Opinion: We will continue to run in the open

By Thomas L. Friedman, New York Times

Looking at scenes of the Boston sidewalk a few hours after Monday's bombing – torn clothing, bloodstains, shards of glass – I found my mind going back to a similar sidewalk in Tel Aviv in September 2003. A Hamas suicide bomber had blown himself up at a bus stop outside the Tsrifin army base, and by coincidence I was nearby and got there to witness the immediate aftermath. As I wrote then, parts of the bomber were still on the street, including his hairy leg. His shoe had been blown off, but his brown sock was still daintily on his foot. Israeli rescue workers calmly carried away the dead on stretchers, with an odd mix of horror and routine. But what I remember most was something the police spokesman said to me: "We will have this whole area cleaned up in two hours. By morning, the bus stop will be repaired. You will never know this happened."



Thomas L. Friedman

We still do not know who set off the Boston Marathon bombs or why. But we do know now, after 9/11, after all the terrorism the world has seen in the last decade, what the right reaction is: wash the sidewalk, wipe away the blood, and let whoever did it know that while they have sickeningly maimed and killed

some of our brothers and sisters, they have left no trace on our society or way of life. Terrorists are not strong enough to do that – only we can do that to ourselves – and we must never accommodate them.

So let's repair the sidewalk immediately, fix the windows, fill the holes and leave no trace – no shrines, no flowers, no statues, no plaques – and return life to normal there as fast as possible. Let's defy the terrorists, by not allowing them to leave even the smallest scar on our streets, and honor the dead by sanctifying our values, by affirming life and all those things that make us stronger and bring us closer together as a country.

Let's name a playground or a school after that 8-year-old boy, Martin Richard, who was standing by the finish line, and who ran out and hugged his father, Bill, after he completed the race, and then trustingly walked back to the sidewalk to be with his mother and sister when the bomb tore through them all. Let's donate to the favorite life-giving charities of the other victims. Let's pitch in to help the injured recover. But on lovely Boylston Street in Boston, a place normally so full of life, let there be no reminder whatsoever of what President Obama called this "heinous and cowardly act" of terror.

And while we are at it, let's schedule another Boston Marathon as soon as possible. Cave dwelling is for terrorists. Americans? We run in the open on our streets – men and women, young and old, new immigrants and foreigners, in shorts not armor, with abandon and never fear, eyes always on the prize, never on all those "suspicious" bundles on the curb. In today's world, sometimes we pay for that quintessentially American naïveté, but the benefits – living in an open society – always outweigh the costs.

Terrorists know that, of course, and feed on it. The explosives were reportedly packed into six-liter pressure cookers, tucked into black duffel bags and then left on the

ground. That is the signature of modern terrorism: to turn routine items from our lives into bombs: the shoe, the backpack, the car, the airplane, the cellphone, the laptop, the garage door opener, fertilizer, the printer, the pressure cooker – so that everything and everyone becomes a source of suspicion.

This can pose a much greater threat to our open society than the Soviet Red Army ever did – if we let it – because this kind of terrorism attacks the essential thing that keeps an open society open: trust. Trust is built into every aspect, every building, every interaction and every marathon in our open society. Terrorists can steal it for a moment or even a while, but we dare not let them fundamentally erode it, and I don't think we will. When you watch the video of the bombing aftermath, notice how many people you see running toward the blast within seconds to help, even though more bombs easily could have been set to explode there.

Fortunately, we don't frighten easily anymore. You could feel it in the country on Tuesday morning. We've been through 9/11. We probably overreacted then, but never again. We tracked down Osama bin Laden with police and intelligence work, and we'll do the same in this case. But meanwhile, even in this age of terrorism, let's keep heeding the advice of an advertisement that you could see hanging in a Boylston Street window in a picture taken after the blast. The picture showed a marathoner sifting through unclaimed runners' bags left behind after the explosion. Behind him, in the window, the ad poster says: "Your home should be a place to rest easy."

Only we can take that away from ourselves – not some terrorist with one despicable spasm of madness. So hug your kids tonight, but also encourage them to start training for the next marathon tomorrow. Now that I think of it, maybe we should make this one longer – from Boston to the site of the World Trade Center to the Pentagon – to remind ourselves and anyone else who needs reminding: This is our house. We intend

to relax here. And we are not afraid.

Opinion: Questioning community colleges' mission

By Warren Swil

The California budget crisis of recent years – which mercifully seems to be lifting – has been an excuse for many fundamental changes in the way our state serves its citizens.

One of these is the California ommunity college system – with 112 colleges serving 2.4 million students – that is in the midst of a subtle, unannounced shift from its historical twin missions of workforce training and offering affordable continuing education for lifelong learners.

In fact, various legislative actions in recent years are gradually removing the "community" from the entire college concept.

Those who simply seek an affordable class in ceramics or art history for self-improvement, and those with post-secondary degrees who need retraining, are being shunted aside as the system narrows its focus to basic skills, vocational training and preparing students for transfer to four-year schools.

Its mission, increasingly, seems to be: "get 'em in, and get 'em out."

Emblematic of this is SB1440, the Student Transfer Achievement

Reform Act, signed into law in 2010.

While its intent – to foster closer cooperation between the two-year schools and the California State University system – is noble, largely due to the budget situation, its effect is to reduce the resources available for lifelong learners.

According to the joint website of the Community Colleges Chancellor's office and CSU, SB1440 requires that by next year, the two systems negotiate new associate in arts degree and associate in science degree transfer programs.

"Upon completion of the associate degree, the student is eligible for transfer with junior standing into the California State University system," it says.

While the focus on preparing students for transfer is laudable, it is having unintended consequences.

One of these was the September 2012 regulation approved by the California Community Colleges board of governors that established systemwide enrollment priorities "designed to ensure classes are available for students seeking job training, degree attainment or transfer to a four-year university and to reward students who make progress toward their educational goals," according to an announcement from the chancellor's office in March.

If you are just looking for a class to learn something about the history of the movies or want to burnish your computer skills, you go to the end of the line when it comes to class availability.

"In addition, students who have accumulated 100 or more units – excluding most basic skills English and math and English as a Second Language classes – by fall 2014 will lose priority enrollment," the announcement said. Tough luck if you already have a bachelor's degree.

Every student in the system will attest how difficult it already has become to get into a class, whether it is needed for graduation or completion of a certificate program or for any other reason.

Since the real estate crash and economic downturn, state funding for community colleges has been cut by $809 million, or 12 percent, according to the chancellor's office.

Carla Rivera reported in the Los Angeles Times that, according to a report by the Public Policy Institute of California released last month, the system has endured funding cuts of $1.5 billion since 2007.

"Enrollment in California's community colleges has plunged to a 20-year low as budget-strapped campuses have had to slash classes and instructors," she wrote.

The report from PPIC notes that between the 2007-08 and 2011-12 budget cycles, courses were cut and class sizes increased. "Academic year course offerings fell 21 percent and summer offerings fell 60 percent in these years," according to the report.

"While non-credit courses – those for remediation or enrichment – were cut dramatically, courses taken for credit toward a degree, certificate, or transfer sustained the bulk of the cuts because these classes make up 90 percent of all offerings."

If Proposition 30 had not passed in November, the system would have faced another $338 million in cuts in the middle of the academic year, which translates into 180,000 fewer students. Since it was approved by a slim margin, colleges will now receive $210 million in additional funding and be able to serve 20,000 more students.

The trend is clear.

The mission of one of the pillars of California's world-renowned two-year college system is being dramatically narrowed.

It seems to be abandoning its traditional role as an institution offering affordable continuing education and enrichment to those residents who need it the most.

This would be a tragic loss. Surely we can do better.

Warren Swil is an assistant professor of journalism at Pasadena City College. This column first appeared in the Sacramento Bee.

Letter: Heavenly sustains Bread & Broth

To the community,

Thanks to the sponsorship of Heavenly Mountain Resort, the cooking skills of the B&B volunteer cooks and the efforts of the Heavenly sponsor crew and B&B volunteers, a hearty stew, mixed vegetables, fruit salad, beverages and desserts were served to the very grateful guests at Bread & Broth's April 8 dinner.

Over 90 meals were served and many of the dinner guests happily left with leftovers.

Heavenly Mountain Resort's 12 annual Adopt A Day sponsorships are made possible through a grant provided by the Vail Resorts Charitable Fund/Vail Resorts Echo. Heavenly has chosen to host one Adopt A Day per month and encourages Heavenly employees to volunteer three hours of their time to assist B&B volunteers

at their designated Monday evening dinners.

Heavenly’s April 8 sponsor volunteer crew were a cheerful, hardworking team who described their volunteer opportunity as “an honor to join forces with our colleagues and serve our community”. The Heavenly volunteers for the evening were Kelly Carmichael, manager, product sales; Sean Clark, assistant manager, scanning; Jolena Hearn, assistant manager, greeters; Jimi Herbst, assistant manager, product sales; and Paul Hopkins, direct, product sales.

Bread & Broth is very grateful to Vail Resorts Echo Foundation for their grant to the B&B program. Their grant has been a major funding source for providing the hot, nutritious dinners B&B provides for the needy of the South Lake Tahoe community.

For information on how you can support the B&B program, contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: California can’t tax itself to prosperity

By George Runner

Last year California voters approved two tax increases aimed at bringing billions more dollars into state coffers. But that hasn’t stopped revenue-hungry lawmakers in the Legislature from seeking further tax hikes. It’s almost as if they think we can tax ourselves into prosperity.

A recent example of this type of confused thinking is the oil severance tax. Like a bad penny, this tired old idea keeps

turning up at the Capitol year after year, despite being rejected by voters in 2006.



George Runner

A severance tax is simply a fancy name for taxing something when it comes out of the ground—in this case, oil. Proponents of the tax argue that California is giving oil companies a free ride. In her release announcing Senate Bill 241, Sen. Noreen Evans claims – falsely – that "California is the largest—and only—oil producing state in the nation that does not tax its vast oil resources."

The truth is California already has a statewide severance tax that funds state oil and gas regulators. We also tax oil companies in many other ways. These taxes includes property taxes assessed on oil in the ground, local extraction taxes, plus California's sky-high sales and corporate taxes.

A 2008 study by José Luis Alberro and William Hamm found that "the tax burden California imposes on oil companies is average when compared to the tax burden imposed by other oil producing states."

According to the study's authors, a 9.9 percent severance tax would make California's tax burden far higher than these other states, reduce oil production, increase our reliance on foreign oil, raise gas prices and eliminate nearly 10,000 California jobs.

Clearly, taxing oil won't create prosperity for our state.

There is a path to greater prosperity that would create more jobs, lower gas prices and economic growth with no new taxes. But to take this path, we'll need more domestic oil production, not less.

A recent study by USC explored the impact of using advanced oil-extraction technologies to access California's vast oil reserves.

The study's authors project that developing these oil reserves could add up to 2.8 million new jobs to California's economy, bolster the state's economic growth up to 14.3 percent and increase personal incomes by up to 10%. State and local government revenue could grow by as much as $24.6 billion – without a tax increase.

California's oil reserves are located in the Monterey Shale Formation, much of which lies beneath California's Central Valley. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the formation holds more than 15 billion barrels of oil—about two thirds of the nation's shale oil reserves.

Hydraulic fracturing for oil, a practice that has been widely used and carefully regulated by states since the 1940s, has been increasingly used by the industry. Through advances in "fracking" technology, including the use of concrete barriers to ensure that the upward-moving oil remains contained within the well, California is well-positioned to safely and wisely access what is literally a new untapped resource.

California's unemployment rate of 9.6 percent is tied with Mississippi and Nevada as the highest in the nation. In contrast, oil-producing North Dakota boasts the nation's lowest unemployment rate of just 3.3 percent.

California's Central Valley, where double digit unemployment rates still linger, would benefit most from a California oil boom. Of course, any new oil production must be done safely and in an environmentally responsible manner.

But we won’t ever reach economic prosperity if we block it from happening. The quickest way to do that is by enacting an oil severance tax. Let’s keep energy jobs in our state by stopping the severance tax. It’s the least we can do for our current energy industry workers and the many more who may soon join them.

George Runner represents more than 9 million Californians as a taxpayer advocate and elected member of the State Board of Equalization.

Editorial: Gene damage linked to smoking

Publisher’s note: ***This editorial is from the April 7, 2013, Times Colonist in Victoria, Canada.***

It’s a remarkable fact that although lung cancer is directly linked to smoking, the disease was almost unheard of 100 years ago. Tobacco has been in circulation since the 1600s, yet as late as 1912, fewer than 400 cases had been reported worldwide. In the 1920s, medical students were still summoned when lung cancer was found in a patient, the condition being so rare.

Today, unfortunately, the picture has changed completely. Around 20,000 Canadians alone died of lung cancer last year, and death rates are sky-high in many Third World countries.

Part of the explanation for this public-health calamity lies in the way tobacco use has changed over time. Before mass production became possible in the 1880s, cigarettes were in short supply.

Pipes were the favored utensil, but they produced a harsh smoke that was unpleasant to inhale. In contrast, modern cigarettes are more easily tolerated, and for that reason, more dangerous.

All of this is common knowledge, of course. That cigarette smoking brought with it an epidemic of lung cancer has been obvious for some decades.

But scientists are beginning to suspect that behind the direct, visible link, something more ominous may be going on. One clue is the large number of non-smokers who get the disease.

Nowadays, between 10 and 15 percent of lung cancer deaths occur in people who have never used tobacco. In B.C., that translates to 300 fatalities annually. Even 50 years ago, that would have stunned the medical world.

Without question, many of these “innocent” deaths are due to the impact of second-hand smoke, though most developed countries have aggressive laws against lighting up in public places.

However, in just the last year or two, a series of studies, some involving Canadian researchers, has revealed a chilling new possibility. It appears that parents who smoke may be passing on to their children genetic mutations caused by the habit. If true, that opens up an entirely novel form of disease transmission.

There is an important distinction to draw here. It’s well known that cancer is linked to certain genes, and that in some families, those genes are passed along from one generation to the next. Variations of the BRCA1 gene are a cause of hereditary breast cancer.

But what these recent studies show is that smoking injures healthy genes, and that these newly damaged genes can be

handed down from parent to child.

Like any emerging field of knowledge, the research is not complete and these findings may not stand up. It’s also unclear whether offspring who inherit this damage will go on to become lung-cancer victims themselves.

What can be said so far is that the genetic damage occurs in areas of the human DNA chain that are linked to serious ailments. These include brain cancer and leukemia, and possibly also lung cancer.

There are profound moral as well as medical implications at stake here. Adults who smoke already know the risks they take with their own well-being.

But now it appears they could be jeopardizing the health of any children they may have. Playing dice with your own life is one thing. Playing with the safety of an unborn generation is another matter entirely.

It will have to be seen exactly what this line of research uncovers. But the results are already sufficiently troubling to warrant a broader debate.

Smoking remains legal in Canada, in part, because it was thought the risks could be contained. Now it seems that may not be the case.

Whether an outright ban is desirable, or even practical, is still perhaps in question.

But at a minimum, there are some new victims whose interests we must consider.

Opinion: Leave Yosemite alone

Publisher's note: ***Rep. Tom McClintock on April 12 submitted this letter commenting on the Merced River draft Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement to Don Neubacher, superintendent of the Merced River Plan.***

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

I am writing to provide comments on the National Park Service's (NPS) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Merced River Comprehensive Management Plan. Yosemite National Park is a national treasure that must be available for the American public to access and enjoy in the same manner that Americans have for decades. The 1864 Act authorizing the original Yosemite land grant to the state of California stated that the "premises shall be held for public use, resort, and recreation" and "shall be inalienable for all time." The draft plan in question directly contravenes the authorization, and I am firmly against NPS taking any action that would limit public access and enjoyment of Yosemite.



Tom McClintock

Congress enacted the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to protect free-flowing rivers from dams and other development. Congress did not intend for NPS to use the act to justify limiting visitation, closing facilities and eliminating or curtailing historic uses that pre-date passage of the Act and the Merced River designation under the act. In designating the Merced River, Congress understood that Yosemite National Park had a

multitude of existing facilities that served river users, that Yosemite was widely visited and that the Merced River was extensively used for recreational pursuits by park visitors. See S. Rep. No. 96, 100th Cong, 1st Sess. 1987 (the river is an "outstanding and heavily used recreation resource in the areas of easy accessibility").

The Merced River's designation was based upon the river's value as a popular recreation resource in a highly-visited National Park that was supported by the extensive facilities that existed at the time of the River's designation. Congress could not have intended for NPS to limit visitation or do away with the existing facilities and the recreational activities that support the values that caused the Merced River to be designated in the first place. Congress also did not intend its designation to drive planning of the larger park and force the closure of facilities that pre-date the act, enhance visitor experiences, and are located outside of the Merced River.

It is equally troubling that NPS is proposing to close a number of facilities within Yosemite Village and reduce recreational activities in the Yosemite Valley. NPS claims that camping will be increased to 640 campsites but that figure is still less than the 830 campsites that existed before the 1997 flood. NPS is also proposing to close the Curry Village ice skating rink, bike rental facilities, snack stands, swimming pools, tennis courts, retail stores and horse stables and stock use. These facilities are not located in the Merced River, do not impede its flow, and many existed and historically served Yosemite visitors for decades prior to Congress passing the act.

It defies logic that NPS is proposing to close these facilities not because they degrade the Merced River, but instead because in NPS's eyes, these longstanding facilities do not benefit the River. What about the benefits that the American public will lose under NPS's proposal? NPS is also

proposing to eliminate commercial rafting on the River. Like the existing facilities, commercial rafting is a service that was offered before the Merced River's designation under the act.

I am also concerned about the proposed destruction of the Sugar Pine Bridge. This historic stone bridge was built in 1928 (40 years before enactment of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act) and was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The National Historic Preservation Act directs federal agencies to preserve the historic properties under their control and the legislation designating the Merced River as Wild and Scenic does not require the bridge's destruction. I do not believe that the Park Service may simply ignore its responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act to protect the Sugar Pine Bridge and find no justification for robbing Yosemite of this iconic landmark.

Finally, I am aware that NPS has received a number of requests for an extension of the public comment period on the Merced River plan. This is entirely understandable given that the plan and its exhibits are over 4,000 pages long, and that the comment period overlaps with the comment periods of two other major Yosemite Park plans. To ensure that the public has an adequate opportunity to provide its input, I concur that an extension is necessary, and therefore have requested that NPS extend its public comment period on the Merced River Plan by 90 days to ensure full public opportunity to comment on this important issue.

I submit these comments greatly troubled by the adverse and lasting effects this would have on Yosemite and the many visitors who enjoy the park.

Sincerely,

Tom McClintock, R-Granite Bay

Opinion: Time is now for marriage equality

By Janice Eastburn

A recent column written by Tiffany Miller takes as its basic premise that marriage equality "should not be solved in court." She justifies her argument, in part, by saying, "Most of us simply believe that no government can define marriage because God has already defined it as a sacred union between a man and a woman."

I will leave the theological debate on the definition of marriage to the clergy and religious scholars, as it has no bearing on the legality of marriage. Our country is founded on the separation of church and state. Marriage is, by legal definition, a binding contract between two people and the state in which they reside. As such, it is subject to state laws; not religious tenets.



Marriage involves the filing of a marriage license with the county clerk and entitles the parties to a variety of legal protections and requirements. Some of these legalities include rights to property, inheritance, immunity from testimony, support, and presumed parentage to name a few. Divorce requires the involvement of the legal system.

If a particular church does not sanction the joining of any two people as a marital union that is their prerogative. Whatever the Supreme Court decides about marriage equality

this will not require a given church to change their policy or practice of performing marital rites. Churches will not be required to perform marriage rites for same gender couples if doing so is in violation of their church doctrine, just as certain churches are entitled to refuse marital rites between people of different faiths or when there is a history of marital dissolution via divorce.

I do not deny or disparage the passion and conviction that people of faith feel. The line must, however, be drawn where those beliefs are used to justify the mistreatment of others or to deny others their civil rights. Gay and lesbian people are entitled to basic civil rights and protections. We pay taxes. We work. We raise children. We vote. We are your family, friends, co-workers, fellow congregants, and children.

In the fight for equality, we do not demand that anybody change his or her religious beliefs. What we do demand is that we are treated equally under the law, as any American, as defined by the equal protection clause and the fourteenth amendment of our constitution. This is a civil rights issue and, therefore, it is entirely appropriate that the Supreme Court hear the issue of marriage equality. What is not appropriate is for civil rights to be decided by public opinion (as in the case of Proposition 8 for example).

Civil rights cannot be determined by popular vote. What would be the effect on history if the right of women to vote had been determined by popular opinion? If the right to own slaves were decided in this manner? If the right to interracial marriage had been thus determined?

Miller attempted to make the case that the rights of gay and lesbian Americans should not even be considered a civil rights issue because, according to her, gay and lesbian people have not suffered the severity of indignities that African Americans have suffered. In our country’s history I have never encountered the argument that the rights of minority people

must be held to a litmus test to determine whether that group has “suffered equally” nor is that argument appropriate here. Gay and lesbian people have suffered, and continue to suffer, not only various indignities (i.e. bullying, violence, rejection from families, friends, and religious institutions), but also loss of legal stature throughout this great country.

In 30 states it is perfectly legal to fire somebody on the basis of sexual orientation. In only 13 states is adoption by gay and lesbian parties clearly legal (and three of these states do not allow joint adoption). The decision to overturn the arbitrary discharge of military personnel based on sexual orientation happened only two years ago. As for marriage equality, even in the handful of states that do recognize the legality of same gender marriage, gay and lesbian married couples are denied more than 1,138 federal rights that the married (heterosexual) couple who lives next door enjoys (and likely takes for granted). Rights that, when denied, carry real consequences for real people.

Marriage equality is not an issue of religion. It is a matter of basic fairness and justice. I am optimistic that our supreme court will do the right thing by deciding the matter of marriage equality in favor of liberty and justice for all.

Janice Eastburn is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: TRPA board believes in Regional Plan

By Shelly Aldean and Casey Beyer

As chair and vice chair of the Governing Board of the Tahoe

Regional Planning Agency, we are no strangers to negotiation and compromise. While the serene beauty of Lake Tahoe often can calm even the most agitated bystander, finding compromise over land use policies at this bi-state lake has never been easy.

Yet just four months ago, we witnessed a revival of cooperation when tough negotiations and hard-fought compromises successfully produced an updated Lake Tahoe Regional Plan. Despite unprecedented levels of support for the plan, activity in the California and Nevada legislatures have spurred questions about the future of the lake and the TRPA.

While the states sort out their differences about the lake's future through the legislative process, the members of the TRPA Governing Board, who represent the interests of both states, continue to work collaboratively to implement the newly updated Regional Plan. This new plan is the child of compromise and represents a new era of public-private cooperation. After years in the making with thousands of hours of stakeholder input, this new blueprint for the future deserves a chance to succeed.

The compromises that underpin the plan are reflected in the details. While maintaining the strict growth control system that's been in effect since 1987, the plan is projected to eliminate 10,000 vehicle miles traveled annually in the Tahoe basin. Approximately 27,000 parcel owners will be able to access incentives to install stormwater infiltration measures while at the same time the plan cuts the rate of residential grown allocations in half and anticipates an additional 1,200 private parcels will be protected or restored.

The intent of this updated bi-state regulatory system is to accelerate environmental gains while at the same time helping to improve the health of our communities. In this era of

diminishing public sector revenues, the salvation of the environment may well depend on our ability to encourage private investment in ecosystem restoration. It is no longer effective to use only a regulatory compliance approach. We must seek new ways to educate and engage the public by forging partnerships with allies and adversaries alike. Aristotle once observed, “A common danger unites even the bitterest of enemies.” In the Tahoe basin that “common danger” is aquatic invasive species, catastrophic wildfire, and uncontrolled runoff from older urban upland areas – it is not the private property owner, the conservationist, or the neighbor down the street. Rather than focusing our energy and precious resources fighting one another we must unite in a common cause: preserving the environment, strengthening the health of the local economy, and maintaining the social fabric of our communities. To do less would be an injustice to those we serve.

As representatives on the Governing Board from both Nevada and California, we remain convinced that preserving the bi-state Compact is the best protection for Lake Tahoe. We believe that to fulfill our responsibilities we must shed the old and tired paradigms of the past and adopt a more progressive and realistic approach to environmental stewardship. We are committed to a more inclusive and collaborative bi-state approach to governance and will lead by example with a renewed commitment to preserve the basin for current and future generations.

Shelly Aldean is Carson City supervisors’ appointee and chair of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board. Casey Beyer is Governing Board vice chair and the California governor’s appointee.

Letter: Land management in Tahoe questionable

To the community,

On any subject to have a discussion, bona fide discussion, it is necessary to define the terms. When we speak on the subject of the city of South Lake Tahoe and its relationship with the Forest Service and the California Tahoe Conservancy, especially on the subject of land use and land management and maintenance, it's necessary to ask what is a city?

Webster's defines a city as 1) a center of population, commerce and culture, 2) an incorporated U.S. municipality with definite boundaries and legal powers set forth in a charter granted by the state.



Bill Crawford

Webster says a forest is a dense growth of trees, together with other plants covering a large area. And conservancy is conservation, especially of natural resources.

And wilderness is 1) uninhabited region left in its natural condition, especially a large wild tract of land covered with vegetation or forests.

So what is the point? When I look at the lots owned by the Forest Service and Conservancy in my neighborhood, it appears they are managed as if a wilderness. That's a contradiction

because they are within the city, small lots in an urban area that are subject to fire. And that’s the sticking point.

We live in a city that has no authority within its boundaries over land owned by the federal government and the state of California. So things are in a muddle. They are free to thumb their noses at the city. They do not have to conform to the legal powers of the city.

That’s not right. But that’s how it is.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Letter: Praise for Barton Auxiliary

To the community,

I would like to take a moment to recognize Barton Memorial Hospital’s Auxiliary members. Without their determination and perseverance, Barton Memorial would not be what it is today — 50 years strong.

In 1960 the hospital was an idea and a community need. Just three years later, on Nov. 23, 1963, Barton Memorial opened its doors. After endless work and fundraising, Barton Memorial Hospital became a reality. A large portion of the first year of the hospital’s operating expenses ($600,000) was generated by the auxiliary.



John Williams

These dedicated auxiliary members provide vital support to our patients and staff – from a smile to a delivery of flowers, they are part of our backbone. These dedicated volunteers help staff the hospital's front desk, assist in the skilled nursing facility and organize local blood drives and events. In addition to assisting with staffing of the gift shop in the hospital lobby, the auxiliary also manages and operates the Attic Thrift Store.

Today, there are more than 100 members who give their time and talents each year to the auxiliary's many endeavors.

A lot has changed since 1960, but the dedication of Barton's Auxiliary members remains steadfast. Thank you on behalf of everyone at Barton and our community for all you do. In honor of National Volunteer Week, April 21-27, I encourage everyone to take a moment to thank these amazing individuals for their support.

Sincerely,

John Williams, Barton Health president and CEO