lot of work to be done, particularly in the area of water storage. I will continue to urge the Bureau of Reclamation and the state to move as fast as possible to approve plans and funding to allow us to bank more water in wet years for the increasingly dry years.

Although California is getting drier, plans are in place to move us in the right direction. But it will take a commitment from federal, state and local stakeholders to get us there. There is no time to waste.

*Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., chairs the Appropriations subcommittee on energy and water development. This column first appeared in the Sacramento Bee.*