Letter: TRPA policy killing Tahoe’s economy

To the community,

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency recently completed their Regional Plan update.

Possibly influenced by other environmental agencies – TRPA created a new 20-year build-out plan to dramatically cut residential building allocations for Tahoe by 57 percent – 300 to 130 total – for the Tahoe region.

This harsh new number (130/year) was conceived using a completely “fabricated calculation – designed to achieve a desired result”.

For El Dorado County, allocations were cut by 73 percent – from 119 to 29 this year.

The city of South Lake Tahoe allocations also severely cut – only nine this year.

On the TRPA website they proudly boast, “The Best Lake Tahoe Clarity in Ten Years”.

They also are preparing to offer homeowners a new and unprecedented relaxed Deck/Driveway Coverage Program with simple permitting stating, “We want to share our great environmental progress with homeowners.”

What TRPA is not advertising is their “silent slaughter” of an entire local economy, construction industry, and revenue for local county agencies, businesses, utilities, schools and fire departments, and thousands of local jobs.

Until this year we had a residential allocation system that achieved both TRPA’s goals and building industry for over 12

years. One can only speculate TRPA is slaying the allocation program because they have failed to enforce a mandated BMP program.

One consistency we can always count on is the “inconsistency” of TRPA.

This agency needs to find a “balance” between protecting our beautiful lake and allowing a local business economy to survive.

This severe restriction of land use truly rides the fence for litigation by parcel owners who lose their right to use their property.

John Adamski, Meyers

Opinion: Time to live every day without violence

By Diana Meza Cabrera

On March 29, President Obama nationally proclaimed April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month in an effort to bring these global issues to the national spotlight for all Americans.

Our leaders have demonstrated that there are steps to be taken toward achieving a safer nation. This year’s first step was the reauthorization of VAWA (Violence Against Women Act). VAWA was established in 1994 to provide funding for the investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

This year the legislation was improved to include the protection of Native Americans living on reservations, victims who are undocumented, and the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning) community as well.

The passing of VAWA allows agencies such as Live Violence Free to provide continued services and education to members in the community, spreading awareness of the effects of such violent acts.

April 24, was Denim Day, an international campaign that is held every year to promote the deconstruction of the destructive attitudes toward sexual assault. In 1997, a teenage girl in Italy was picked up by her 45-year-old driving instructor for her first lesson. He drove her to an isolated location, pulled her out of the car, and forcefully raped her. The girl was courageous and despite his threats she reported the incident and he was arrested.

After his conviction the perpetrator appealed the sentence and the case went to the Supreme Court. In the final ruling, the Italian Supreme Court overturned the rape conviction claiming the sex act to have been consensual. The statement by the chief judge read: “Because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex.”

The women in the Italian Parliament were outraged by the verdict and protested the court by wearing jeans to work. This action began the annual international demonstration known as Denim Day.

The culture that has developed around violence and rape has desensitized our communities, thus creating the need for awareness events such as Denim Day to remind us just how real and heinous these crimes are.

Every two minutes a person in the United States is sexually assaulted. This means that there is an average of 207,754 victims over the age of 12 that report being sexually assaulted per year. It is important to note that this number does not take into account anyone under the age of 12 or anyone who does not report being assaulted.

Sexual assault is one of the most unreported crimes as 54 percent of sexual assault crimes go unreported each year. Victims are often silenced because of their feelings of shame and fear that occur with these forms of attacks. Most often a victim's abuser is someone that they know and trust. Nationally, two thirds of victims reported knowing their attacker and 34 percent of rapists are a friend or acquaintance of the victim. Sexual assault is not a problem that only happens out in the community; is most often carried out within the walls of our homes.

It is time we take a stand against these acts of violence and as this year's national campaign for Sexual Assault Awareness Month says, "It's time to talk about it."

A report for child abuse is made every 10 seconds; that's 3.3 million reports made each year. More than five children's lives are lost every day due to child abuse. Although sexual abuse only accounts for 9.2 percent of reported child abuse cases, the number of victims is still shocking, at 91,412 minor victims of sexual assault per year. Moreover, child abuse is not an isolated problem that only affects the one victim; 30 percent of children who were abused or neglected will later abuse their own children.

Violence is a never ending cycle within relationships. It is important for our services to always be available so that we may educate and empower survivors. The instilling of positive values in our clients will go on to be reflected in our community. Children are ultimately the ones who will run our world in the future; therefore, we should be doing our best to

provide them with a healthy and nurturing upbringing.

Locally, April has also been proclaimed as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is great to have local elected leaders support our cause, recognizing the need for our services in the community.

Throughout 2012 Live Violence Free was able to serve 208 clients who were under the age of 18. Of these 208, 20 percent were survivors of sexual assault. Our Child Abuse Prevention and Rape Prevention Education programs provided over 300 presentations to over 7,000 of El Dorado and Alpine counties' youth. Our Home Visiting Program helped seven families parents to learn nurturing parenting skills in the comfort of their own homes. With these programs in place, we are doing our best work to prevent these crimes from happening.

We hope that you join us on our journey to create a violence free community and consider becoming a volunteer.

We will be offering Crisis Counseling Training through the Lake Tahoe Community College Connect Community Education workshop, classes will begin April 29. Our agency's greatest need is crisis line volunteers. If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Scarlet Caldwell at (530) 544.2118, ext. 7634 or scaldwell@liveviolencefree.org.

Be sure to be on the lookout for our first Clothesline Project display on April 29 outside our main office.

Diana Meza Cabrera is with Live Violence Free in South Lake Tahoe.

Editorial: Stop California's spread of Indian gaming

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the April 18, 2013, Sacramento Bee.***

Indian gambling in California has exploded well beyond the "modest increase" voters were promised when they approved casino gambling just 13 years ago. While most casinos are still in remote locations, a new push by tribes to purchase additional land at lucrative freeway locations threatens to kick off a whole new Indian casino land rush. The Legislature should reduce that threat by rejecting a pair of ill-conceived gambling compacts.

As the Bee's Laurel Rosenhall reported on Sunday, two tribes, the Enterprise Rancheria near Marysville and the North Fork Rancheria near Fresno, won approval from President Obama's interior secretary last year to acquire land more than 30 miles from their original reservations. Gov. Jerry Brown unwisely concurred in that decision and has negotiated gambling compacts with the tribes.

The Enterprise Indians seek to build their new gambling hall just off Highway 65 in Yuba County next to the Sleep Train Amphitheatre. The North Fork Indians want to build a casino on Highway 99, about 25 miles north of downtown Fresno.

At this point in the process, the only thing standing between the tribes and their dreams of gambling riches is the California Legislature. The compacts that Brown negotiated with the tribes must be approved by lawmakers.

Powerful opponents and proponents are lining up on both sides. Deep-pocketed investors from Nevada and Chicago are bankrolling the Enterprise and North Fork efforts. Meanwhile, existing gambling tribes oppose them, angered that their own

gambling enterprises will be placed at a competitive disadvantage.

The Enterprise and North Fork tribes are engaged in reservation shopping at its most blatant. It breaks faith with voters who were told that gambling would be confined to existing Indian lands – remote areas of the state for the most part, not plopped down near cities.

Why should established gambling tribes who've played by the rules continue to live up to their agreements, to make mitigation payments to state and local governments or share their proceeds with non-gambling tribes if the state breaks the spirit of the initiative and allows the competition to be much closer to their customer base?How long before existing gambling tribes use their considerable clout and wealth to persuade authorities to let them build casinos in or near urban areas too?

Every time the U.S. government takes land into trust for an Indian tribe, it creates a semi-sovereign ministate within a state's borders. There are 110 federally recognized Indian tribes in California, and 70 or so more are seeking recognition. How many ministates, all with the right to build lucrative casinos, can California accommodate?

A story in the Bee on Tuesday reported that the Graton Resort and Casino expects to hire 2,000 workers by the time it opens in Rohnert Park later this year. But many of those jobs will simply be taken from somewhere else.

There is only so much disposable income for gambling in California, and the state is already saturated with casinos. Each one that is added takes from another. It's a zero-sum game.

Opinion: Recreation a priority in South Tahoe

By Lauren Thomaselli

South Lake Tahoe took the opportunity to sign the CPRS pledge "Parks Make Life Better" this spring.

The annual conference of the California Parks and Recreation Society in San Jose in March provided national collaboration, alignment, and built on successes to demonstrate that parks and recreation are an essential service to creating healthy prosperous communities throughout California.

By taking the pledge, South Lake Tahoe has officially adopted the philosophy that: "Parks and recreation provides access to the serenity and inspiration of nature; spaces and places for play and exercise; opportunities for directed and organized recreation; positive alternatives for youth and activities that support social connections, human development, the arts and lifelong learning."



Moving forward it is imperative to tell our story and celebrate our success as we align programs with the CPRS pledge.

This past winter the Recreation Aquatics Department provided swim lessons to every fourth-grader in Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Our skilled instructors provided one week of swim instruction at no cost to the students or the school district.

Additionally, the aquatics division has adopted the American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor Certification Standard for all swim lesson programs; making South Lake Tahoe the only aquatics facility in the region to provide a national standardized quality swim program.

Recreation programming has improved through cultivating a variety of recreation partnerships. New for this summer is South Tahoe Adventure Recreation Camps (S.T.A.R.). The concept is to partner with businesses, nonprofits, and recreation experts to provide authentic Tahoe outdoor adventures such as backpacking, standup paddleboard, golf, BMX, mountain biking, waterskiing, wakeboarding, and much more.

The best way to find out about who we are and what we do is to meet our staff, instructors, leaders and recreation partners. South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Division invites the community to learn more about recreation programs, sign up for swim lessons and summer camp, and tour our facility at the inaugural Spring into Summer Kick Off Party on June 1 from 10am to 2pm at the Recreation and Swim Complex at 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.

For more information, contact the Recreation Center at (530) 542.6056.

Lauren Thomaselli is the recreation program coordinator for South Lake Tahoe.

Letter: Bike parade ending

upsets grieving dad

To the community,

It has taken a couple of days for me to compose myself after discovering that Mo’s Place would be the terminal point for a parade on the anniversary Zip’s senseless beating, which resulted in his death. The web, being what it is, everyone is entitled to their opinion, whether they knew Zip or not. (Too bad for those folks who didn’t.)



Mark Cutright is unapologetic for planning to end his May 16 bike ride at the site of a lethal bar fight. Photo/LTN file

I have purposely refrained from making any reactionary public comment, because frankly, my sorrow and grief over our loss of Zip makes any rhetoric meaningless.

I’m curious if Chief Slowroller [Mark Cutright] would be so flippant if the Rollers knew that Zip was one of their own. He was a cruiser, very proud of his latest creation, having recently built a 200 spoker with a 6-inch springer front end to add to his other three rigs. That bike now resides at Zip’s

home, above a waterfall, in an area that's named The Peaceful Place.

Among the crew that were there in Tahoe that night Zip was beaten were the bride and groom, some of the groomsmen and bridesmaids, that all rode their cruisers to the wedding in gowns and tuxes. You should see the pictures of that. The bachelor/bachelorette parties were in Tahoe, wedding in Ripon. Zip and his brother Patch (who was also severely beaten that same night), were both cruising in the wedding party.

I am biased, but if I were the Slowrollers, I'd terminate someplace else, even knowing that ducats will be lost. But saving face, like throwing down, sometimes has a cost.

That weekend our crew is already amassed to have a memorial dive at Rainbow Pool, on the 19th, Zip's birthday. He would have been 31.

This is something I felt the Slowrollers should know.

I just thought the Rollers should know that Zip was one of their fallen brothers, not simply some flatlander run amok.

Wayne Penaranda, father of Derek "Zippy" Penaranda

Letter: Thanks for Spaghetti Feed

To the community,

On behalf of the Boys & Girls Club, I just wanted to reach out

to all of you who came to the Spaghetti Feed … and to the numerous responses from those who couldn't attend, but wished us success.

I think you would agree that the pasta, salad and garlic bread prepared and donated by Himmel Haus was a hit.

It was great to see so many of you there … and thank you for bringing your family, friends, business associates and neighbors.

We will be hosting the Spaghetti Feed on the third Thursday of each month, alternating between our Main Site and Bijou Site from 5-6:30pm, so mark your calendars for a monthly event. Each month a different restaurant will be "adopting" us by providing the meal.

Join us on May 16 at the Bijou Site (located at Bijou Elementary, 3501 Spruce Ave.).

Karen Houser, Boys & Girls Club Lake Tahoe

Letter: Thanks from Choices for Children

To the community,

A special thank you to MontBleu, Harveys-Harrah's,Hyatt Regency, Sorensen's, Embassy Suites, Tahoe Seasons Resort, Nourish Life & Business Coach Alexis Robin, Yoga Teacher Audrey Villanueva, Lake Tahoe Golf Course, Ernie's Coffee Shop, Scusa Italian Ristorante, Side Street Boutique, Apricot Lane, Kahle Community Center, Hollywood Theaters, Elements Spa, Primo's Italian Bistro, Tot Spot, Chevys Fresh Mex,

Paradise Beauty Supply/Salon, Sushi Pier, Rude Brothers Bagel, Safeway, Round Table, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Homewood, Eloise Automotive & Alignment, Lakeshore, Blue Dog Pizza, Sierra Athletic Club, Costco Wholesale, and Thran's Flower Shop for their generous donation supporting the early care and education field who met on April 20 at Lake Tahoe Golf Course.

Nadine T-Davis, resource coordinator for Choices for Children

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Opinion: Legislators attempting to bankrupt taxpayers

By Lloyd Billingsley

Now that they have filed their income tax returns and written their checks, many Californians are starting to realize that government greed is no laughing matter.

In November, California voters approved Proposition 30, raising the state's top income tax rate to 13.3 percent, an increase of more than 29 percent. The state sales tax now ranges from 7.5 percent to 10 percent, the highest statewide rate in the nation.

The tax increases are supposed to raise an additional $6 billion in revenue. But that's not enough for California politicians. They want more.

The California State Board of Equalization, for example – a government agency that collects sales, fuel, alcohol, tobacco and "use" taxes – recently approved a 9 percent increase in the excise tax on gasoline, raising it to 39.5 cents a gallon

effective July 1. That’s a large increase in a state where businesses and workers depend heavily on their cars and gas prices already average more than $4 a gallon.

There’s more coming from the Legislature. Assembly Bill 1002 would raise the $46 basic annual vehicle registration and renewal fee by $6, supposedly to encourage greater use of bicycles, buses and other transportation modes with smaller carbon footprints than cars.

Senate Bill 700 would require Californians to pay 5 cents for every paper and plastic shopping bag they get at the store, supposedly to raise money for cities and parks.

SB622 would tax consumers a penny an ounce when they purchase bottled tea, sport drinks, energy drinks and other beverages. That would add nearly $1 to the price of a six-pack of 16-ounce sodas. The excuse for this is to fight childhood obesity and dental disease.

SB391 would impose an additional $75 state fee on top of existing county charges for recording various legal documents in real estate transactions, such as deeds, liens and so forth. This measure will supposedly support affordable housing.

In the war against gun violence, AB760 would impose a 5 cents a bullet sales tax on ammunition purchases, on top of the existing sales tax. The supposed purpose of this new tax is to fund expanded mental health services.

Under SB782, bars and restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages and offer adult entertainment, such as exotic dancing, would get slapped with a $10 a person fun tax – or is it a sin tax? These funds supposedly would be used to prevent sexual assault and provide treatment for victims.

California politicians also are intent on making it more expensive and cumbersome to operate businesses in the Golden

State, even as the state's unemployment rate stands at 9.6 percent, one of the highest in the nation.

SB254, the Used Mattress Recovery and Recycling Act, seeks to eliminate the blight of illegally dumped mattresses. It would do so by requiring mattress manufacturers to submit recovery and recycling plans to the state, with the goal of a 75 percent compliance rate by 2020. The bill would require mattress retailers to pick up the old mattress when they deliver a new one, and would be funded by a "quarterly administrative fee" paid by manufacturers (which, of course, in the real world would undoubtedly be passed on to consumers).

The authors of these proposed measures are unable to predict with any certainty how much revenue they would bring in if they became law. But the proposals make it clear that the hundreds of millions of dollars that California already spends on affordable-housing, mental health and other government programs will never be enough. The politicians will always want more.

Onerous regulations, false promises of fiscal responsibility and the relentless quest for more revenue have become hallmarks of California government.

Lloyd Billingsley is communications counsel for the Independent Institute in Oakland. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Opinion: Tahoe's abysmal

service is inexcusable



What piece of this economic pie could be Tahoe's if people were treated better? Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

> *"Do unto others as you would want done to you."*
>
> *"If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."*
>
> *"You can never have too many friends."*

Those are just some of the words of wisdom from my mom that still resonate with me today. Sometimes I hear her screaming the phrases when I'm doing the opposite of what I was taught.

Who cares? – you ask.

Mom, like others of her generation who embraced the above quotes, knows how to get along with people. That is the first step to being good in the hospitality industry.

Mom was not a marketing person, though she could have been. She didn't work in the tourism industry, but could have. But she did study hotel and restaurant management, so she knows

something about the hospitality industry.

What if the frontline staff of every business in Tahoe took to heart those first three sentences?

Do you really want to be treated like crap? With disrespect? Like you don’t matter?

Those are the experiences Denise Pirrotti Hummel had in the past couple days. She is CEO and founder of Universal Consensus. She was one of the speakers of the 2013 Trends in Tourism forum at Harveys on April 18. She relayed a story of how she asked the concierge at her hotel where to go running. She was given a map that wasn’t accurate and told the concierge when she got back. The concierge’s response was she wasn’t responsible for the map. Hummel told the employee she might want to tell the mapmaker. “She looked at me like ‘whatever’,” Hummel said to the crowd full of Tahoe tourism gurus.

The lack of quality guest services is astounding here – especially on the South Shore. It starts with managers and owners, and quickly goes down the ranks.

I don’t know if these people all just go to other bad Tahoe businesses so they think lousy service is the norm or maybe they really don’t care.

I go to a handful of places in town because I know I will be treated well. Everyone at Blue Angel Café is outstanding. Rosie knows how to train her people. Bri at Pearl Izumi is so helpful. The staff at Les Schwab always seems to be running and smiling.

“It’s Tahoe, so they will come” doesn’t work anymore. Customers actually want to be treated with respect.

Locals often point to our dismal infrastructure for why people don’t come back. But I’ve had fun in funky towns with little

or no infrastructure. Occidental in Sonoma County comes to mind. I love this little hotel, which is a true old-school motel. But it’s clean and the people are friendly. I would never go into the equivalent looking place here.

Across the street is a great breakfast spot and yummy Italian place.

People recommend places to go. I’m treated like they care if I have a good experience. (See quote No. 1 above.) They tell me to have a good time. (See quote No. 2.) They ask me how my day was when I return – as if we are friends. (See quote No. 3.)

It really isn’t hard to be nice. To be nice or mean – both a choice. To keep lousy employees – that’s a choice, too. To not train them – another choice.

We can build pretty buildings – hotels, restaurants, retail – but if the experience once inside is horrible, well, all the window coverings in the world can’t erase a bad experience.

Just look at Heavenly and Squaw. What were the first things the new owners did at the respective ski resorts? Work on guest relations. Look at their skier visits – yes, it’s the mountains they both have, but it’s the entire experience that makes you want to go back.

Tahoe – wake up. People want to be treated with respect and you are doing the opposite.

—-

Tips for those involved in Tahoe tourism:

Letter: Freshies stands up against sexual violence

To the community,

Live Violence Free would like to formally thank Erik and Melodie Ulman, along with the whole Freshies crew, for the outstanding work and effort that they invested into this year’s annual Freshies Trading Places Fundraiser.

The fundraiser is hosted by Freshies every year in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Freshies donates 100 percent of the proceeds raised through the event to Live Violence Free. This year’s fundraiser was a complete success and brought in over $1,400.

We greatly appreciate all the years of support and generosity that Freshies has continued to offer Live Violence Free and the survivors of violence in our community.

Support from local businesses like Freshies enables Live Violence Free to continue providing comprehensive, individualized assistance to all survivors of sexual assault, child abuse and domestic violence.

Diana Meza Cabrera, Live Violence Free