

Take time to remember what Memorial Day is really about

War is one of those seemingly necessary evils in our society.

Today – Memorial Day – is when we pause to remember those who lost their lives fighting for the United States. It's a day to put aside our political differences and personal beliefs that led to the deaths of these men and women.

These lost lives are no less significant because we don't agree on what led to their deaths. They died fighting for what our government deemed a worthy cause.

Don't blame the soldiers for the job they do. If you disagree with the battles being fought, then deal with the lawmakers. The soldiers who keep marching, keep training, keep fighting – they deserve our respect and our thanks.



Memorial for
South Lake
Tahoe men who
died in the
Iraq conflict.
Photo/LTN file

Lake Tahoe News takes this time to salute those who given the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The ones who died deserve a moment of silence today – and more

often. Take a moment from your long weekend and remember that many people have an empty chair at the picnic table today.

Go to one of the many ceremonies at the cemeteries and military halls. Place a flag on the marker of a grave of a soldier. Toast to those who are not with us.

Hardly any community has not been touched by the death of a soldier – including Lake Tahoe.

Some died in combat. Some died in training.

Those who aren't listed are the ones who took their lives because they did not know any other way to conquer the demons they were ravaged by.

Not all of those who died volunteered to serve in one of the branches of the military. But those who join one of the branches today do so willingly. That is to be commended – especially in the world we live in today. Most of these people will see a tour of duty overseas in hostile areas where U.S. citizens are not always welcome.

It is naïve to think the numbers of military deaths will ever be nil. But we must not ever forget those who have died fighting to make the world a better, safer, more livable place.

The *Washington Post* keeps a running list of those who have died in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. While news sites seem to keep these conflicts off the front pages, they are always front and center for the thousands of families who worry each day that the dreaded call will come saying their loved one has died.

We owe it those who have died to not forget them.

Below is a list of the wars, or whatever the government chose to call it, where the U.S. engaged in combat, the dates of the struggle, and the number of people the country lost in the

fight. Of course, the numbers in the last two categories keeps growing.

Conflict	Dates of	Number of casualties
War of Independence		
1775-1783		25,000
Northwest Indian War	1785-1795	
		1,221
Quasi-War		
1798-1800		20
Barbary Wars		
1801-1815		35
War of 1812		
1812-1815		20,000
1st Seminole War		
1817-1818		30
2nd Seminole War		
1835-1842		1,500
Mexican-American War		
1846-1848		13,283
3rd Seminole War		

1855-1858

26

Civil War

1861-1865

623,026

Indian Wars

1865-1898

919

Spanish-American War

1898

2,446

Philippine War

1898-1902

4,196

Boxer Rebellion

1900-1901

37

Mexican Revolution

1914-1919

35

Haiti Occupation

1915-1934

146

World War 1

1917 - 1918

116,708

World War 2

1941 - 1945

407,316

Korean War
1950-1953
36,914

Vietnam
War
1964-1973
58,169

El Salvador
1980-1992
20

Beirut
1982-1984
266

Persian Gulf "Support"
1987-1988
39

Invasion of Grenada
1983
19

Invasion of Panama
1989
40

Persian Gulf War
1991
269

Somalia
1992-1993
43

Bosnia

12

Afghanistan

2002-2011

1,571

Iraq

2003-2011

4,442.

Opinion: California should look at 4-day school week

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the May 8, 2011, Los Angeles Times.*

The general assumption is that when it comes to educating American kids, more is more. Longer school hours. Saturday school. Summer school. Yet more than 120 school districts across the nation are finding that less can also be more – less being fewer days spent in school.

The four-day school week has been around for decades, according to the National Council of State Legislatures, but it's quietly spreading as a money-saving tactic, especially after several states – including Montana, Georgia, Missouri and Washington – passed legislation allowing school districts to make the switch as long as they lengthened each school day so that there was no reduction in instructional hours. Teachers work just as much under the four-day plan, so there are no cost reductions there, but schools have saved from 2

percent to 9 percent, according to a 2009 report by the Center for Education Policy at the University of Southern Maine. Utility and transportation costs are lower; there's no need to serve a fifth lunch each week; even the reduced wear and tear on buildings has helped.

Here's the surprise: There appear to be educational benefits as well. Absenteeism among students and teachers in these schools has fallen appreciably, the report said. (As a result, schools also paid less money for substitute teachers.) Students reported feeling more positive about school. Dropout rates fell, students behaved better and participation in extracurricular activities rose. Parents of young children often objected to the change because of the need to find childcare, but once the programs were in place, the report said, they often found that it was easier to find care for one full day a week than for several partial days. Test scores didn't fall, and in many cases, they rose.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Best chances for staying out of an ER

By Warren Withers

There may be no better place on Earth than Lake Tahoe – especially in the summer. As proof, more than 1.5 million visitors make their way to the South Shore of Lake Tahoe each year, and locals by the thousands take advantage of the superb surroundings.

Most who enjoy Tahoe return home with only good memories.

However, a few find that they need urgent medical services during their visit. The following advice will help you avoid the most common ailments seen in the emergency department, so you can stay safe and have fun this summer.



Warren Withers

Avoid slips and falls. Slips and falls while boating, camping and hiking are common. Taking extra care when entering and exiting boats from the dock can help you avoid many dockside injuries. Get an extra hand from a friend, especially if it's been a while since you've been on a boat.

Protect your feet. As harmless as it may seem, going barefoot at a campground is risky. We see many happy campers become less so after they step on pine cones or other sharp objects while not wearing shoes.

Protect your ankles. Wearing shoes or boots with proper support can help you avoid ankle sprains when you venture out on the trail.

Protect your skin. Sunburns can ruin your vacation. People forget that at high altitudes (the lake is at about 6,225 feet), sunburns happen much more quickly than at sea level. Proper application of sunscreen: use of broad-rimmed hats and moderating time spent directly in the sun will keep your skin healthy and reduce your risk for skin cancer.

Stay safe in the water. What would Tahoe be without water sports? To stay safe in the water, wear a U.S. Coast Guard-

approved life vest. It's a simple thing and if you're going to be out on any sort of watercraft, it could save your life. And it's the law. Swimming is fun and the water is refreshing, but extended exposure to Tahoe's cold water can result in hypothermia, which makes swimming difficult. If you are taking up a new sport, like kayaking or paddle boarding, take a lesson. You'll be far safer if you understand the basics of the sport.

Consider the altitude. The beauty and grandeur of Tahoe is spectacular, but if you have a medical condition, especially one that involves your lungs or heart, discuss your trip with your doctor before you visit. Be sure to mention the altitude level. With proper preparation, most people can enjoy a trip to Tahoe.

Beware of reptiles, arthropods and animals. Rattlesnakes and scorpions are very rare in the Tahoe basin, but do exist on the slopes and valleys outside of the basin. Black bears are generally placid animals that mind their own business unless provoked. Food must be carefully stored when backpacking and at campsites – use the provided bear boxes – as bears will wander into busy campgrounds in search of food.

Consume alcohol in moderation. Boating while intoxicated is dangerous and illegal, as is operating any vehicle – even bicycles – while under the influence. Consume alcohol in moderation, especially at high altitudes, and do not drink and drive.

Enjoy Tahoe – we wish you happy memories and experiences. If you find yourself in need of medical care, know that Barton Memorial Hospital, with our board-certified staff, 24/7 emergency department and Barton Urgent Care will provide you and your family excellent care.

Warren Withers is co-director and head physician of the Barton Memorial Hospital Emergency Department.

Opinion: Why Chief Michael is LTCC's distinguished alumni

By Melonie Guttry

On behalf of the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation I am happy to announce that the third LTCC Distinguished Alumni is Fire Chief Jeff Michael.

This nomination was submitted by Virginia Boyar, so a huge thank you to Virginia for taking the time to make this nomination possible. In addition, I would like to thank all LTCC employees who submitted nominations. The Alumni Association committee had excellent nominations this year, which made the decision very difficult.



Jeff Michael

Michael obtained a fire science certificate of achievement from LTCC in 1981. He has served as the fire chief of Lake Valley Fire District since 2005 and has been with the district since 1979. Previously, he had positions of battalion chief, captain, engineer and firefighter. Chief Michael was recently awarded:

o Chief of the Year, Lake Tahoe Basin Regional Chiefs Association

- o Certified Chief Officer with the California State Fire Marshal
- o Appointed by California and Nevada Governors to the California Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission
- o Recognition award for the Angora Fire, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
- o Recognition award for the Angora Fire, California Interagency Incident Management Team
- o Special recognition after the Angora Fire from California State Fire Marshal Kate Dargan, for "An outstanding job of leading his troops through a battle and his community through a recovery."

Michael has been instrumental in the development of Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy and continues to be actively involved. He has provided staffing, facilities, equipment and supplies that are critical to the academy's success. Whenever the college requires assistance to administer this complex and highly-regulated vocation program, Chief Michael will "drop everything" to come to our immediate assistance. Beyond lending his expertise to the college, Chief Michael serves as a formal mentor to LTCC's academy cadets and graduates. He strives to know each student on a personal level and then supplements their formal education with practical hands-on advice to help them perform as firefighters in our unique environment.

What an honor to have Chief Michael sharing his knowledge and his passion for fire science with current LTCC students. Chief Michael will be recognized at our graduation ceremony on June 24, the same day of his official retirement from Lake Valley Fire Protection District.

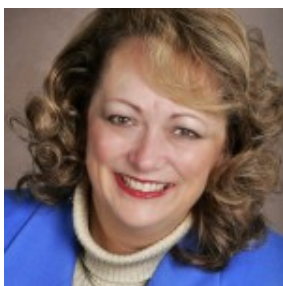
Melonie Guttry is director of the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation.

Opinion: Wishing graduates success after high school

By Vicki Barber

Tra-la, it's May, the lusty month of May. Remember the song from "Camelot"? Yes, it is May. El Dorado County may not be quite Camelot, but for a large number of graduating students it is a wonderful place to be this May. Students will be graduating from our high schools and moving into the future of their choice. Some are planning to go to college, others to technical training, and others to work in the community.

For some students their work and effort has turned into rewards in the form of scholarships to schools of their choice. The effort needed to receive a scholarship doesn't occur in just the last few months of a student's senior year of high school. Although this does feel like crunch time, in actuality the real work for a scholarship began long before these last few months as students combined their dreams for the future with the importance of hard work during their entire school career.



Vicki Barber

Many students come to the end of their high school careers with a real passion for learning, and we in El Dorado County

are pleased that we are able to acknowledge and reward their arrival with scholarships to go on and learn more. As you can see when you visit the El Dorado County scholarship website, there are many organizations and individuals who want to recognize these talented students and we truly appreciate their efforts. The scholarships support students who have chosen academies, universities, community colleges, or culinary schools.

Now, this May, we congratulate all graduates and wish them well as they take their next steps toward the realization of their dreams.

Vicki Barber is superintendent of El Dorado County Office of Education.

Opinion: Legislature should reject threat to leave TPRA Compact

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the May 24, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

More than 40 years after Nevada and California governors agreed on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency compact and President Richard Nixon signed it into law, it may well be time for the two states and Congress to get together and take a new look at how well the often-controversial pact is working to meet its primary goal: the protection of the lake's world-renowned clarity.

But threats from Nevada to withdraw from the bi-state agency

will not get the job done.

To lawmakers' credit, the Nevada Senate Government Affairs Committee on Monday agreed to ease back on a bill that would have withdrawn the state from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency immediately.

Instead, the committee approved an amendment that turned the bill into a threat of withdrawal if significant changes aren't made in the coming years. It set 2013 as the deadline, with a two-year extension possible if the state believes progress is being made.

That threat isn't likely to play any better in California, or in the halls of Congress, however, where Nevada, with its casinos on the state lines of north and south Tahoe, long was considered the stumbling block to making progress at the lake.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Thankful for friends, bitter toward media

To the community,

The recent post on this site and the article in the *Tribune* that reported my brush with law enforcement was so highly inaccurate as to be silly. But that is not my point in responding. Bias, inaccuracy and sloppy reporting in the media are so widely accepted and broadly understood that, to most people, it no longer merits a comment.

I am writing to thank the large number of people who understood the actual facts of the situation and provided

unwavering support to me and my family during the less than 48 hours that it took before it was resolved. I cannot thank enough the people who came to Barton Hospital ICU to show their support – members of our church family, relatives, church pastors, and those how have been our friends for years. To my business partner who was standing ready to put up whatever amount of money necessary to see that I was home with my family. And thanks to the deputies of the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department who provided security for me at Barton and showed the highest level of professionalism and dedication to service.



Joseph
Scanio

Also, thanks to my attorney who was tireless in his defense and to our community leaders, elected officials whose support I so much appreciated. Friday evening was our 11th wedding anniversary and the dinner and show at a local casino was fantastic and our thanks for that great experience. And, finally, to all the people of our church who joined with us this past Sunday to offer their support and encouragement and to so warmly welcome us to our shared fellowship with Christ.

The anniversary card my wife gave me this past weekend I think sums up how we should look at the situations that cause us pain or bring turmoil to our lives. I want to share her words with you. I think they can give us and our partner the love and strength to endure when there is darkness and despair –as there always will be:

Sometimes life can get a little messy, a little crazy around

the edges. But that's okay. It's still wonderful ... and there is no one I'd rather be sharing it with than you, amazing you. I'm so glad our life isn't about seeking perfection. Instead. We find happiness in everyday moments and real satisfaction in our home, our love, and our family.

Jennifer, I love you – and to all our friends and family, we love you more than you can ever know.

Joseph Scanio, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: City Council throws road repairs under the bus

By Steve Kubby

What is the real budget for fixing our streets and how much will the South Lake Tahoe City Council be spending this year on badly needed road maintenance and pothole repairs?

Much has been written lately about the “new” City Council and its commitment to fixing our broken roads, which have gone virtually unfunded for 15 years. In fact, Nancy Kerry, the South Lake Tahoe public affairs and communications manager, recently responded to a column I wrote saying, “The City Council and city manager have for the past many months been stressing the importance of fixing the city’s streets. It is inaccurate to say otherwise. The City Council as a whole and each individually are on the record of stressing the importance of fixing the streets, advocating for the fixing of streets. The city has recently adopted a five-year financial plan where throughout, the importance of fixing the streets and improving the built environment are declared priorities.”



Really? That's great to hear, but what does that actually translate to in budgeted dollars?

According to Jim Marino, engineer with the city, it will take \$5.2 million a year for 25 to 30 years – just to get the streets up to par. That was back in 2009 and since then the City Council has done nothing to address this rapidly escalating unfunded liability. What was once repairable, is rapidly becoming so damaged that it must now be replaced. Every year we delay incurs even greater liabilities and destruction of our infrastructure.

So what percent of that figure will the City Council be spending this year? It's not easy to find the answer. Buried in the Capital Improvement budget is a budget for the "declared priority" of fixing our streets.

So, what is the real budget for fixing our streets? It turns out that the City Council has not even budgeted a tiny fraction of the \$5.2 million a year for 25 to 30 years just to get the streets up to par. No, this "declared priority" of fixing our streets will receive a total budget of \$100,000 or about 2 percent of what is needed. Furthermore, despite the "Five-Year Financial Plan," there is no actual budget for spending any more than 2 percent next year or the next five years.

Now, after 15 years of criminal neglect, the best the City Council can do for the "declared priority" of finally addressing this escalating unfunded liability, is to budget 2 percent of what is needed?

Our streets are not going to fix themselves. Every year we delay adds millions of dollars of debt to our community, our

business and our homeowners. Either the citizens of this wonderful town demand a full budget to fix our streets or we can expect further economic decline for what was once a great destination resort. It is time to face the reality that you cannot have a world-class resort with Third World streets.

Frankly, if the City Council cannot even come up with an adequate budget to fix our crumbling roads, then it is worthless and should be dissolved.

Steve Kubby is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: Is Squaw Valley cursed?

By Cody Townsend, ESPN Action Sports

In sports and life, mythological curses are sometimes blamed for tragic chains of misfortune. For instance, when an accident in his Porsche Spyder sports car took the life of James Dean in 1955, the car then became entangled in a five-year-long series of tragedies that killed a race car driver, maimed a mechanic and brought mysterious woe to many who encountered it. The vehicle, it was said, had to be cursed.

In the freeskiing world, for the Squaw Valley community that I live in, it feels like we're driving that Porsche right now. For the past couple of years, we seem to have been trapped in a vortex of misfortune – we keep losing our own people, one tragic accident at a time.

Randy Davis, a local up-and-coming freestyle skier, was killed at Squaw in an inbounds avalanche on Christmas day in 2008. We

lost longtime Squaw legend Shane McConkey to a ski BASE accident in Italy in 2009. Andrew Entin, a much-loved career ski patroller, died while conducting avalanche control at Squaw in 2009. Then CR Johnson perished in an inbounds crash at Squaw Valley in 2010. Squaw's Arne Backstrom passed away in a ski mountaineering fall in Peru in 2010. And then, a couple of weeks ago, locals Kip Garre and Allison Kreutzen were killed by a backcountry avalanche in the southern Sierra Nevada mountains.

Of course, the greater freeskiing community suffered tragedies during the last few years as well – we lost the lives of pro skiers Billy Poole, Jack Hannan, John Nicolleta, Ryan Hawks, and countless other skiers. But the sheer number of deaths from Squaw seemed to be heart-wrenchingly high. We couldn't help but think it: Is the Squaw community cursed?

At this point, our tenets of faith – karma, justice, providence – have been torn down. We question everything. How can it be that our heroes, friends and family are being ripped away from the Squaw Valley community so methodically?

Read the whole story

Opinion: Time running out on dealing with invasive species

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the May 14, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

The possible discovery of quagga mussels in two of Northern Nevada's most important reservoirs is reason for considerable concern.

The invasive mollusk has become Public Enemy No. 1 in waterways throughout the United States, including Lake Mead, where they were first found in 2007. From there, they migrated to Lake Havasu.

The natives of eastern Europe, and their cousins, zebra mussels, already have caused millions of dollars of damage in the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, they clog water intake pipes, foul hydroelectric operations and, particularly worrisome, voraciously eat the food that native species depend on for survival.

Officials at Lake Tahoe have battled fiercely to prevent an invasion of the alpine lake, where they could undo decades of hard work that has been done to protect its famous clarity. The mussels' favored method of transportation is on the private boats that often are moved from lake to lake. That's why boats entering Lake Tahoe have been subject to inspection and decontamination since 2008.

Inspections also are occurring at other area lakes.

Read the whole story