

Forethought for the future

By Roxanne Rain

Now that we have entered a new era, a new decade, maybe it's time to readdress the "hole" at Stateline and begin to use logic and reality, rather than archaic mundane concepts like a Convention Center.

I recently read on *Lake Tahoe News* that studies were performed that indicate a Convention Center would do well here. Most statistics can be skewed to give the desired outcome. The questions are: "Who wants the Convention Center? Who did they pay to have those statistics rendered to their specs? Why is this town beating a dead horse?"

The enormous Convention Center in Reno doesn't stay booked. In an economy like this, what makes anyone think Tahoe can keep one booked? The casinos are barely surviving, and they have convention centers that are never fully booked. Where is the logic?

When did the City Council become "The Planners" and what qualifies them? That's not their job. They should focus on serving the town's interests and current issues. Leave master designing to experienced entities.

I have lived in this town for 22 years, and the Convention Center is not a popular idea. The hole is better left in the hands of wealthy visionaries such as Steve Winn or Donald Trump for example. Accomplished moguls with a track record who have built and designed unique successful monuments and wonderlands. Let someone or some corporation with vision and power get the job done.

It's time for the City Council to step aside and allow vision, intent and purpose to take over. It would be spectacular if "We the People" of this town sent all of our ideas about what

we would like to see happen to a specific email address, i.e.: the hole@____.com, and then allow a committee to sift through and put together a model which incorporates the best ideas into a state-of-the-art multi-faceted architectural phenomenon.

Why not create a landmark, a fabulous monumental structure that stands out on its own. Something that brings people from all over the world just to see it, like the pyramids in Egypt, or the more modern Luxor. Why not get grandiose and do something big and special, get original and create an eighth Wonder of the World. Attach a zipline from the top of Heavenly continuing onto the top of the new structure, ending with a dive into the lake. Add some zest and zeal for the adventuresome thrill-seekers. Give the world something to come see and talk about that is glorious and multi-functional.

Now that's what I'm talkin' about, and I declare a finder's fee for the explicit idea.

Commission a special committee to collect ideas from the people of the town and the Internet. Find and explore some of the most exciting concepts and ideas, then hire a new age avant-garde firm, with a track record, to implement it. I would be happy to contribute to such a lofty creative adventure, melding architecture and art. Why settle for a boring mundane archaic idea when the sky is really the limit? If you do it right, people would want to come and hold meetings there, convention center or not. Convention rooms could be one aspect of the facility's function.

A decade ago, I wrote an article about boosting the economy by allowing a topless club to exist, which generates enormous income, and brings in more businessmen, who currently choose Reno as a destination point, because of the option to indulge in the strip club atmosphere. That is not just my opinion, but fact. I have taken several calls from gentlemen seeking a topless club venue, for which I explain that we are an adult

entertainment agency who sends entertainers out. Consequently, they have left Tahoe behind, chartered a bus to Reno, and spent their money elsewhere. There is no doubt they patronized other vendors in Reno as well, such as restaurants, casinos, specialty shops, etc. The point is they did not spend their money here.

To address the moralists, strip clubs are similar to churches in that no one forces anyone to attend. People go of their own volition, seeking the experiences they themselves choose. Strip clubs don't bring in bad elements; bad elements congregate where they are able to thrive.

I have heard and read all the hype about drug dealing and prostitution associated with topless clubs. That element goes on across the globe, and will continue to go on no matter what. Strip clubs will only attract that element if those in charge (owners, managers) partake and perpetuate it. Good security, and upscale environment can deter undesirables. It's time to stop playing judge and watchdog to the detriment of our economy. Let change unfold and flow as it naturally does. Let people with vision, intent, and purpose thrive and go forth.

I mentioned how hind sighted it was to try to stop indigenous American Indians from opening casinos in Shingle Springs (an entirely different community) when Red Hawk was in the planning stages, and rather focus on what we can do here to bring more people.

Well, I hate to observe, a decade later, the same mistakes are being made. Wake up and embrace change, forget the Convention Center and do Tahoe a favor, allow fresh creative influences to flourish.

And what about the Horizon Casino? I have heard of people turning buildings into new green producing projects that bring jobs to the unemployed. Wouldn't it be spectacular if Heavenly

did something for the children and created slide shoots in the summer from the top of the mountain to the base? They could use rope, instead of permanent structures, to implement a unique slide park for the kids. How cool would that be?

What if the whole zone from the hole to the Horizon became one huge monumental functional facility as well as an amusement facility for children? Let's bring in some visionaries with innovative ideas and money to back them, then our town might have viable hope.

Transportation is another issue. I went to several city planning meetings where our group pushed for a monorail system that started in Meyers, and continued down the highway and Pioneer Trail all the way to Stateline, including all the main arteries (thoroughfares) of town. What a great vision. Do you think that beautiful concept got any airplay? People could park at a designated lot in Meyers and ride the rail. That would cut down on traffic, eliminate DUIs, and restore the social fabric of the community.

What a concept, why don't intelligent things happen? Is it per chance we don't think about the long-term benefits due to narrow-minded scope, or are we paralyzed by our own system that now serves itself rather than "We the People"?

Roxanne Rain is a resident of South Lake Tahoe.

Senator: Water is jobs

By Dianne Feinstein

This is a make-or-break moment for California's agricultural economy.

After three years of drought, winter storms have boosted storage capacity at key reservoirs and replenished the Sierra Nevada snowpack to between 90 and 129 percent of average.

Yet hundreds of family-owned farms in the Central Valley still don't know if they'll be able to plant, hire and harvest this year because they may not get sufficient water allocations. Thousands of farm industry workers could again be standing in food lines in towns with



Dianne
Feinstein
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unemployment rates as high as 40 percent.

Read the whole story

Effective supervision needed to avoid another Dugard case

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Feb. 18 edition of the Reno Gazette-Journal.*

The tragedy of the Jaycee Lee Dugard kidnapping nearly 20 years ago isn't just that the young girl was stolen from her family in South Lake Tahoe, Calif., or that she was held captive for some 18 years, sexually assaulted and bore two

children with her captor – as tragic as those were.

The tragedy is that law enforcement in California and Nevada had numerous opportunities to prevent and then end Dugard's terrible ordeal and failed.

Much of the blame rests with parole and probation officials in California, who inherited Phillip Garrido after he was released from prison in Nevada, where he was held for his conviction on sexual assault charges.

Read the whole story

Victims of CPS seek class-action lawsuit participants

Letter to the community,

Tahoe Victims of CPS has joined together with families on the West Slope of El Dorado County to form the El Dorado County Victims of CPS. All parties involved are either advocates for CPS reform, or families that have had their constitutional rights violated by CPS.

First and foremost, we do not want any more children removed from innocent parents; but we also want to ensure that social workers employed by Child Protective Services' Investigative Unit have the proper training.

We have heard from numerous parties in the community that social workers are hired off the street with no training, and the funding is not available to properly train these social workers. So what we have are employees of the county that enter people's homes by intimidating them, and removing

children without a search warrant. Not only are the families traumatized by these actions, but also social workers then falsify the facts in their report to the court to cover up their illegal activities, a fact confirmed by a number of court-appointed family court attorneys.

Law enforcement, whom we support whole-heartedly, has somehow been misinformed that they need to support these illegal acts. We encourage all law enforcement officials called to a home by a social worker, to ask where the search warrant is, unless exigent circumstances exist that put the child in harm's way. We do not want our wonderful law enforcement members, or even social workers for that fact, leaving themselves open to criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits.

El Dorado County is a great place to live, but as residents, we need to live here without the fear of renegade social workers misinterpreting the Child Welfare Codes, which were written to protect children from gross neglect, abuse, and possible death. We want our county's CPS to be the model that other counties and states can mirror.

We are inviting any resident of El Dorado County, past and present, to write us with their experiences of violations by Child Protective Services and their interest in a class-action lawsuit against Child Protective Services for violation of their constitutional rights, namely the 4th and 14th Amendments.

The mailing address is:

El Dorado County Victims of CPS

P.O. Box 22

Placerville, CA 95667

Ernie Claudio, co-founder of Tahoe Victims of CPS

NBC's mind-boggling decision to tape delay Olympic coverage



By Henry Blodget, The Wire

It didn't seem possible that it would happen again.

It didn't seem possible that, in the middle of a national holiday, NBC would be so self-serving that it would risk infuriating millions of viewers by tape-delaying one of the most popular events at the Winter Olympics—the Men's Downhill.

Read the whole story

Incline crab feed nearly hits goal of zero waste

By Madonna Dunbar

Can you imagine throwing a big party, providing a bar, feeding 400 people a three-course dinner “ and ending the night with only fourbags of trash from the whole event?

Though it sounds impossible, this is exactly what happened at the Incline High School Booster’s 26th Annual Crab and Pasta

Feed on Feb. 6.

It is a Zero Waste Event success story.

So how was this done?

First, the planning committee for the Crab Feed decided that “going green” was an important consideration that needed to be expanded from the previous year’s initial green initiatives.

The committee members then worked closely with Incline Village General Improvement District’s (IVGID) Waste Not Programs to plan the evening’s “Zero Waste” efforts. Since this event historically relied heavily on the use of disposable serveware, a commitment was made to purchase compostable serveware “ which could be collected with the food waste (including all the crab shells) for compost processing. This meant that the cups, plates, utensils, napkins and even the crab bibs that were purchased – were made from plant-based sources. Compostable serveware is made from renewable sources such as potato, corn and bamboo; all are non-petroleum and non-styrofoam items.

These compostable items are readily available online and can now be found at local grocery stores.

Figuring out the recycling system was a little easier. The Lake Tahoe region now entirely uses a single stream, blue bag collection method, so all the cardboard, paperboard, glass, aluminum, hard plastics and non-compostable cups from the evening festivities could be collected for recycling.

The night of the event – the Waste Not staff, plus two enthusiastic AmeriCorps volunteers, set up waste sorting stations. These stations had one collection can each for: compostables, recyclables and trash. The student servers and event volunteers were shown how to sort the materials. It got pretty hectic as the night progressed and the dinner

courses were served and cleared, but everyone participated and learned it was an easy system to follow.

Through the careful planning of the dinner service itself, and the use of this three-part collection system (compostable/recyclables/trash) – this large scale event; which would have easily filled an 8 yard dumpster full of trash – became a low impact event.

The event's 36 bags of compostables were stored in four 96 gallon BearSaver carts and delivered to Full Circle Compost's industrial composting facility in the Carson Valley to become rich, vibrant soil.

The 16 bags of collected recyclables were diverted for re-processing instead of being dumped in a landfill. So the same amount of materials that would have been waste, instead became a source of renewed resources.

So what was in the trash anyway? There were some non-compostable cups used by mistake for the appetizers, plastic wrap, plastic food bags, the foil wrappers off the butter pats and the hand wipe packets, latex gloves, wine bottle collars, plastic wine corks, and the gunk from the dishwashing food trap.

The night's results:

- 36 bags of compostable material averaging 40 lbs/bag = 1440 lbs. of compostables
- 16 bags of mixed recyclables: (5 bags w/glass averaging 40 lbs/bag + 11 bags at 20 lbs./bag) = 420 lbs. of recyclables
- 4 bags of trash averaging 25 lbs./bag = 100 lbs. of trash
- 1,860 pounds of diverted material; only 100 pounds of trash sent to the landfill
- Greater than 95 percent reclamation/diversion
- That's less than 5 ounces of trash per attendee, not

fully zero waste, but darn close.

For more information about the Lake Tahoe Zero Waste Project, please contact IVGID Waste Not at (775) 832.1284 or email wastenot@ivgid.org.

Madonna Dunbar works for the IVGID Waste Not program.

Perez impresses LT Democratic Club

To the community,

For those of you who missed (Wednesday) night's meeting, you missed a great opportunity to meet Stan Perez, candidate for El Dorado County sheriff. He's one of seven candidates running for that position in the June primary.

His ideas are progressive, based in common sense, and he has a strong focus on helping and working with communities.

We spoke with him for more than an hour and covered many, many topics. To paraphrase them would be to do him an injustice. You should hear his ideas for yourself. You can go to his website, and at the top of the main page you'll find a link to a two-part Comcast Channel 7 Point Blank interview.

It's important to Tahoe to vote in this June's primary, a notoriously low-turnout election. The top two vote-getters will go on to the November election – unless one of the candidates wins 51 percent of the primary vote. I believe Stan Perez deserves to be one of those two candidates.

Judy Williams, president Lake Tahoe Democratic Club

Olympics hit home for Tahoe-Reno area



Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Feb. 11, 2011, Reno Gazette- Journal.*

On the 50th anniversary of the Squaw Valley Olympics, residents of the Reno-Sparks-Lake Tahoe area have good reasons to watch this month's events in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The most important reason, of course, is the competition. Nearly a dozen athletes with connections to this area will be going to the games, which should give area fans more than a passing interest in the competition.

Read the whole story

Northstar congratulates Olympian Hight



To the community,

Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort would like to congratulate team athlete, Elena Hight, on her upcoming participation on the U.S. Women's™ Snowboard Team as she heads to Vancouver to compete in the halfpipe event.

Hight, one of the nation's top female riders, joined the Northstar Resort Professional Freestyle Team during the 2008-09 season and will represent the resort when she competes in Vancouver.

Hight, a South Lake Tahoe local, was the first female professional rider to join the Northstar Resort team, and was the youngest female snowboarder to compete in the 2006 Games in Turino, Italy, at age 16, where she placed sixth in halfpipe. She continues to be a top competitor in halfpipe competitions, and this season has placed first in the halfpipe competition at the Snowbasin Dew Tour and second in the Mammoth Grand Prix.

Additional information about Hight and her accomplishments can be found online at www.elenahight.com.

Northstar-at-Tahoe staff

LTWC's process for returning bears to the wild



By Cheryl Millham

The two cubs rescued by the BEAR League after the mother was illegally shot and killed in Carnelian Bay were brought to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. They came in weighing 13 and 16 pounds, respectively. There, they joined three cubs already at LTWC from Yosemite.

All five cubs became friends fast, chasing each other, playing in their pool, rolling and tumbling and swinging on their two swings.

The cubs were on LTWC's webcam all summer and into December and gave people all over the world enjoyment just being able to watch them play and grow.

This next spring, if we receive any cubs, they will also be on our webcam. Just log on to www.ltwc.org and click on "Bear Cam."

Since the cubs had no mother to teach them how to find food or even what foods to eat, it is up to us to introduce these foods to them. An example of the types of foods we offer them is fish, (whole fish) which was placed in their swimming pool, so they learned that if they wanted fish, they needed to get wet. They learned about honey and honeycomb, carrion (dead animals) and fruits and nuts, which they will find where they are released.

As the bears grew, their volume of food had to increase. When they first arrived, they were all put on bear formula along with other foods, mostly fruit. By the end of summer, they were eating about 40 pounds of food put into their cage twice a day.

That equates to 16 pounds of food for each cub per day. No wonder they gained 70 to 90 pounds in six months.

The volunteers who feed and clean the cubs are never in the same area with them. There is never any communication with them. The cubs are totally wild and not habituated with humans.

To put the bears into hibernation, we always wait until the wild bears are going under. Then we start pulling back on the quantity of food they receive. We do this slowly. This process takes about two to three weeks. Bears don't go into

hibernation when it gets cold. They go into hibernation when there is no food. That is why some of our wild bears don't hibernate, because they can find food in the form of garbage all winter.

About two weeks of cutting back on their food, we put in tree branches along with six to eight bags of pine needles so they can arrange them into a huge nest. When the food is stopped, they have already made their winter den – or nest. Then, it is sleepy time for about two more months, until Fish & Game (or the biologists from Yosemite) can make their plans to come and take the cubs to their release point.

At this time, we have had the bears for more than seven months.

It is a happy day when we send the cubs back home to the wild, which is where they belong. They all learned their lessons well and we have no doubt they will have a great life being free, wild bears.

Cheryl Millham is executive director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.