Letter: Bread & Broth thankful for help

To the community,

Bread & Broth's Adopt A Day of Nourishment program provides individuals, clubs/organizations and businesses the opportunity to sponsor a hot, healthy meal for needy members of the South Lake Tahoe community.

On Oct. 22, the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* sponsored its first Adopt A Day dinner and sent a great volunteer sponsor crew to work side-by-side with the B&B volunteers. The *Tahoe Daily Tribune* crew helped with packing give-away food bags and doing all the necessary tasks involved in serving up to 100 meals for the evening.

The Bread & Broth AAD program encourages our donors to come and assist at their designated evening dinner so they have the opportunity to actually experience the gratitude and sense of community felt by our B&B guests and volunteers.

The members of the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* crew seemed to concur. "Enjoyed the experience and would love to do it again!" was their response to their sponsorship of an Adopt A Day.

Bread & Broth is very fortunate and grateful to have sponsors like the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* who are committed to improving the lives of the less fortunate members of our community.

If you would like to help Bread & Broth's program, contact me at (530) 542-2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: Pot isn’t South Tahoe’s real problem drug

To the community,

The drug problem in South Lake Tahoe is not from cannabis, it is from alcohol. The abuse of alcohol is so rampant that rape and assaults in South Lake Tahoe are twice the national average. You heard me right, twice the national average for rapes and assaults.

Any honest cop will tell you that nobody commits rapes or assaults while using marijuana and it is alcohol that drives these violent crimes. It is time the City Council wake up and deal with real problems of alcohol and end their war on medical marijuana patients.



Steve Kubby

For the record, the only people who are protected by the South Lake Tahoe marijuana ordinances are criminal growers who can afford the time and money to jump through all the hoops created by the city.

None of the patients I know has registered with the city and all of them live in fear.

The City Council has literally thrown the sick, disabled and dying members of our community under the bus. Sadly, with

respect to marijuana enforcement policies, only rapists and bad guys are benefiting from the city’s misguided efforts.

Steve Kubby, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Runaways often run into more problems

By Cheyanne Lane

What are the first thoughts that go through your mind when you see a youth on the streets? How did they get there, where are their parents, and are they safe? It’s disturbing to realize that between 1.6 million and 2.8 million youth run away annually. That’s each year.

Most youth who run away do so because of threatening environments at home, such as physical-verbal abuse, substance abuse issues, questions of sexual orientation, or escaping state care.

Unfortunately, by choosing to run away, they further subject themselves to threatening situations that impede their progress in life. Youth who have chosen to run away are at an elevated risk of pregnancy, suicide attempts, substance abuse, sexual exploitation and participating in criminal activity.

November is National Runaway Prevention Month.

It’s a public education campaign coordinated between Tahoe Youth & Family Services, National Runaway Switch Board, California Coalition for Youth, and other services agencies across the nation. The goal of National Runaway Prevention Month is to increase awareness of the issues that surround

youth who have run away, and help find ways to prevent youth from running away. When a youth runs away, the impact is felt throughout the entire community.

All of us – individuals, local businesses, community groups, teachers, elected officials, and human service agencies – are encouraged to participate in National Runaway Prevention Month. If we work together to identify resources and to help youth develop life skills, it can make the difference between a youth running away and a youth finding needed resources.

Prevention means assisting youth in discovering the delicate balance of life-saving skills.

Here are four things you can do to help prevent youth/teens from running away: 1.) Awareness: Teach them what it means to run away and why running away will not solve the problem; 2.) Resources: Teach them how to build a safety net of trusted people and organizations to turn to for help; 3.) Communication: Teach them how to speak and listen effectively; 4.) Stress Management: Teach them how to reduce or manage stressors and solve problems.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services' Drop In Centers are an excellent resource for youth who have run away, are homeless, throwaway or couch surfing. Our Drop In Center staff can assist youth with the following supportive services: food, clothing, socks, hygiene supplies, laundry services, showers, help looking for a job or filling out an application, obtaining proper identification.

We can also be there simply to listen, which often times is the most important part. The Drop In Center is a great place for youth to get recharged, resources and respect

For more information about our Drop In Centers, or how you can help runaway or homeless youth in our community, contact me (530) 541.2445, (775) 782.4202 or cheyanne@tahoeyouth.org.

Cheyanne Lane is the outreach coordinator for Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

Opinion: DA is committing crimes of his own in DiMatteo case

By Ted Long

Once again El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson is using his office to discredit someone.

First, let us not forget that he dismissed all charges against Mr. [Gino] DiMatteo, and he has never offered any proof of any of the charges throughout this miscarriage of justice. He is using the federal arrest to try and make it look like he might have had something. Remember, the feds are allegedly now prosecuting for what is legal under California law.

They have “sealed” the charges; in other words kept them secret.

He also says the bribery investigation is on going. Sure, until you, the public forgets.



Ted Long

In the mean time, Angela Swanson is left destroyed and Mr. DiMatteo's 30 employees will no doubt be out of work as his very legitimate business is being destroyed. That's not to mention the thousands of dollars of damage to his home. All of which could have been avoided by a phone call. Mr. DiMatteo always was offering to cooperate, to sit down and talk, yet Mr. Pierson refuses.

They arrested him on Labor Day weekend knowing he can not get bailed for at least four to five days. They take him to Placerville – 90 miles away – instead of South Lake Tahoe, just blocks away to make it hard and more expensive for his attorneys to see him.

They then arrest his wife, keep her for the same weekend, releasing her with no charges. They destroy his business and his home. They actually threw a bomb in to an empty house. Now they dismiss all the charges. Oops! I guess they got even for the years he legally operate the dispensary and they could not stop him. Boy, they showed him.

Yes, I have been critical. I have tried for weeks to communicate with the DA and he has not had the courtesy to return a phone call.

Mr. DiMatteo was always ready, willing and able to cooperate with any investigation, yet the DA chose to ignore that and steamrolled his way through the county, trampling everyone's rights, leaving destruction all around him, costing the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars, for nothing. Now he

attacks me for standing up to this violent abuse.

Vern Pierson was a friend of mine. When he first ran for DA he came to my house and asked for my support, which I gave him. He promised me he stood for justice to all. I have served three terms on the grand jury; once as its foremen. In that capacity I worked closely with him and Jim Clinchard on many cases. Vern and I enjoyed lunching together on several occasions.

When I was first told of the alleged bribery investigation, I urged Mr. DiMatteo to cooperate fully and called the DA at least six times to set up a meeting so that we could understand the situation. No call was every returned or acknowledged, no meeting held. Some have said I was entitled to at least a call saying he did not want to talk.

When I arrived at the gym [Mr. DiMatteo owns] on the day of the arrest I renewed our request to cooperate. I made it clear to all that if there were a corrupt politician, we want it exposed just as much as they did. They refused to even talk about it. It was at that point that I saw they had Mr. Di Matteo restrained and clearly in custody. I asked to talk to him as his attorney. They not only refused, but threatened to arrest me if I continued to attempt to protect his rights.

It was at this point that they told Mr. DiMatteo that they were going to arrest me also. That brings us to the tape that the DA is spreading all over the county, that of the statement of Mr. DiMatteo and my political future. If they played the entire tape for you, you would clearly hear that he was protecting me. Yes, protecting me. He did not want my involvement to be construed as any way involved with his situation. By saying what he said, he made it clear that I had no involvement, which I did not. He did not want to see me arrested also. I did not even know who he was until the dispensary issue was already over. I met him through the purchase of the gym, after which he asked me to be a business

advisor and consultant.

The district attorney knows full well that I was right all along. They had no case and they used excessive force throughout this case, when no force was necessary. He is now using the resources of the county to cover his mistake at my expense, his friend, the person he broke bread with, the person he came to for his own election, the person he trusted and confided in as a dedicated citizen serving his county.

In conclusion, he would like you to think my assistance of Mr. DiMatteo was to forward my political future. I will be 80 years old at the next election. I have just recovered from my second heart attack and my wife has promised to leave me if I get involved again. Draw your own conclusions on my so called political future. The statement by Mr. DiMatteo was made to protect me as the DA was threatening to arrest me for standing up to their force that day. I find the distinct attorneys' behavior despicable and not what is expected from our county's highest law enforcement officer.

Perhaps I will get involved in the next election.

Ted Long is one of Gino DiMatteo's attorneys.

Opinion: Skiing officials are wrong in denying Vonn's request

By David Trifunov, Global Post

Saying it’s written clearly in the rules – and clearly not understanding the spirit of the request – skiing’s international governing body on Saturday denied Lindsey Vonn’s request to compete against the men.

The American World Cup champion had asked FIS to let her compete in the men’s World Cup downhill skiing race later this month at Lake Louise in Alberta, Canada.

“The council respected Lindsey Vonn’s proposal to participate in men’s World Cup races and confirmed that one gender is not entitled to participate in races of the other and exceptions will not be made to the FIS rules,” an official statement said, according to AFP.

FIS, somehow, has been caught unprepared.

Golf has experimented with allowing women – Michelle Wie and Annika Sorenstam – lineup alongside the men. Danica Patrick continues to challenge men on the racetracks of NASCAR after a successful Indy Car career.

Countless others have already broken that stereotype – Billie Jean King in tennis and golf’s Babe Zaharias being the most famous. Heck, even ice hockey allowed men to blast frozen pucks at Manon Rheaume’s head in an NHL exhibition game.

Skiing should have seen this coming, you’d think. We’re moving past the 24-hours news cycle into an age where social media and smart phones make exchanging views and news instantaneous.

FIS said it considered the request and, not slighting Vonn’s skills or accomplishments, flatly denied it.

They could’ve said tried to say men’s racecourses are too dangerous for women (ignoring Vonn’s two Olympic medals and 53 World Cup wins) but FIS instead tried to say it’s just not in the rules.

Wait, isn’t racing against 40-odd other cars at 200 mph on a

concrete oval more dangerous?

Sure, she's looking for a new challenge after dominating the women's World Cup races these last few years. Vonn won the women's downhill championship from 2008 through 2010 and again last season, and has won the 2010 Winter Olympic downhill in Vancouver.

But this is more about, "Why not? What are we waiting for?"

Organizers of the Lake Louise race said they'd happily welcome Vonn. There's little danger for her there, anyway. She's won nine of her 26 World Cup downhill races on the resort's slopes.

"I saw it as a great opportunity to raise the profile of the sport by attracting interest from people who do not normally follow ski racing, particularly in North America," Alpine Canada president Max Gartner said.

"It would have been interesting to see how she stacked up against the best male racers in the world. Lake Louise is the perfect venue to have that comparison because Lindsey has as much experience on the mountain as many of the men have had.

What makes the whole situation worse, though, is that FIS invited Vonn to apply for a "forerunner" position.

Forerunners test the racecourse before the athletes compete for real.

Suggesting Vonn become a forerunner would be like Yahoo telling Marissa Mayer, "thanks, but our CEO position has been filled by a man, but maybe you want to work in our marketing department?"

Face it FIS, this is going to happen sooner rather than later.

Change your rules now, because the world is changing quickly around you.

Opinion: No one seems to care the world is getting safer

By Greg Jaffe, Washington Post

There’s one foreign policy fact that President Obama and Mitt Romney dare not mention this election season. No American general will speak of it. Nor will it displace the usual hot topics at Washington’s myriad foreign policy think tanks.

Measured by most relevant statistics, the United States — and the world — have never been safer.

Obama says terrorist networks remain the greatest threat to the United States. “We have to remain vigilant,” he warned recently. But global terrorism has barely touched most Americans in the decade since Sept. 11, 2001, with 238 U.S. citizens killed in terrorist attacks, mostly in war zones, according to the National Counterterrorism Center’s annual reports. By comparison, the Consumer Product Safety Commission found that 293Americans were crushed during the same stretch by falling furniture or televisions.

Beyond the United States, global statistics point undeniably toward progress in achieving greater peace and stability. There are fewer wars now than at any time in decades. The number of people killed as a result of armed violence worldwide is plunging as well — down to about 526,000 in 2011 from about 740,000 in 2008, according to the United Nations.

The candidates’ rhetoric, however, suggests that the globe is ablaze. “The world is dangerous, destructive, chaotic,” Romney said this summer in a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Nevada. Obama, though less apocalyptic than his

Republican challenger, routinely talks about the critical need for “tested and proven” leadership in a “world of new threats and new challenges.”

When it comes to foreign policy, the incentives on the campaign trail run toward ruin: Aspirants to public office praise the troops and preach the possibility of global doom.

That makes sense in the looking-glass world of campaigning. A candidate who talks about the declining threat to Americans can quickly appear foolish, weak or out of touch if there is an attack on the homeland or an unexpected setback abroad. In his speech at the Democratic National Convention, Obama proudly declared that “al-Qaeda is on the path to defeat.” Five days later, on the anniversary of 9/11, an attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi left four Americans dead, including the ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens.

Stevens’s death at the hands of a possible al-Qaeda affiliate forced the president to temper predictions of the group’s demise. More recently, he has even accused Romney of underestimating the threat posed by the terrorist group. “I’m glad that you recognize that al-Qaeda’s a threat because a few months ago, when you were asked what’s the biggest geopolitical threat facing America, you said Russia — not al-Qaeda,” Obama chided Romney at the last presidential debate.

In recent weeks, Romney has shifted his focus to the Iranian nuclear program. “Iran is the greatest national security threat we face,” he said during the final debate.

The news media, meanwhile, almost never take candidates to task for incorrect predictions of disaster. “The political penalty for being wrong about the threat or underestimating it is much more severe than the penalty for overstating it,” notes Peter Feaver, who was a senior official on the National Security Council under President George W. Bush.

Presidential candidates, eager to prove they have what it

takes to be the leader of the free world, talk about threats so they can cast themselves as potential saviors in an increasingly dangerous world. “It does not further anyone’s career to say we are safer,” said Micah Zenko, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations who uncovered the fatality statistics about terrorism and falling furniture.

Touting global peace may also be “distinctly un-American,” asserts Steven Pinker, a Harvard psychology professor and the author of “The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined.”

Pinker offers this theory: Americans want leaders who embrace the country’s role as the sole superpower and confront all adversaries. “A historical peculiarity of the U.S., compared to Europe, is a ‘culture of honor,’ in which a man has to defend himself against threats and insults,” Pinker said.

If he is correct, perhaps it makes sense for Romney to accuse Obama of conducting an “apology tour” of the Middle East that showed weakness and emboldened Iran, China, Russia and other U.S. rivals. Obama has scoffed at Romney’s characterization of his trip, but the challenger has persisted in trying to portray the president as uncomfortable with America’s military might.

The incentives to play down safety also extend to America’s military and intelligence officials, who must live on high alert, scanning the horizon for potential threats to American power. Because these officials know they will be blamed in the event of an unexpected attack, they are more prone to sound the alarm.

“My job as a war planner was to look for all the bad stuff,” said Janine Davidson, who until recently served as a senior civilian planner in the Pentagon. “Scanning for threats is what we get paid to do.”

Most top Pentagon officials say the statistics showing that

the world is safer are irrelevant and don't reflect the magnitude of the risks. The result is what Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has dubbed a "security paradox." The world may seem safer, Dempsey says, but the potential for global catastrophe has grown as the planet has become more interconnected and potential enemies have greater access to more powerful weapons and technology. Individuals with simple laptop computers can launch cyberattacks capable of crippling major corporations. Small countries and terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah, can buy precision-guided bombs that were previously the province of superpowers.

Not everyone buys Dempsey's paradox. The Europeans, who have slashed their defense budgets over the past two decades, don't seem especially worried about these threats. Some academic researchers also question Dempsey's logic.

"Should we really predict that the combined expertise and efforts of the American government, universities [and] corporations will be outsmarted for extended periods of time by some unemployed young men in Bulgaria?" asks Pinker, the Harvard professor.

What's missing is any serious effort to study whether the decline in state-on-state war, violence and terrorism around the world means that the United States can scale back its spending on defense. Each year the Rand Corp., a government-funded think tank, publishes dozens of reports on potential threats to the United States. Recent papers have focused on the Iranian nuclear challenge, the North Korean missile threat, the security of sea lanes in Asia and the rise of new military powers such as India and Brazil. The think tank has never explored the implications of a statistically safer world.

"Why can Smokey's fire-danger index go down but the nation's threat level not?" said Gregory Treverton, the director of

Rand’s Center for Global Risk and Security. “It’s a good question.”

There are tangible benefits to overspending on security: The United States is more prepared for a broader array of catastrophes than any other nation on Earth. It’s also possible that the government’s massive investment in defense — which exceeds the combined outlays of the nations with the next 10 largest defense budgets — is responsible for the current era of stability and the decline in deaths. This is the essence of President Ronald Reagan’s promise, reiterated in recent weeks by Romney, of “peace through strength.”

But the heavy investment also carries a cost. U.S. defense spending, adjusted for inflation, is at the highest level since World War II and is unlikely to decline substantially. Potential adversaries, such as China, could view the trillions that the United States is spending as a threat in itself, triggering an arms race — and a less-safe world.

For now, though, no one is rushing to discuss the implications of a world that has grown safer.

Letter: S. Lake Tahoe has enough on its plate

To the community,

If Mayor Claire Fortier is serious about the city honoring Marjorie Springmeyer and her Johnson brothers, then the city should build a city hall to honor them because years ago they gave 6 acres to the city for a hall that never was built.

At a council meeting the police chief reported that the school district has a problem with unexcused absences. Apparently there’s a deal between the district and city for cops to be truant officers. It’s ill advised because the city needs to focus on city affairs. The district should employ a truant officer. The city has enough on its plate.


Bill Crawford

Also, at the council meeting there was talk about recreation. The city and El Dorado County are talking about, if possible, blending city and county programs. A city committee has been created. Again, it’s ill advised because the city should focus on city problems, not distractions.

Also, the city is straining for the city recreation program to contribute to the city’s bottom line. Public recreation programs were never intended to be for profit. And where is the financial report on the private management of the ice rink?

There has been a blunder in the leasing of the city building across the street from the rec center. The city attorney was in the dark about the deal. It should be a given that all contracts should be sent to the city attorney before any contact is signed.

The city hasn’t an assistant city manger. So when the city manager isn’t available to manage, who will be in charge? There should be a city line and staff chart that shows the order of command.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

PS: John Steinbeck wrote that a cynic is one who sees things as they are, not as they ought to be. I agree.

Letter: McCall Realty appreciated by Bread & Broth

To the community,

Bread & Broth's Adopt A Day of Nourishment on Sept. 24 was generously sponsored by McCall Realty. An Adopt A Day sponsorship provides a nutritious evening meal to approximately 100 needy individuals in the South Lake Tahoe community.

To serve this number of meals, B&B has a regular crew of volunteers and generally four to five volunteers from the AAD sponsor who setup, serve and cleanup. The McCall Realty sponsor volunteer crew on Sept. 24 consisted of Cynde Cain, Beatte Miering, Jill Moffett and Mike Yagi. One of McCall's volunteers provided this comment regarding their sponsorship of an Adopt A Day "At McCall, we are committed to helping our community. The Bread & Broth program provides to those who are in need and it was our pleasure to sponsor this event and take part."

This was the first time McCall Realty has sponsored an Adopt A Day and is looking forward to continuing their support and involvement in this program.

Bread & Broth would not be able to continue this vital service

to the Lake Tahoe community without the support of businesses like McCall Realty and is very thankful for their monetary and sponsor volunteer crew contribution.

For information on any monetary donations or volunteering, contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: Thanks goes out from North Tahoe Arts

To the community,

On Oct. 21, 20 local artists volunteered their time and donated valuable pieces of their own art work all in an effort to raise money for local nonprofit, North Tahoe Arts located in Tahoe City. Attendees gathered at the Lodge at Lahontan Golf Course for A Fine Evening with Fine Art. The event raised more than $5,000.

Thanks to our local artists who donated a piece of art with a minimum value of $400 and who continue year after year to support North Tahoe Arts, this first of its kind fundraising event for NTA was a huge success. Everyone involved had a great time and felt good about supporting the arts in our community.

North Tahoe Arts has been a prominent promoter and supporter of arts in the North Lake Tahoe Communities for over 24 years.

All proceeds from the event support various art programs like ARTour in July, Kids Art Camps happening each summer and numerous Art Openings in the Galleries throughout the year.

The North Tahoe Arts' ARTisan Shop is filled with extraordinary works of art from regional artists, both nationally-recognized and emerging, with a wide variety of mediums represented.

Tickets were $300 per couple, and each couple left with a piece of artwork with a minimum value of $400. Guests spent time talking with the local selected artist and learning about his/her background while enjoying live music, appetizers and wine. Featured local artists included artwork from various mediums such as watercolor paintings, sculptures; photography, wood and much more.

A huge thank you goes to the artists who so generously gave: Susie Alexander, Jenny Antonucci, Tom Beebe, George Eisert, Carol David, Jessica Hall, Jane Jenny, Pamela Hunt Lee, Cathy McClellend, Geoff McGilvray, Jacob Morrison, Victoria Murphy, Ann Nichols, Eva Nichols, Heidi Reeves, Toni Rockwell, Andy Skaff, Jay Thelin, Loreen Thomas and Greg Zirbel.

Kellie Cutler, executive director North Tahoe Arts

Opinion: California doesn't need more taxes – no on Prop. 30

By Michelle Steel

Proposition 30, on the Nov. 6 ballot, will ask Californians to raise their own taxes by about $6.6 billion to fund California's bloated government. Proposition 30 won't fix our schools or stabilize the state budget; it will increase tax

volatility and leave our children facing more of the same.

Proposition 30 will raise income tax rates by one to three percentage points on Californians who earn $250,000 or more, for seven years – making our top income tax rate the highest in the nation. It will also raise the state sales tax, currently the highest in the nation, by one quarter of a cent, for four years.

The rationale for the higher taxes is that top-earning Californians should "pay their fair share." Class warfare may be a good political tactic, but it is bad policy. Proposition 30 will make life for Californians more difficult across the wealth spectrum.

The state Franchise Tax Board data released earlier this year that shows that from 2007-09, the income of California's top 1 percent declined the most of any income class. Yet, they continued to account for over 35 percent of state tax revenue, down from about 50 percent in 2007, and now their contributions hover around 40 percent. A recent study by the California Budget Project says this group would account for 81.2 percent of Prop. 30 funds. While the CBP says that's a good thing, the Legislative Analyst's Office says these revenues "could be subject to multibillion dollar swings" because of economic fluctuations that affect investments much more than wages and salaries.

The lowest-income earners in California pay little to no income tax, but they pay a lot of sales tax. According to the Board of Equalization, the bottom fifth of earners spend 82 percent of their income on taxable purchases. While the tax increase on the bottom 20 percent will be small in comparison with the top 1 percent, it won't be insignificant at a time when every penny counts.

These tax hikes will hit everybody, and they will hurt the economy. After all, an economy is made up of the business

owners, employees, and consumers who participate in it. When these individuals have fewer dollars in their wallets, it becomes harder to grow a business; to get transportation to work or to buy food, clothing, and everything else we need.

With less production, less consumption, and less capital with which to increase either of those, there is less economic growth and less work available for those who need it.

Supporters of Proposition 30 claim that the money taken out of our pockets will go to schools. The supporters' rebuttal to arguments against Proposition 30 included in the official Voter Guide says, "Proposition 30 provides billions in additional funds to reduce class sizes and restore programs like art and PE." But there is no evidence that classrooms will benefit from the increase in funds.

Even the California School Boards Association – a supporter of Proposition 30 – has said it wants "to make it clear to the public that the governor's initiative does not provide new funding for schools. Instead, it bolsters the General Fund with new revenue." The money that will go to schools, because of the California Constitution's minimum-funding requirement for education, will be spent to restore "some of the funds already owed to schools," not increased services for students.

The higher taxes in Propositin 30 will hurt the economy by taking more from Californians, making it more difficult to save for the future, to create jobs, or to find them. It will increase state spending without increasing student performance. And it will aggravate the revenue volatility that has plagued state budgeting for decades.

Please join me in voting no on Proposition 30.

Michelle Steel is vice chairwoman of the California Board of Equalization. This column first ran in the Orange County Register.