

Opinion: Know what you are agreeing to

By Daniel Rozansky

There is a cost to “free.” There is an additional cost to speed. It’s called privacy.

Each day we pay these costs to download movies, music and buy things on phones, tablets or computers. We agree to terms of service without thinking about the implications. But every day there’s a new rash of lawsuits over privacy rights. What’s the solution? Content providers could create more succinct terms of service to benefit consumers. As a byproduct, they will benefit, too.

The speed-for-privacy trade-off begins with free websites like Google, Yahoo, YouTube and Pandora. It continues with online stores that sift through the clutter to speed up shopping and direct us to products we might like based on where we live, shopping history and website visits.

But what are the websites and content providers getting in return for providing us with this useful information? Important information about us.

Privacy is a commodity. Your personal information is being bought and sold with your approval when you agree to the terms of service. Does anyone bother to read Facebook’s or iTunes’ terms of service or take the time to understand what they are agreeing to? Parents, do you have any idea what personal information your children are giving up? Probably not. That’s why websites and other online service providers should voluntarily agree to shorter terms-of-service language so consumers can identify what important privacy and other rights they give away when clicking “I Agree.”

First, an abbreviated terms of service should clearly state the information being collected. As information available through technology extends further and further past such simple things as your name and address, the privacy becomes less apparent. For example, the GPS technology that maps your route home also can track where you are right now or log where you go every day. Each time you visit a website, content providers collect “cookies” coupled with your IP address to create a log of your online behavior.

Daniel Rozansky is a partner at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP in Los Angeles.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Recognizing the efforts to upgrade STHS

Publisher's note: *The following letter was sent to Lake Tahoe Unified School District Superintendent Jim Tarwater and is published with permission.*

Dear Dr. Tarwater:

My wife and I were among the many proud people you addressed at the grand opening of the Tahoe Arts & Design Academy.

We've lived here over 10 years, have one grandchild presently attending high school and another who soon will be. And though I earn my living as a writer and creative professional, words and ideas to express what you have created do not come easily.

I'm aware of the numerous board, staff and team members that worked together to make this dream become a reality. And I'm

aware of the thicket of governmental issues you all had to wade through to keep this project on course, on time and on budget.

But at the end of the day, you were the driving force behind it. You were the agent of change. And you are the one who, to your eternal credit, re-opened the Meyers Elementary School and did so in record time. That was when I first became aware of your propensity toward pragmatic and your focus on creating positive change.

What South Tahoe High is now offering is an opportunity of immeasurable proportions.

It's an enlightened portal to the real world. A portal capable of opening minds, inspiring lives and getting students excited about learning. And it's all encased in a stimulating environment positively charged with possibilities.

For those interested in the creative arts, the new theater and its ancillary elements are nothing short of amazing. As someone who has spent endless hours, days and weeks in film production and post-production around the country and the world, I'm thrilled to have this creative learning center in our backyard.

At a time when our local economy is so difficult, with homes being foreclosed and jobs becoming scarcer, it was wonderful to be in a setting that was so upbeat, and hopeful.

We now have a campus that offers our kids the very best and challenges them to take it and make the most of themselves. Whichever direction they want to head, it's all here and it's state of the art. I only hope they realize what a valuable asset they have before them.

Thanks again for all that you and your team did. You have created far more than a series of structures. You have created a mind opening, life changing opportunity for our kids and an

exciting new reason to be proud to call South Lake Tahoe home.

Sincerely,

James Barr, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Finding the truth to myths circulating in S. Tahoe

Publisher's note: The following letter was submitted by South Lake Tahoe resident Mary Ann Klein to the City Council prior to the Oct. 18 budget hearing. Lake Tahoe News is publishing it with her permission.

To all those sharing my concern about the proposed layoffs and privatization initiatives by the South Lake Tahoe City Council:

I met in person with our city manager, Tony O'Rourke and our mayor pro tem, Claire Fortier. I have been corresponding daily with Tony since Oct. 10. Claire has been on vacation for 10 days and was just now responding to my letters. I asked my husband to accompany me as well. We attempted to clarify several issues for over two hours. I do not have political acumen; I was nervous and had lost a night of sleep. Despite this, Tony and Claire were attentive. They put me at ease and heard me out completely. The discussion took a few bunny trails, but overall the discussion was very focused.

1) There were questions about Tony O'Rourke's background, motives and his hiring process. For the record:

- Tony O'Rourke has absolutely no affiliation with any type of mega-enterprise such as "CNL Financial Group", CNL Lifestyle

properties, or ski resort conglomerates. He had no clue what I was talking about.

- Tony has shown acceptable tenure with all his city manager jobs, including 14 years in Beaver Creek, seven in Coral Springs, five in Richardson, Texas, three in Dallas and one in Tallahassee. Note the average tenure for city managers is four years nationally.
- Tony was selected by all nine members of the Beaver Creek Resort Co. He was selected by all four [South Lake Tahoe] council members, with Bill Crawford choosing to abstain from the entire process.
- He did have a few litigation issues in his previous jobs that were summarily dismissed.

I wasted a lot of time checking out an unsigned link which implied Tony had some sort of criminal intent, researching the actual facts and then wasting more time questioning Tony, to confirm he has no agenda but to do what the City Council hired him to do. This "link" also contained a very twisted analysis of the city budget reserves. Both Tony and Claire explained the erroneous figures. I suspect a certain person authored this slanderous document; who no longer lives in this state.

2) For the record, the city is not considering a \$4.25 million property purchase. Claire explained there has been a plan in place for a long time to improve public access to the lake on the California side from the casino corridor westward. The California Tahoe Conservancy was approached about an existing beachfront Stateline Avenue property on the California side, but the Conservancy had no money. The Conservancy has in the past bought property and then given it to the city for the environmental and capital improvement projects. There is no funding for operational expenses with this venue. It was a no go because there were no dollars. In general, the city owns property, but did not try to buy this property with city

funds.

3) A very legitimate suggestion was submitted to end future retiree benefits, offer early retirement incentives, limit frivolous spending (Christmas trees, signage improvements, etc.), reduce training and conference expenses, consider salary cuts and wage adjustments to preserve positions scheduled to be terminated, and have a regard for old-fashioned, committed, public service. This writer asked a very profound question: Where does the entitlement "give me more" end? Claire discussed what she calls, "The corruption of the attitude of service" in this country. There are cities which owe employee entitlements which exceed their budgets; no manner of drastic wage adjustments can prevent them from going bankrupt since the entire budget is owed to retirees. It gave me pause.

Tony O'Rourke updated what is already being done by the city: "First, we are requesting our employees to contribute to their pension and health care plans. These contributions represent \$1.5 million in savings to the city. To date all senior managers have committed to do this, as well as all fire personnel. The other city employees covered by collective bargaining units are also on the verge of making this commitment. Second, lifetime health care benefits for retirees cost the city \$2 million a year. The city has already eliminated this benefit for anyone hired after 2008. Third, the city has over the last several years offered early retiree incentives. The key to them is to vacate the retiree position to create long-term savings. We will continue to offer this program. Fourth, expenditures like a decorated holiday tree are easy to criticize unless you forget we are a tourist-based destination and economy and guests want to see these kinds of entry statements and amenities. Believe me, \$7,000 is not the reason for our \$5.2 million projected deficit. Fifth, we have significantly reduced training and conference expenses. For example, I have not gone anywhere over the past year.

Nonetheless, some training is vital to enhance staff or City Council skills and knowledge. Can you imagine teachers never upgrading their abilities? Finally, the funds earmarked for signage improvements ranks with infrastructure improvements as the number one public priority based on the December 2010 Citizens Survey. People in this community are tired of crumbling roads, no sidewalks, insufficient bikeways, no streetlights and a blighted aesthetic appearance. Hence, the City Council's \$5 million commitment to roads and capital improvements this fiscal year and funds to assist businesses clean up of our cluttered aesthetic environment. These are the priorities of the community and the city is committed to address them. Thank you for your ideas and interest in the community."

4) Suggestions about increasing motel/hotel TOT are being implemented. A 2 percent increase to the city, as opposed to the visitors' bureau, is planned for 2013.

5) The redevelopment litigation, when settled "would not have any affect on budget balancing" (Tony O'Rourke) It is my understanding if the litigation went in the city's favor, the monies would be applied to the city's projected \$5.2 million deficit.

6) I, Mary Ann Klein, implored the city manager and the mayor pro tem to once more, give careful consideration to the proposed layoffs. The concept of a "community family" being torn asunder was received thoughtfully by Claire. It is the graceful interface our present staff provides between a warm family community (where many have no other family) and social destitution. Apparently of the 21 jobs being considered for termination, four have been saved. Which jobs were not discussed.

The discussion at this point felt painful for everybody at the table. The analogy given was something like: If there is a sinking ship with 500 people and only enough life boats for

40, who is to say which go and which do not? The point is, the ship is sinking. There are many hard questions and no easy answers.

6) Several people were skeptical about the public "survey" on which the council is relying to set priorities. The methodology involved a random sampling, statistically based. Apparently 1,200 people were queried in this random sample. The survey can be answered online on the South Lake Tahoe website.

7) A question was asked by several writers about why the original attempt to privatize the golf course failed? Claire Fortier could not remember the details from 10 plus years ago, but it involved Knox Johnson being concerned that the community was not being served appropriately, or something like that. The ice rink is faring well, financially, thus far. It is reasonable for the public to be skeptical about privatization when we have only 60 days so far by which to judge the asset of the ice rink. Other cities have employed very creative ideas which involve variations on privatization. I think Claire referenced Half Moon Bay, but I can't remember how they problem solved.

Claire Fortier, our mayor pro tem, encouraged me to read an article in the current issue of Vanity Fair entitled Will California Sink the US? I have only had a chance to scan it, but already I feel I have a broader perspective of what we must face in our city. She commended our "state of the art high school," despite the negative economic vortex, and other amazing community initiatives. Tony crunched the numbers with experience and is steadfast about what has to be done else we go broke, but I feel Claire lent compassion for the individual suffering and faltering morale down here at the grass roots.

Respectfully submitted and with gratitude for our dedicated city employees.

Thanks and God bless you,

Mary Ann Klein, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Time to honor Girl Scouts with special license plate

Dear Elected Officials,

This letter is an urgent request for your administration to recognize the Girl Scouts of the USA as a preeminent leadership development organization for girls with over 3.7 million members throughout the United States, including U.S. territories, and more than 90 countries through USA Girl Scouts Overseas.



The 100th anniversary of founder Juliette “Gordon” Low’s organization is being celebrated extensively from: Opening Ceremonies at their 52nd Convention in Houston (Nov. 8-13); the California Girl Scouts of the Greater Los Angeles Organization and their Jan. 2, 2012, Rose Bowl Parade Float along with weeklong celebrations recognizing previous and current Gold Award Winning Members of the Organization; the H.R. 621: Girl Scouts USA Centennial Commemorative Coin Act Directing the secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue up to 350,000 \$1 coins in commemoration of the centennial of the founding of the Girl Scouts of the USA; and ad infinity nationwide activities and events.

Special interest license plates are created by an act of the state's Legislature to support a particular group or cause. The time has come for you, California's officially elected representatives by working together to issue a direct fiat of the California Legislature to accomplish writing, approving, getting the governor's signature, printing and producing this special interest license plate in commemoration of the centennial celebration of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (March 12, 1912, to March 12, 2012).

Right now you have that opportunity, that power, that clout, the right contacts, and the special privilege of making this happen – thereby putting your stamp of approval by officially honoring and recognizing the Girls Scouts of America and their world renowned organization that continues to build girls of courage, confidence and character who notably make our world a better place.

Please “get busy” Californian's and get this project accomplished.

Girl Scouts of America is an icon in our country's history. This is noteworthy, doable, and in “your corner” today.

Ultimately, my vision is to have the opportunity to invite the honorable Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. (with perhaps Brownie Troop 123 from South Lake Tahoe) to recognize your dedication and diligence in getting this assignment accomplished as he proudly stands by the Girl Scouts of the USA Rose Bowl Parade float on Jan. 2, 2012, with the newly designed and proudly revered Centennial Commemorative Girl Scouts of the USA license plate for the “great state” of California!

Kindly work together ... talk about this ... blog it ... Facebook it ... promote it and get the job accomplished. There's a whole bunch of young, old, boys, girls, men, and women counting on YOU to get this project accomplished.

What do I need to do next? Somebody, please acknowledge this

and advise me what's next. Thank you in advance for "doing the right thing."

Linda Kabealo, Girl Scout volunteer in South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Soldier teaches lessons with his death

Publisher's note: *The following is what Rep. Tom McClintock read on the House floor Oct. 13.*

Mr. Speaker:

Forty years from now, a beloved high school history teacher at [South] Tahoe High School named Garrett Fant should be celebrating his retirement surrounded by generations of his students and by his children and grandchildren. They would have all told affectionate stories of how Mr. Fant inspired them or helped them and wished him a happy and well-deserved retirement.

Sadly, history has willed a different story. Army Specialist Garrett Fant instead returned to South Lake Tahoe last week as a fallen hero at the age of 21. This young man sacrificed all those years, all those memories, all those pleasures – all that life – in the service of his country.

He loved the Army and had a plan for his life – he'd serve his country as a soldier for twenty years, and then he'd come home and serve his community as a high school history teacher.



Tom McClintock

From everything I've learned about Garrett Fant, he would have made a great history teacher. His mother told a reporter that "His thought was that high school was the last stop for kids, and he wanted to influence people."

He would have been a great family man. His older brother remembers looking up to Garrett as if Garrett were the older brother. Knowing full well the dangers that surrounded him in Afghanistan, his foremost attention went to reassuring his family that he was safe and secure. His mother said, "He always tried to protect me from the dangers of being over there ... He was just someone that if you were his family or his friends – or his country – he gave you his all and loved you with everything."

Above all, Garrett Fant wanted to be a soldier. His brother tried to get him to enlist with him in the Navy, but Garrett would have none of that. He was all Army and had known from the time he was a little boy that's what he most wanted to do.

On Facebook, he listed his occupation as "grunt," telling friends, "You can't spell 'Infantry' without 'Fant.'" He was the top marksman in his class of 1,000.

I wish I'd have known him. I wish my grandchildren might one day have been in his high school history class.

Instead, Army Specialist Garrett Fant takes his place in history, among nine generations of American heroes who sacrificed all those precious years to protect those who couldn't protect themselves, to stand up to the bullies of the

world, "to proclaim liberty throughout all the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof."

In his farewell address at West Point, General Douglas MacArthur turned his attention to fallen heroes like Army Specialist Garrett Fant and with searing insight observed, "Their story is known to all of you. It is the story of the American man at arms. My estimate of him was formed on the battlefields many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded him then, as I regard him now, as one of the world's noblest figures; not only as one of the finest military characters, but also as one of the most stainless.

"His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me, or from any other man...

"But when I think of his patience under adversity, of his courage under fire, and of his modesty in victory, I am filled with an emotion of admiration I cannot put into words. He belongs to history as furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism. He belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom."

And so Garrett Fant became a teacher after all. As Shakespeare said, "This story shall the good man teach his son."

Succeeding generations of students at South Tahoe High School, and also at Valley Oak High School in American Canyon, which Garrett also attended, will know his story. Every Memorial Day in his home town, his name will be read with a special pride that his friends and neighbors will share. For centuries to come, strangers will pass by his honored grave, adorned with flags and flowers and note the few years he had and the sacrifice he made, and be humbled by it and perhaps inspired by it to become better citizens. No history teacher can do

more than that.

To his grieving family, on behalf of a grateful nation, I can only say that you do not mourn alone. Your pride in Garrett is shared by your community, your country, and by many history teachers who will tell his story to the latest American generation.

Tom McClintock represents the California side of Lake Tahoe in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Opinion: S. Tahoe's budget is not the whole truth

To the community,

I have read City Manager Tony O'Rourke's letter to the community on the budget. He projects a deficit of \$5.2 million and average deficits of \$3.4 million "between fiscal years 2012 and 2016." The problem with the numbers is they can't be verified. And there are lies, damned lies, and statistics.

The city manager said the numbers "showed the need to reduce city expenses to live within our means." To do so, he proposes a number of moves. He would eliminate 26 city employees. He would bid out city services.



Bill Crawford

But who knows other than the city manager which 26 city employees will be cut. Will he on a whim swing his ax? On bidding out city services, will the city go bid shopping? If so, the end result will be bad news. And who will have oversight on the contracts? Who will see that the contracts aren't one-sided in favor of the contractor, or that the contracts aren't breached? The city attorney?

And presently, the contract on the ice area is in a muddle because the city wants to turn Measure S non-taxable bonds into taxable bonds. It can't be done without voter approval because in 2000 voters approved non-taxable bonds.

Part of projected deficits is a line item of \$1.8 million that will go to the state to keep "city development activities" alive. What activities? The \$1.8million needn't be in the budget. It's padding to inflate the deficit. It's there to "justify" swinging the ax and bidding out more city services. It is dishonest.

Finally, if the projected savings don't eliminate the projected deficits, what will the city do? The city manager hasn't a clue because he's flying by the seat of his pants upside down. He is a stunt pilot. The five years this and the five that is smoke and mirrors, pure poppycock.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Sense of community

means giving back as a company

By Stephanie Grigsby

Anthony J. D'Angelo wrote, "Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community." I have been a member of the Lake Tahoe community for over 11 years, but still I find myself astounded at the passion and efforts our members put into making Tahoe an enjoyable, successful, vibrant city. Our area is full of people who inspire me with their constant striving to make Tahoe a better place for us all.

This sense of spirit is no more evident than within the walls of my office. I work as a principal at Design Workshop, an international landscape architecture and land-planning firm with an office right here in Tahoe. I feel compelled to recognize the extraordinary dedication and talents of my co-workers, and how their sense of community betterment has impacted our firm. I am continually impressed by the quality of design they produce but also by the fact that each person donates his or her time and talents to give back to the area that has fostered and supported our business success.



Stephanie
Grigsby

This team understands the important need to sustainably improve the quality of life for its neighbors and friends and to provide an enriching experience to those who visit the area. Whether we are in the office, working on client

projects, or volunteering our time to initiatives such as alternative transportation improvements, we are committed to the community.

Ben Fish, operations manager at Design Workshop, also serves as board member and trails director of the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association. He has a passion for making Tahoe a year-round destination for adventure seekers who want to explore the city's natural environment by bike. This spring, he brought together over 40 people, including land managers and resort operators, for a three-day workshop put on by the International Mountain Bike Association to focus on techniques to build and design trails that benefit communities socially and economically.

Steve Noll, my fellow principal at Design Workshop, focuses on volunteer efforts that advance alternative modes of transportation and recreational improvements in Tahoe. Noll assisted in the initial design for the field renovations of the South Tahoe track and soccer field and is a charter member of the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, promoting the development and maintenance of bike lanes and paths.

Micah Langdon, an associate at Design Workshop, organized a volunteer effort to design and construct a kids' garden at Western Nevada College's Child Development Center, using tires that had been dumped in vacant lands. His son and schoolmates learn how to help plants grow while the greater community enjoys a cleaner landscape.

In addition to these specific efforts, many members of the Lake Tahoe team of Design Workshop regularly spend time serving on boards, planning committees and business cooperatives as well as contributing to the community arts and organizations.

Over the past 11 years I have been fortunate not only to work on important projects that better our community, such as the

South Tahoe Greenway, but to also work alongside a team of talented individuals who are committed to bettering Tahoe. This spirit of dedication is the reason I enjoy coming into my office every day. I work directly with a number of these neighborhood-oriented members, but I am delighted that there are numerous others whom I read about or see in action, cleaning beaches or building trails. So here is a big thank you to my colleagues at Design Workshop and to the many residents of Lake Tahoe who continually work to make our city great.

Stephanie Grigsby is a principal at Design Workshop.

Opinion: Time to take action against golf course proposal

To the community,

We are still fighting the battle to stop the Lake Tahoe Golf Course from taking over the Washoe Meadows State Park. A postcard was created by the Washoe Meadows Community that many are filling out and submitting, but it is hoped many more can be reached through the media.

If you support the opposition to the Lake Tahoe Golf Course expansion into Washoe Meadows State Park, please reply by email to BrutHilda@att.net. Simply enter your name and address. This will serve as an electronic submission of your signature. Please put in the subject line "Opposition to Alternative 2." Also feel free to provide additional comments. The deadline to respond is Oct. 16.

Key points in opposing Alternative 2 are as follows:

1. Much of the golf course would be moved to sensitive land doubling the length adjacent to the river
2. It would course both sides of the river, limiting access by wildlife
3. Wildlife habitat and migration paths would be fragmented
4. More human-wildlife (bear) encounters would be created resulting in destruction of the bears
5. Hikers, snowshoers, cross country skiers, wildlife watchers, horseback riders would have restricted access
6. It would create more pollution into Lake Tahoe
7. Golf is on the decline
8. Funding is not defined as to what would be the burden on the taxpayers.

For more information, go online.

Please pass this on to people who you know will support this campaign.

The next meeting for "certification" of Alternative 2 is Oct. 21, 9am at the Lake Tahoe Golf Course.

It is important that anyone who can attend do so.

Thank you for your support.

Patti Handal, Meyers

Opinion: TRPA thankful for successful community event

To the community,

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency would like to thank the many organizations and individuals that contributed to our recent Community Appreciation and Lake Spirit Award event including:

- Members of the community for joining us in celebrating all those who work to protect Lake Tahoe;
- Red Hut for donating the ice cream for our ice cream social;
- SWEP and Tahoe RCD for their fun kid-activity booths;
- Bison, for performing great bluegrass music;
- Lake Tahoe Catering for the delicious barbecue;
- Our Lake Spirit Award winners, Ruth Dworsky and Mahmood Azad for their incredible contribution to protecting Lake Tahoe and our Basin environment;
- Our Lake Spirit Award judges;
- TRPA staff.

More than 100 people joined us in honoring all the individuals in our community who work to preserve this special place. As proud members of this community, we appreciate these collective actions to protect Lake Tahoe for future generations.

Kristi Boosman, PIO Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Opinion: It's time the U.S. taught Iran a lesson with new warfare

To the community,

Let me preface this opinion with this statement: I believe that teaching history to our future presidents is a waste of time. "History repeats itself" because it is taught to do so. Let's break that cycle. What is about to happen tomorrow is infinitely more important than what happened (under totally different circumstances) in the past.

In the 16th, 17th, 18th centuries, England ruled the world because she had a navy that said so. Then Napoleon said that god was on the side of the biggest cannon. He was right until he got to Russia.

During the First World War, numbers counted until the tank was invented. Hitler believed that and got to within 80 miles of Moscow before several other factors shot him down.

During the Second World War, cracking the Japanese radio codes and superior air power and production capabilities made the difference.

So ask yourself this: Who controls the world today? China does – and without a shot being fired. Can you imagine what would happen if China suddenly decided to stop all exports?

Wars of tomorrow will not be fought with ships, guns, tanks, material wealth, or even air power. Communication is the new name of the game and in my opinion should have been employed

in Iraq some eight year ago.

Tuesday's incident with Iran trying to terrorize Washington, D.C., demands immediate counter offensive action. I suggest a total isolation of the country of Iran from the rest of the world until they come to the realization that they cannot control us. They must submit to being a partner in the world around them.

That means a total isolation of the nation – all roads leading in and out are closed by conventional tactics – all communication between individuals, politicians, government agencies, and commerce will be blocked by electronic means. I'm convinced that we can do that.

When they get hungry, or when their commercial interests wield enough power, they can send an emissary by horseback to inform the world that they are finally willing to cooperate.

Then let the U.S. celebrate for a significant victory without a shot being fired. And forget Connecticut – that's history!

Jim Hildinger, South Lake Tahoe