Letter: LTCC admin team helps Bread & Broth

To the community,

Bread & Broth is very thankful that for the second time this year Lake Tahoe Community College administrative staff members sponsored an Adopt A Day of Nourishment. The $250 donation covered the cost of food, serving materials and utilities needed to serve the hot, nutritious evening meal on Nov. 26 to the needy of our community.

Once again, LTCC was represented by a helpful and energetic sponsor team which consisted of Julie Cathie, director of Financial Aid; Tom Green, vice president of Academic Affairs & Student Services; Tracy Thomas, interim director of Students & Academic Support Services; and Jeff Defranco, vice president of Administrative Services.

In addition to providing sustenance and a safe gathering place for those in need, the Bread & Broth program engenders a spirit of good will for those who volunteer at the evening meals. Helping at their sponsorship dinner was a “wonderful experience, we would do it again! Volunteers and dinner guests were enthusiastic and shared time together.”

Bread & Broth commends the Lake Tahoe Community College staff for their involvement in strengthening the social fabric of our community and their generous monetary and volunteer support of the B&B program.

For information on Bread & Broth donation or volunteering opportunities, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Overhaul of CEQA looms large

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

It’s been 42 years since then-Gov. Ronald Reagan signed the landmark California Environmental Quality Act, an early victory for the nascent environmental protection movement that has since become a very powerful force in state and national politics.

Whether CEQA and its legislative progeny, including the most recent anti-global warming laws, have truly protected California’s environment or merely morphed into vehicles for those on the political left to pursue other ideological goals remains a bitterly debated issue.

Whatever the reality, with environmental groups now a major component of the Democratic Party and Democrats’ holding virtually unfettered political power in the state, CEQA would seem to be sacrosanct.

However, it appears that Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature’s Democratic leadership are poised to revise CEQA in some manner, responding to complaints that it has become an impediment to California’s recovery from the worst recession since the Great Depression.

It’s setting the stage for a potential battle with environmentalists who look upon CEQA as an iconic, almost religious, touchstone.

A hint of that came this year when Sen. Michael Rubio, D-Shafter, introduced a CEQA overhaul.

While it stalled due to pressure from environmentalists, it indicated an appetite among Democrats for change and led to declarations from Brown and Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg that CEQA reform would sit atop their legislative agendas.

Brown, as is his wont, offered a pithy description of CEQA, once calling it “the blob.” While campaigning last fall for his tax-increase measure, Proposition 30, Brown responded to a questioner that he considered CEQA reform to be “very important.”

“There are many people who work very well under CEQA and don’t want to change it,” Brown said during the exchange in Los Angeles. “And yet, changes are needed.”

Brown signed a CEQA exemption for a new football stadium in Los Angeles and mused about exempting his pet bullet-train project from its provisions. Farmers and other local interests along the planned route of the train have filed CEQA suits to stop it.

Steinberg, meanwhile, helped enact the law that allows the governor to fast-track certain kinds of projects through the CEQA process over the opposition of major environmental groups. And he not only declared that CEQA reform would be a high priority but named Rubio as the new chairman of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee with a mandate to explore changes in the law, saying they are “needed to eliminate abuses.”

If Brown and Steinberg are serious, the forthcoming battle over CEQA is likely to be one of the Capitol’s more interesting, and perhaps significant, tests of the Democrats’ hegemony.

Opinion: Focusing on climate change at Lake Tahoe

By Geoff Schladow

Some of the most important questions we currently face at the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center relate to the impact of climate change on restoration efforts at Lake Tahoe. Our past studies suggest that climate change will reduce the extent of lake mixing, and in particular the mixing of oxygen, down to deep water. How true this really is remains an open question at Tahoe and lakes world-wide.

Starting in 2013 we will have the opportunity to start answering that question. A custom-designed thermistor and dissolved oxygen "chain" will be installed in 400 feet of water off the west shore of Lake Tahoe. This instrument chain will measure tiny fluctuations in temperature and oxygen over this entire depth, allowing us to understand how the wind and currents interact to produce mixing under continually varying conditions.

The instruments will take measurements every 10 seconds and the measurements will be instantly transferred to shore via a lake-bed cable. By having this real-time data, we will be able to observe the evolution of key mixing events as they happen and have the opportunity to dispatch boats to take a host of supplementary measurements. The data will also be used as the basis of real-time exhibits at TERC's education centers and at other locations such as the Tahoe Maritime Museum.



Geoff Schladow

How does TERC fund this kind of project? Part of the support for this cutting edge research is from a new initiative by the UC Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society. Part is through philanthropic support that TERC receives from private donors who have a desire to invest in science to save Lake Tahoe. And part is through in-kind support provided by our many partners around the lake. In this case we are particularly grateful to Obexer's Boat Company, which is working with us to originate the lake-bed cable at their marina and providing the power to run the instruments.

All of these groups are essential to making science happen at Lake Tahoe and to keep the restoration efforts firmly based on science.

I want to thank all those who helped us with the many things we were able to accomplish this year. This ranges from our incredibly dedicated staff, our volunteer docents, the many students and interns that work through TERC, our partners in other research institutions and in the numerous Tahoe agencies, those who visit our education centers, and those of you who have helped fund our research and education programs and partnered with us in unique way.

Geoff Schladow is director of the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village.

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Note: Geoff Schladow will present the State of the Lake on Dec. 13 at 6pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences

building, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

Opinion: Law enforcement abuse of power is unforgivable

By Kathryn Reed

Maybe it should be called the *in*justice system.

Due process is clearly not a phrase that is applied equally to all who come in contact with law enforcement.

While there are plenty of stories about individuals who have been wrongly accused being set free with new evidence, what about those who are left in limbo? It's an entirely different form of purgatory.

Our criminal justice system is supposed to be about being innocent until proven guilty. But the way the system works – and information is distributed – it is more like guilty until proven innocent.

A person is arrested and the public perception is the suspect is guilty. All the media has to go on is the police report or what the cops say. Reaching the suspect behind bars isn't as easy as picking up the phone. And often if an attorney has been retained, the line of communication is immediately cutoff.

That keeps the story one-sided. It's all about what law enforcement has to say.

Yes, the suspect or person of interest can choose not to listen to legal advice. But based on that seldom happening, the conclusion one can draw is that it's safer to be tried in a courtroom than the media.

There are two residents of South Lake Tahoe who have not been arrested, but their lives have been turned upside down by law enforcement and subsequently the media. One usually tells his side, the other is mum.

I'm talking about Johnny Poland and Angela Swanson.

Neither one has been charged with a crime. Neither one has been arrested. Both have been the targets of law enforcement. Both are in limbo.

The cases are completely different, but the consequences to date are similar. An investigation is going on, law enforcement is not talking, evidence has not been presented to them or the public, and they are spending money to defend themselves against the unknown.

What is outrageous is that this is almost 2013 and it's allowed to happen in the United States.

Law enforcement should not have the power to ruin lives. Investigate and charge. Go to court. See what the judge or jury says. But limbo – that should never be tolerated.

Law enforcement seldom seems to be held accountable for the wrongs they have committed.

No one is perfect and we all make mistakes. But cops, district attorneys, parole officers – their mistakes can destroy lives.

Look at the Jaycee Lee Dugard case. An 11-year-old is whisked away from a bus stop in Meyers, found 18 years later in 2009 at a ramshackle abode only three hours away in the Bay Area. Parole officers came to the house. Jaycee kept being raped. Unforgivable.

It’s also unforgivable what is happening to Poland and Swanson.

Letter: Community support helps feed those in need

To the community,

Tahoe Community Church would like to say thank you for the community support as we feed the hungry in our community.

This Thanksgiving we fed 148 households a turkey and bag of all the fixings. We are also feeding record numbers each Friday afternoon at the Food Pantry. We have fed over 7,000 people this year.

Our thanks to American Century and the LTVA for their generous donation which helps us to give a generous amount of food each week to those in need.

Thanks to the Salvation Army for the 100 turkeys, and to MontBleu and its employees for turkeys, bags of fixings and pies. Thanks to Harrah’s-Harveys for the use of their freezer to store our turkeys. Thanks to Cub Scout Troop 592 for their service in helping to carry the Thanksgiving dinner bags to the cars of our clients.

A special thanks to all our volunteers.

We are thankful for Whittell High School students who donated food from their successful nonperishable Food Drive.

This community partnership is very important in helping us as we feed the those in need in this community.

Thank you!

Kathy Pavich, **Tahoe Community Church**

Letter: Youth pitch in at Bread & Broth

To the community,

On Nov. 12, Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe Sunrisers hosted the Monday evening Adopt A Day of Nourishment dinner which served more than 90 meals at St. Theresa Church Parish Hall.

In addition to monetarily sponsoring the nutritious meal, the Kiwanis Club invited members of the Whittell High School Key Club to participate in the Adopt A Day event by serving on the Kiwanis' AAD volunteer sponsor crew.

"Key Club is a Leadership Program sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. Key Club helps high school students learn the importance of community service and helps mold tomorrow's leader," stated Debbie Ward. She and Chuck Nelson, Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe Sunrisers' president, along with the Bread & Broth volunteer coordinator, were pleased with the great job done in helping with the meal's setup and serving by the Key Club representatives.

Representing the WHS Key Club at the dinner were Veronica Charles, Cody Gibson, Avery Laub, Serena Libert and Gabe Rusk.

Bread & Broth very much appreciates the Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe Sunrisers support of the B&B program and its goal of feeding the hungry of South Lake Tahoe. B&B also commends the work of the Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe Sunrisers in providing leadership and community service opportunities to the young people of our community.

There are many ways to support Bread & Broth in their efforts to help the less fortunate in our community. For more information, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: Infrastructure investments create several benefits

By Thomas L. Friedman, New York Times

I was in Chattanooga, Tenn., last week, and people were still buzzing about an unusual duet heard on Oct. 13, using superlow-latency videoconference technology and the city's new gigabit-per-second fiber-optic network. T-Bone Burnett, a Grammy Award winner, performed "The Wild Side of Life" with Chuck Mead, a founder of the band BR549, for an audience of 4,000. But Burnett played his part on a screen from a Los Angeles studio and Mead on a stage in Chattanooga. The transcontinental duet was possible, reported Chattanoogan.com,

because the latency of Chattanooga's new fiber network was 67 milliseconds, meaning the audio and video traveled 2,100 miles from Chattanooga to Los Angeles in one-fourth the blink of an eye.

That cross-country duet is just one of many, many signs I'm seeing of bottom-up innovation happening in cities from Minneapolis to Chattanooga, where local Democrats and Republicans are coming together – in Chattanooga's case to pass a $229 million bond issue to build a world-class fiber-optic grid that is spurring innovation and start-ups – to grow lots of good jobs. There is a huge amount of innovative thrust building, bottom-up, in the U.S. economy today. If Washington could just get the macro picture right, you could see a real growth surge in America. We're just a couple of grand bargains away from something big.

And that brings me to the news. It's good to see the budget talks between President Obama and the Republicans getting off to a solid start, but we know there will be plenty of partisan fireworks before any deal is cut. With that in mind, I hope the president will reframe and elevate the debate. It is vital that he not frame this as a discussion of just new taxes and spending cuts. His guiding principle should be "growth." Right now, the whole budget discussion reeks too much of castor oil – and which side will have to swallow the biggest spoonful.

I get why the president needs to stress that the wealthy will have to pay higher taxes before he can go to his base for spending cuts to restore long-term fiscal balance. But here's what I hope we'll see more from the president: a sense of excitement, a sense that if we can just get this grand bargain done, we can really unlock growth again, we can really, as Mohamed El-Erian, the C.E.O. of the bond giant Pimco, puts it, "restore economic dynamism, ensure financial soundness, and overcome political dysfunction," which collectively would have a huge stimulative effect. If everyone has to take their castor oil – the rich more, the middle class some – make them

feel that it will enable us all to get stronger. Make them feel that we're embarking on a new journey – not to punish but to solve, not to sock it to the successful but to create more abundance for all. Because the right mix of tax increases, spending cuts and investment incentives will spur more start-ups, lead to more risk-taking, inspire more entrepreneurship and create more jobs. Elections are win-lose, but successful negotiations are always to some degree win-win.

And that brings me back to Chattanooga, where, Mayor Ron Littlefield says, city elders looked themselves in the eyes 15 years ago and realized that "we were a dilapidated city going the way of the Rust Belt." But, by coming together to make the city an attractive place to live and getting both parties to agree to invest in a fiber-to-every-home-and-business network in a 600-square-mile area, Chattanooga replaced its belching smokestacks with an Amazon.com fulfillment center, major health care and insurance companies and a beehive of tech start-ups that all thrive on big data and super-high-speed Internet. "We've gone from being a slowly declining and deflating urban balloon, to one of the fastest-growing cities in Tennessee," said Littlefield. The fiber network now attracts companies that "like to see more and more of their employees able to work some of the time at home, which saves on office space and parking," the mayor said.

How fast is that Chattanooga choo-choo? The majority of Chattanooga homes and businesses get 50 megabits per second, some 100 megabits, a few 250 and those with big needs opt for a full gigabit per second, explained Harold DePriest, the chief executive of EPB, the city's electric power and telecom provider, which built and operates the network. "The average around the country is 4.5 megabits per second." So average Internet speed in Chattanooga is 10 times the national average. That doesn't just mean faster downloads. The fiber grid means 150,000 Chattanooga homes now have smart electric meters to track their energy consumption in real time. More

important, said DePriest, on July 5, Chattanooga got hit with an unusual storm that knocked out power to 80,000 homes. Thanks to intelligent power switching on the fiber network, he said, “42,000 homes had their electricity restored in … 2 seconds.” Old days: 17 hours.

That network was fully completed thanks to $111 million in stimulus money. Imagine that we get a grand bargain in Washington that also includes a stimulus of just $20 billion to bring the 200 biggest urban areas in America up to Chattanooga’s standard. You’d see a “melt-up” in the U.S. economy. We are so close to doing something big and smart. Somebody needs to tell the Congress.

Letter: Wars have already sent us over the fiscal cliff

To the community,

There is loud chatter on the national stage about going over the fiscal cliff if there’s no action soon. It’s a bit late because we’ve already marched over the cliff to the tune of “Yankee Doodle Dandy” in Afghanistan.

In 2006, congressional researchers estimated it cost $390,000 per soldier per year in Afghanistan. By 2009, the cost had increased to $1 million per year.



Bill Crawford

In Baltimore in June 2011, at the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the mayors called for an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and use the $126 billion annual savings to rebuild U.S. cities. The mayor of Los Angeles said, “That we could build bridges in Baghdad and Kandahar and not Baltimore and Kansas City absolutely boggles the mind.”

The fiscal cost is immense. And the random wholesale killing of civilians by U.S. soldiers and drones is morally outrageous. Spiritually, we have come close to bankruptcy.

I believe our city should by resolution call for a quick end to our wars in the Middle East. And our city should call upon the League of California Cities to call for an end to the wars.

For most our history it was the policy of our government not to fight land wars in Asia. Let’s return to that policy and save ourselves.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

PS: Our global network of bases and 255,000 overseas troops costs about $250 billion annually.

Opinion: Obamacare is going to cost patients

By Peter Weiss

Obama won, Obamacare is the law, and, as my wife says, I will just have to learn to dance to a new song.

Now, don't get me wrong, Obamacare is awful. Forget all the "free stuff" it provides. Children covered on their parents' plan until 26 years of age? A scam, making young adults – excuse me, children – pay for complete, comprehensive health insurance when all they need and should pay for is major catastrophe insurance. Then there is the "annual " or "preventative" exam, which according to Obamacare is "free."

You gotta love this stuff. I wish I had the chutzpah of the people who wrote Obamacare. What they did not tell you, and I am, is that it covers absolutely nothing more than the bare minimum.

I have now posted a notice in my office and each exam room stating exactly what Obamacare will cover for those yearly visits. Remember Obama promised this as a free exam – no co-pay, no deductible, no charge. That's fine and dandy if you are healthy and have no complaints. However, we are obligated by law to code specifically for the reason of the visit. An annual exam is one specific code; you can not mix this with another code, say, for rectal bleeding. This annual visit covers the exam and "discussion about the status of previously diagnosed stable conditions." That's the exact wording under that code – insurance will not cover any new ailment under that code.

If you are here for that annual exam, you will not be covered if you want to discuss any new ailment or unstable condition. I cannot bait and switch to another code – that's illegal. We,

the physicians, are audited all the time and can lose our license for insurance fraud.

You, the patient, will then have to make a decision.

Do you want your “free” yearly exam, or do you want to pay for a visit which is coded for a particular, new problem? You can have my “free” exam if you only discuss what Obamacare wants me to discuss.

This happened to me personally, as a patient, when I went for my physical. It is the law. If you are complaining of a new problem, then you have to reschedule, since Obamacare is very clear as to what is covered and what is not. Obamacare – intentionally – makes it as difficult to be seen and taken care of as possible.

Patients can be very tricky. I have had patients make an “annual” exam, only to want to discuss and be treated for another ailment. I can’t do it.

Peter Weiss is director and founder of the Rodeo Drive Women’s Health Center. He is also assistant clinical professor of OB/GYN at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. He was health care adviser to John McCain’s presidential campaign.

Letter: Heavenly provides cash, help to Bread & Broth

To the community,

As always, an awesome group of Heavenly volunteers was how the Heavenly Mountain Resort Adopt A Day sponsor crew was described by the B&B volunteer coordinator for the Nov. 5

evening meal.

Due to their repeated stints of Bread & Broth volunteering, most of the Heavenly sponsor crew members are seasoned AAD helpers and their experience is greatly appreciated by the regular Bread & Broth volunteers. The evening's Heavenly AAD volunteer team was manned by Pete Sonntag, general manager; Eric Anderson, base operations supervisor; Phil Demus, facility maintenance manager; Tom Fortune, director of base operations; and Tom Maugeri, security manager.

Along with the B&B volunteer crew, the Heavenly crew helped bag baked goods, fruits and vegetables donated by local stores for take home, served more than 100 meals and assisted with the evenings cleanup.

Bread & Broth is extremely thankful for Heavenly Mountain Resort's support in providing a hot, well balanced meals to needy members of the South Lake Tahoe community. B&B would like to salute Heavenly and their employees for their dedication to providing a unique and exhilarating skiing experience and their generous commitment of time and money to the community of South Lake Tahoe.

To become a sponsor of an Adopt A Day, contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth