

Advice for keeping pets healthy

To the community,

Give your pets the protection they need. Every dog or cat can “host” parasites and you may not even know about it. Even indoor pets can be exposed.

Regular examinations and preventive medications can help protect your pets from fleas, ticks, heartworms, and intestinal parasites like roundworms and hookworms. Don't leave your pet unprotected from these predators:

Ticks and Fleas:

Ticks and fleas are blood-drinking parasites that can also cause serious illness in pets. Ticks can transmit infections like Lyme disease, and fleas can transmit tapeworms and cause allergies. You can sometimes see ticks or fleas on your pet, but for the most part, they are very difficult to find. A veterinary examination can detect ticks or fleas on your pet, and monthly medication can control them.

Heartworms:

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes, and they can infect dogs and cats. Even indoor pets aren't completely safe from heartworms, since 25 percent of heartworm infected cats live completely indoors. Heartworms can damage the lungs and heart, and can even cause death. Fortunately, heartworm preventive medications can protect your pets from these dangerous parasites.

Intestinal Parasites:

Hookworms, roundworms, and other intestinal parasites can harm pets. Some of these parasites are even transmissible to

humans, so preventing parasites in your pets also helps protect children and other family members. A veterinary examination and routine fecal testing can identify intestinal parasites, and many monthly heartworm preventive medications safely and effectively control them.

Sincerely,

The doctors and staff at Sierra Veterinary Hospital, Carson City

Opinion: Shedding light on the Invisible Children

By Morgan Kaufer

I am a sophomore currently attending South Tahoe High. I was just wondering, have you heard about the invisible children?

Recently, a crew from the Invisible Children Foundation visited my school and I was truly inspired to do all I can to help out this amazing organization. I hope I can inspire you too. Check it out.

Kids in Uganda and all over Central Africa are being abducted and forced to fight. And if they resist, they die. They live in intense fear and have no way to protect themselves or know when the brutal rebel army is coming for them... With Invisible Children's new event to free Africa of 25 years of war, I need to raise as much money as possible by April 25th.

Your donation will provide these rural areas with radio systems, rehabilitation centers for the recovered child soldiers, and a search and rescue program for the poor,

unheard children who had no choice but to try and escape the clutches of Joseph Kony- the man behind the rebel army. Imagine how many heads we would turn if we fully implemented the Protection Program. Think about how much peace we could bring to this planet.

No child should ever have to go through this kind of fear. What is happening over there is just unthinkable... Some are even forced to shoot friends and family. It's absolutely horrible and they need you. They don't have a voice. So lets work together to give them one.

For more information on the Invisible Children Foundation, please visit www.invisiblechildren.com and learn about their new event called 25.

What these people are doing to try and bring peace to this world is just phenomenal. They put their heart and soul into their work and they need your help now. Please go online and donate to my page. This is so important to me and I want to make it important to you as well. And, once you have donated, create your own fundraising page so we can work together to stop Joseph Kony, and free the defenseless children from fear and death. They are screaming out to you... listen. Silence the violence and increase the peace.

Morgan Kaufer is a South Lake Tahoe resident who is active in the Invisible Children Foundation.

Opinion: Sustenance outweighs

need for growth in region

By Chuck Alvey

In 2004-05, the citizen-based leadership of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada saw our region's explosive growth and asked if we were creating the kind of place we would want to live in five to 10 years.

Were we growing too fast without a quality-of-life focus for the longer term?

When we released a request for proposals to conduct a thorough economic study of our region's potential with key recommendations, proposing firms noted their pleasant surprise that we were asking for such help during such a high-growth period. They also felt we were asking the right questions at the right time.

Fifty regional leaders helped review and approve the Target2010 strategic economic plan, which was issued in 2006, just before the bottom fell out of the economy everywhere.

A recent segment on "60 Minutes" highlighted the nearly 25 percent of children who are in poverty in the U.S. Middle-class families who have lost their homes live in their car, a hotel room or with another family. Belongings are stored, and when families can't pay rent, those few precious items are auctioned off.

Chuck Alvey is president and CEO of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Keep Tahoe blue-blooded

By Claire Fortier

The Nevada Legislature's frustration at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is not only understandable. It's timely.

The TRPA should be called out to explain its archaic and cumbersome bureaucracy that costs local residents and developers too much time, aggravation and money.

Unfortunately, that's only part of the real problem at Lake Tahoe.

Changing the "just say no" culture of the TRPA is the reason I chose to sit on the TRPA Governing Board. And finally that seems possible. The TRPA has an executive director and a governing board who understand that real environmental solutions at the lake require replacing our aging 1950's infrastructure, not sealing our communities in a regulatory time capsule.

The problem is that "environmental" advocates, like the League to Save Lake Tahoe, are demonstrating that it's not about keeping Tahoe blue. It's about keeping Tahoe mired in needless litigation and regulatory muck.

In the past few weeks, the League has shown its true colors as an obstructionist organization bent on stopping any change at the lake, even change for the environmental good.

In the eleventh hour, as an excellent and environmentally sensitive project was to come before the TRPA Governing Board, it appears that "environmental" advocates convinced California Gov. Jerry Brown to replace a moderate governing board member with a League colleague.

The replacement, from what we know thus far, is attorney Clem Shute. Mr. Shute has a long history with the League.

It was Mr. Shute who represented the League to block the TRPA Regional Plan in 1985. As he states in his bio, he had “extensive involvement in Lake Tahoe issues including drafting revisions to the 1980 Tahoe Regional Planning Compact and representation of environmental groups in litigation which enjoined development contrary to the Compact.”

In that sentence alone, Mr. Shute represents just why the League is an obstructionist organization. That suit tied the Regional Plan process up for years. While I’m sure Mr. Shute is eminently qualified to serve on the TRPA Governing Board, his past relationship with the League is concerning given the League’s new litigation posture against TRPA.

Is it a coincidence that the League would tap Mr. Shute at a time when the governing board is desperately trying to get a new Regional Plan approved, a plan more than seven years in the making? And a plan that has been blocked on every front by the League?

Last week, in another 11th hour move, the League showed just how unwilling it is to be part of solution. Through a law firm renown for its environmental litigation history, the League sent a letter to the city raising objections to the city’s general plan. That plan, almost four years in the making, was to come before the council for final this month.

Why after all the public forums and opportunities to comment on the city’s general plan, did the League decide to do so at the last minute? And why did they choose to do so through an attorney’s memo and not through established lines, thus ensuring cooperation, not antagonism?

In the letter, the League states that there “is no reasonable assurance that a new Regional Plan anytime in the near future.” Why? Certainly the TRPA Governing Board is committed

to getting a Regional Plan approved. Could it be because the League doesn't want the Regional Plan adopted?

So many of the problems that are preventing this community from both improving lake clarity and its economic bottom line lay squarely with the organization that purports to Save Lake Tahoe.

As a member of the TRPA Governing Board, I take very seriously the need to preserve and protect this beautiful lake for generations to come. I also believe it is equally imperative to have planned environmental redevelopment that not only keeps the lake blue, but keeps the community green, environmentally and economically. I believe that the TRPA is capable of doing so with strong leadership and focused vision.

But it's time to call the League on its misguided efforts. Is the League's real mission to save Lake Tahoe or save the Tahoe of 50 years ago? Is the League, which is primarily comprised of wealthy second homeowners from San Francisco, really keeping Tahoe blue or just keeping Tahoe blue blood?

Claire Fortier, a longtime Tahoe resident, a member of the South Lake Tahoe City Council and the TRPA Governing Board.

Opinion: Finding honest help harder than finding good help

By Denis Collins

It's not just hard finding good help these days – it's hard finding honest help, too.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, approximately 75

percent of all employees steal from work in some way. What's worse is that about 30 percent of all corporate bankruptcies are a direct result of employee theft. The National Retail Security Survey in 2009 said you can also subtract a whopping \$15.9 billion each year just from retailers who suffer from employee theft.

With the problem so widespread, many companies simply factor those losses into their yearly projections, and then hope it's not worse by year's end.

Although it may seem complex, one hedge against employee theft and fraud is to redesign the hiring process to help screen for employees who suffer from 'selective integrity'. After an employer fires someone for theft, the natural question they ask is, "How'd we even hire that guy?" Well, by changing your hiring practices, you can screen out people who are more likely to steal, and reduce the number of times you ever have to ask yourself that question again.

Tips for managers who screen job candidates include:

- * Obey Legal Ground Rules

- While there are many questions the law forbids you to ask job candidates to eliminate discrimination, there are still many questions you can ask.

- * Use Ethics-Based Interview Questions

- Too many interviewers gloss over questions that test an individual's character. Ask the candidate how he or she responded at a previous job to someone stealing, engaging in sexual harassment, or cutting corners at the cost of high ethical standards. Ask them if a superior ever requested that they do something unethical and, if so, how did they react. Even those who are dishonest with their answers can reveal how they feel about ethics in general.

* Review Behavioral Information

– Behavioral information can be gathered about job candidates through resumes, reference checks, background checks and some basic integrity tests that quiz candidates through “what would you do” style situations. Three standard integrity tests come from the Reid Report, the Stanton Survey and the Personnel Selection Inventory (PSI), which are easily found with a Google search if you don’t already have access to them.

* Test Personality Traits

– The traits that govern whether an employee is more or less inclined to be dishonest include conscientiousness, organizational citizenship behavior, and social dominance. For the first two, you want to see high scores – not so much on the last one. Again, personality tests are widely available to test these traits.

* Other Tests

– Some of the most revealing tests are the obvious ones – alcohol tests, drug tests and even polygraph tests, when permitted by law. Many candidates may object to these as employment requirements, but in a world in which 7 percent of our entire economy goes up in smoke from employee theft and fraud, companies should not feel shy about drawing a line in the sand. While those who refuse to take those tests may not have anything to hide, it’s clear that those who agree to those tests have nothing to hide.

Fraud and malfeasance at the highest levels of some of the country’s largest companies contributed to the 2008 to 2010 recession, and have been a willing assistant in keeping our economy down. It would be interesting if we could have turned the clocks back and run those executives through an ethics-oriented hiring process, and perhaps eliminated some of the fraud and theft that helped level our economy. Short of that, all we can do is pave the way for a better future by taking

some very basic steps to help weed out the unethical and dishonest from our nation's talent pool.

Denis Collins is a professor of business at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisc.. He is responsible for Social Responsibility and Business Ethics components in the school's Business Programs, and a SIFE Sam Walton Fellow.

Opinion: Convention center follies aren't unique to South Tahoe

By Jeff Jacoby, Townhall

Back in November of 1999, as Boston's 516,000-square-foot convention center was about to go up near the South Boston waterfront, I wrote a column about the futility of building exhibition halls with taxpayer money. Such facilities, I observed, are invariably touted as engines of economic growth, guaranteed to stimulate the creation of new jobs, the development of new hotels, and gushers of new spending by visiting conventioners. Then, when the promised boom fails to materialize, the subsidized facility is blamed for being too modest and taxpayers are told they must underwrite a venue even grander and more expensive.

"So here we go again," I predicted. "More construction, more rosy rhetoric – and more disappointment when the new convention center fails to meet its boosters' promises. . . . I give it about a decade. And then the droning will resume: If only we had a bigger convention center. . . ."

Ten years later to the month – how’s that for prescient? – the Boston Globe reported on its front page that Massachusetts officials want to double the size of the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, already the largest building of its kind in New England. The story noted that the convention center had never lived up to the exuberant promises made by its promoters. For example, a state-commissioned feasibility study had estimated that by 2009 the convention center would be doing enough business to generate 670,000 hotel room nights per year. In fact, the real figure turned out to be less than half, or about 313,000 room nights.

To a disinterested observer, it might seem obvious that Boston is no different from so many other cities competing for conventions and trade shows in a national market glutted with space. Over the past two decades, the amount of square footage available for exhibitions nationwide has soared nearly 75 percent, growing from 40.4 million square feet in 1990 to more than 70 million square feet today. Cities everywhere have been enlarging their convention centers. San Diego, Phoenix, Denver, Atlanta, Orlando, Chicago, Las Vegas, Philadelphia – all of them have either recently finished or are planning an expansion, all of them at taxpayer expense, and all of them justified with the same argument being made once again in Boston: If only we had more capacity, we could attract bigger shows, lure more visitors, stimulate more business, generate more growth.

Jeff Jacoby is an Op-Ed writer for the Boston Globe, a radio political commentator, and a contributing columnist for Townhall.com.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Thanks for successful Drug Store Project

By Lisa Huard

Each year I become more appreciative of the community in which I live and work. Tuesday's Drug Store Project was one of the reasons why.

Again, we provided a meaningful anti-drug program for the 6th grade youth of South Tahoe Middle School, Zephyr Cove Elementary, St. Theresa, and Diamond Valley School. On the LTCC campus, 350 students were joined by 160 volunteers represented by over 50 agencies and businesses.

I'd first like to thank Tahoe Youth & Family Services as the lead agency in this project, one that continues to benefit our children and saves lives.

For those that pay attention to the list of participants in this program, consider this....the list of thanks continues to be a consistent one. This program is truly community owned.

Thank you to: AK Entertainment, Arizona National Guard/DDR, Barton Health, Blackie Gonsalves-Photography, Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement, California Conservation Corps, CALSTAR, California Highway Patrol, California National Guard/DDR, Camelot Rentals, Diamond Valley School, Douglas County Probation, Douglas County Sheriff, El Dorado Community Foundation, El Dorado County District Attorney, El Dorado County Mental Health, El Dorado County Probation, El Dorado County Public Defender, El Dorado County Public Health Department, El Dorado County Sheriff, El Dorado County Superior Court, Embassy Suites Hotel & Resort, Harrah's Harvey's Lake Tahoe-HERO Team, Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra, Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe, KTHO, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Lake Valley

Firefighter's Association, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, McFarlane Mortuary, Optimist, Outside Television, Partnership of Community Resources, Pro Leisure, St. Theresa School, Sierra Community Church, Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, South Lake Tahoe Fireman's Association, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Officer's Association, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, South Lake Tahoe Rotary Club, STHS-Friday Night Live, Tahoe Douglas Elks, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, Tahoe Douglas Rotary Club, Tahoe Youth & Family Resources, Vitality Lake Tahoe, Zephyr Cove Elementary AND the many, many wonderful volunteers to who took time out for the benefit of our kids and our community. We are all very lucky to live in such an amazing community.

Thank you everyone,

Lisa Huard, Drug Store Project Coordinator

Opinion: Getting to the bottom of Lake Tahoe stories

By Guy Rocha

The B.S. associated with Lake Tahoe might be as deep as the lake. That's if you believe the Sierra Nevada lake has a bottom. Some tell tales of dead bodies sinking to the lake bottom still intact today because of frigid water temperatures. They include Chinese woodcutters from the late 19th century and victims of 20th-century mafia hits. Perhaps every sizeable lake in the world has its equivalent stories, but what do we actually know and why?

We can thank Nevada journalist, writer and politician Sam Davis for giving us the tall tale of “The Mystery of the Savage Sump,” (1901) which claimed that Lake Tahoe had a hole in its bottom and was connected to the lower levels of the Comstock mines. The hole was plugged or unplugged as needed to manipulate the price of mining stock, or so Davis’ tale went. William Meeker, a San Francisco stock speculator involved in the elaborate stock market swindle was murdered in 1869 at Lake Tahoe by Colonel Clair, his partner in crime, according to Davis, and his mangled body found in the scalding waters of the Savage Mine sump. The short story is pure humbug and a hoax.

The stories are myriad about a submersible under the direction of the famed Jacques Cousteau detecting perfectly preserved bodies, including those of drowned Chinese woodcutters. The truth is that Philippe Cousteau, Jacques’ grandson, visited Lake Tahoe in April 2002, but there is no record of Jacques ever seeing the jewel of the Sierra, much less his being involved in an underwater expedition or using a motorized submersible camera to explore the icy depths.

Guy Rocha is the former state archivist with the Nevada State Library and Archives. For more information, go online.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Teachers must be evaluated by what students

Learn

By Doug Lasken and Bill Evers

Students in California public schools are not achieving at the levels they should. Too many students are unprepared for jobs or have to take remedial courses when they start college. In California, we judge student achievement through student scores on statewide tests. These tests assess how much students know about subject-matter content that is specified in an official set of state academic-content standards. Research has long shown that effective teachers are among the best ways to bring up student achievement. But in order to improve teaching effectiveness, it is helpful to know where the challenges are.

We've heard a lot in California recently about the move to factor student test scores from statewide standards-based tests into teacher evaluations. Yet did you know that for more than a decade, it has been the law in California to do just that?

If you are a typical teacher, school administrator, school reformer or parent, you'll be surprised indeed to hear about Education Code 44662. This decade-old law says that the governing board of each school district "shall evaluate and assess" teacher performance, if possible, using the state-adopted academic-content standards "as measured by" state-adopted "criterion referenced" tests. The law says "shall," not "may" – i.e., it is required.

The standards in question are the California Academic Standards, which detail the knowledge and skills that children from kindergarten through high school are supposed to master at each grade level. Once a year, students in grades two through 11 take the California Standards Tests. These tests measure mastery of the subject-matter content listed in the

standards, grading the students' achievement at various performance levels.

And the results of these tests are required by law to be factored into teacher assessment. Yes, that's right: It is already the law that teachers must be evaluated using scores on tests that are standards based and criterion-referenced.

Doug Lasken is a retired English teacher and debate coach, who worked in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Bill Evers is a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and member of the institution's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education. Evers served as U.S. assistant secretary of education from 2007 to 2009.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Thinking about natural gas and clean water

Publisher's note: *This editorial first ran in the March 22, 2011, New York Times.*

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar told a House subcommittee recently that a drilling technique known as hydraulic fracturing could be the "Achilles' heel" that kills the natural gas industry. Like many others, Mr. Salazar sees natural gas, which America has in great abundance, as cleaner and more climate-friendly than coal or oil and a useful transition to alternative fuels. But he also fears, as we do, that public support for drilling will diminish unless the industry and its state and federal regulators do a better job

of making sure the gas does no harm to drinking water.

Hydraulic fracturing involves blasting water, sand and chemicals into underground rock formations to unlock the gas they contain. The technique has been around for many years and has been used, mostly without incident, in hundreds of thousands of natural gas wells. But the risks have multiplied as the wells are drilled deeper and stretched vertically and horizontally to get at remote deposits. A single well can cough up a million gallons of wastewater laced with carcinogens like benzene and radioactive elements like radium.

The technique has become especially controversial in Pennsylvania, the epicenter of a big push for natural gas locked in the Marcellus Shale, a formation stretching from West Virginia to upstate New York. Ian Urbina's recent series in The Times found that conventional wastewater treatment plants in Pennsylvania could not prevent radioactive contaminants from entering rivers that provide drinking water for millions of people. The series also identified many instances of poor regulation.

Read the whole story