

Editorial: On guns, Nev. leaders overruling voters

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Residents of Nevada voted in November to require background checks for most private gun sales, closing a loophole in federal law. But nearly a year after the ballot measure passed, these checks aren't being made because state officials have claimed, with little evidence, that there's no way to carry out the policy.

Such background checks might not have prevented the massacre in Las Vegas on Sunday night; the gunman, Stephen Paddock, is not known to have a significant criminal record and appears to have bought at least some of his guns from dealers required to vet buyers.

But it has been shown that requiring checks on private sales of guns, such as at gun shows and over the internet, makes it harder for felons and other prohibited people, like those who have been committed to mental institutions and drug addicts, to buy firearms.

Read the whole story

Letter: Why Measure C makes sense

To the community,

As someone who drives on South Lake Tahoe's deteriorating, embarrassing roads every day, I was sad to see **Lake Tahoe News** publish an editorial urging voters to maintain the status quo of dangerous potholes and crumbling streets.

The opposition to Measure C is so quick to point out the city's history of not providing funding for our roads, but fails to examine why this is the case. We've elected city council after city council for over 50 years now, and you're telling me that every one of them conspired to mismanage funding away from roads? There's no political capital in not funding road repairs – a council that fixed our roads would be local heroes.

No, the reason for our ugly road problem is the budget itself. Take a look at its details and its intricacies, I have. Our city's budget is online and available to anyone. The fact is, despite what the stated goals of South Lake Tahoe's founders were, the budget was not constructed in a way that adequately funds road repairs, much less the reconstruction and renovation that our inferiorly paved roads need to properly serve our community.

Saying "vote no" because you think the city is irresponsible with its money is the short-sighted solution. Doing so ensures that the very council members you say are mismanaging funds continue to have the power to do so. The only recourse that California cities have available to ensure funds consistently go to roads and cannot be diverted for other purposes is to pass a measure like Measure C. Truckee did it. Placerville did it. Why can't we?

Look at your options. Vote yes on Measure C to fix potholes, repair dangerous cracks and see our city thrive. Vote against it and watch our streets continue to wither away. Join me. Vote yes on C.

Kirt Willard, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Exchanging insults will have no winner

By Kenneth L. Shropshire

President Trump did not say, “Yo’ mama!” in front of a partisan Huntsville, Ala., audience. But he might as well have because that is what athletes heard directed at them.

Perhaps without even realizing it, the president had engaged in an age-old tradition of playing the dozens, the term for an African American game involving the exchange of insults before an audience. Or did he just think he’s playing the politics of distraction-as-usual, and playing to his base?

Whether he knew it or not, the bully, Trump, went after one group that has spent their lives beating bullies: black male athletes. And, in this new-age mix of politics and sports, these men also possess a pulpit as powerful as the president’s and a combined Twitter following that far exceeds his. Had he met his match?

It remains an open question whether Trump understood the game he had started to play. For one thing, his tone was off. On playgrounds you rarely hear as circuitous an insult as “son of a bitch,” the phrase Trump used when urging NFL owners to fire players who protested during the national anthem.

No, the dozens are more direct.

“Your mother is a bitch” is what a truly street-hardened president would have said to the players, as he anticipated the return blow and stood ready to dish out more. But Trump has clearly stumbled into this unfamiliar territory. He was

just using the so-called genuine language that has brought him political success.

Meanwhile, the athletes' response to Trump on social media was massive and direct. None that I saw took the traditional path of going after his mama, but sometimes that phase is skipped, in favor of going straight to the source spewing the dozens, delivering a punch in the face. In that vein, Buffalo Bills running back LeSean McCoy just tweeted the unambiguous: "asshole." LeBron James of the NBA's "u bum" tweet at Trump was viewed by more people than any single tweet by the president himself.

Among the many ironies of this exchange is the unity it has brought, if only momentarily, between professional players and team owners, between player unions and the leagues. The moment goes beyond football. Basketball players have been brought together by Trump's decision to rescind his invitation to the NBA champion Golden State Warriors to visit the White House. Baseball players have joined the protests, and golfers, tennis players (including the icon Billie Jean King), and even the NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr. have tweeted in favor of the right for peaceful protest.

Although it's new for a president to engage (consciously or not) in the dozens, athletes are also facing new expectations and responsibilities. We are witnessing many of our athletes coming of age to fulfill a new requirement of contemplation and intellectualism from our players. They need an opinion, whether they choose to express it or not. They need to know what they are going to do or not do.

LeBron James has been the leader in this new era; he spoke out during the Trayvon Martin homicide back in 2012. But today, the political decisions facing athletes are more complicated, and the expectations for fast and meaningful responses have been raised.

The difficulties of navigating this athletic-political minefield were exemplified by two players on the same team. When the Pittsburgh Steelers decided to stay in the locker room during the national anthem, an offensive lineman and former Army ranger, Alejandro Villanueva, chose to come out alone and salute the flag. Ben Roethlisberger, the team's star quarterback, stayed in the locker room with the team. They both later expressed regret for making their decisions separately, which suggested a lack of unity. Politics, like football, is a team sport.

Political pressure also falls on the team owners, who were the other group targeted in the Alabama speech, as the president told them how to run their businesses. This is the rich person's equivalent of the dozens, and no doubt the thought bubbles arising from this group of football billionaires and millionaires said, "This guy was one of us, and not even as rich as me, and he's getting in our business?"

The New England Patriots owner, Robert Kraft, who befriended Trump and backed his campaign, said he was "deeply disappointed" at Trump's comments, and clearly by his lack of reciprocity. He wasn't the only owner who experienced presidential betrayal.

Trump's attacks were news, and not just because Trump is always news. Most of the time, sports are about the games themselves. Political protest has been a lesser concern, usually a one-off when it touches sports—a boycott, an arm band, or a political punch added to a hall of fame speech. When sport has been invoked in politics it's rarely been about whether athletes are pulling the nation apart, but instead it's generally been related to the need for national healing. (An exception is the fist-extended protests of John Carlos and Tommie Smith on the medal stand at the 1968 Olympics).

One of the most understudied exchanges between sports and politics took place between then-President Franklin D.

Roosevelt and Commissioner of Baseball Kenesaw Mountain Landis in 1942. In what has come to be known as the “green light” letter, Roosevelt advised Landis that the games should be played during World War II. The president’s logic was that in time of war, the American workers “ought to have a chance for recreation and for taking their minds off their work even more than before.” Landis followed the presidential advice, and Major League Baseball was played throughout the war.

In a similar spirit, the NFL decided to play their Sunday games two days after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, although the NFL commissioner, Pete Rozelle, would call it one of his biggest regrets. (In retrospect, he might have listened to one owner, who sought a court order to stop play).

When the Gulf War began, 10 days before the 25th anniversary Super Bowl in Tampa in 1991, it made for a memorable juxtaposition of football and military display. That created a charged atmosphere for Whitney Houston’s famously stirring rendition of the national anthem, which concluded with a flyover by four F-16 fighter jets.

But sometimes sports gives way. After the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, the NFL postponed the games that were scheduled to be played on the following Sunday. For a brief period all planes were still grounded in the United States and the players, like all other Americans, had mixed feelings about travel even when flights resumed.

Even after real tragedies, moments of national unity are short-lived. Today’s Trump-inspired unity won’t last long. The athletes and the owners will soon head back to their respective corners, at least until another unifying “your mama” moment brings them together again.

Maybe it will be Trump, the distractor in chief, who provides that new moment, as he blasts away at others to take our

attention away from the racism and political problems that surround him. As LeBron James observed recently, the president doesn't seem to recognize how he might bring people together, if he so chooses. "He doesn't understand the power that he has for being the leader of this beautiful country," tweeted James. "He doesn't understand how many kids, no matter their race, look up to the president...."

In this upside-down world of politics and sports, maybe Trump will own up to his own productive divisiveness. He could channel the great basketball player Charles Barkley, who famously declared in a TV commercial, "I am not a role model."

Kenneth L. Shropshire is the adidas distinguished professor of global sport and CEO of the Global Sport Institute at Arizona State University and a professor emeritus at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He wrote this for Zócalo Public Square.

Opinion: What a true progressive city looks like

By Joe Mathews

Adjust your California maps: The little dot marking Santa Rosa needs to be a lot bigger.

Dramatic changes in housing, aging, transportation, and criminal justice are altering the Golden State's geography, and no place in California stands to benefit more than Santa Rosa.



Joe Mathews

The Sonoma County seat seems poised to become the most successful example of a type of urban center—the rapidly growing midsize city that serves as a crossroads between major regions. The city’s current motto—“Out There. In the Middle of Everything”—encapsulates the new and paradoxical centrality of edge cities, from Fairfield and Santa Clarita to Riverside and Escondido. In an era when California’s coastal regions have soured on motherhood (by making children and housing prohibitively expensive) and apple pie (too much sugar and not locally grown), these edge cities are bastions of hoary traditions like economic growth and middle-class opportunity.

“We’re on the move and we’re interested in growing,” says Santa Rosa city councilmember Julie Combs of her town.

As the fifth-largest city in the Bay Area, Santa Rosa, population 175,000, plays many roles. It’s the northern spillover area for people and businesses seeking refuge from the closer-in Bay Area’s higher costs. Employers like it too; the city now boasts 88,000 jobs, its highest employment level ever.

And by dint of geography and deliberate strategy, the city is emerging as California’s weed crossroads—or, in the words used by the city, the “farm-to-market” center for medical and recreational marijuana, connecting the cannabis growers of the North State with the retailers and consumers of the Bay Area and points south.

While many other California cities have decided to limit the

marijuana industry, Santa Rosa has rapidly issued permits for cannabis operations, creating a run on warehouse space. What the city wants is higher-wage professional jobs—in sales, finance, distribution or lab testing—that the newly legal \$22 billion-a-year industry will require.

And while Marin County to the south is famously anti-growth, Santa Rosa has been busily preparing for the new people heading its way. In downtown Santa Rosa, there are plans for taller buildings, including a hotel. Santa Rosa's once-tiny airport is expanding to handle double its number of travelers by the end of the next decade. The first 43 miles of a new 70-mile commuter rail line, the SMART train, opened this summer, connecting Santa Rosa to San Rafael, and, eventually, the ferry to San Francisco.

The City Council has distinguished itself by making housing its top priority, with a multi-phase plan that promises more housing both for younger families and seniors. The city has put its own money into affordable housing, is working with the county to establish a housing trust, and is encouraging denser, taller construction—while still preserving its urban growth boundaries. Santa Rosa also has responded aggressively to rising homelessness—declaring a local state of emergency that allows for flexibility in zoning to help house people quickly.

All of this progress has been helped by a series of inclusive community conversations, some called Santa Rosa Together, in recent years. The community's cohesion opened the door to an extraordinary step: absorbing Roseland and other poorer communities on the city's southwest side, with the goal of giving them a greater political voice and better services. Expected to be complete by November, the annexation, which includes 715 acres and 8,000 people, is billed as the largest such expansion in the city's history.

All this change can be jarring for some Santa Rosans,

particularly longtime residents accustomed to a smaller town that identified itself with the cartoon strip Peanuts. Its author, Charles M. Schulz, spent much of his adult life in the area, which named the airport after him. Santa Rosa still remains home to a Charles M. Schulz Museum, part of a complex that includes an ice rink.

But the world is changing. MetLife last year fired Snoopy and the Peanuts gang after 30 years of sponsorship, and the Peanuts brand was sold off to a Canadian company. And Santa Rosans will soon have to adjust to living in a city of 200,000, rather than the 1970 town of 50,000.

Next year, Santa Rosa will celebrate the sesquicentennial of its incorporation it's also the 75th anniversary of Santa Rosa's most famous star turn, in Alfred Hitchcock's classic "Shadow of a Doubt." Hitchcock—who would recognize the old train station, but not much else about the city now—portrayed Santa Rosa as such a small, out-of-the-way place that the serial killer played by Joseph Cotton could hide there without fear of detection.

Today, the geography of 21st-century California makes Santa Rosa inescapable.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Letter: Councilman a 'yes' for Measure C

To the community,

When I ran for City Council, I ran on a platform of repairing and maintaining our local roads in South Lake Tahoe. I knew our community needed a solution to fix the dangerous potholes and cracks that endanger drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. After much planning and thought, I voted yes to place Measure C, a half-cent sales tax measure, on the Nov. 7, 2017, ballot to fix our roads once and for all.



Tom Davis

Those of you know who me, know that I am no supporter of taxes. What I do support, however, is a smart, comprehensive plan to fix a serious problem in our community. Measure C will do just that by establishing dedicated funding to repair our deteriorating roads.

Measure C will fix potholes, repave streets and bring our roads up to the standards that our community deserves. No Measure C funding can ever be used for any purpose but road repairs, and strict fiscal accountability measures make sure every dollar is spent as required by law. It is a criminal offense to spend Measure C funding on anything but our roads in South Lake Tahoe.

Improved roads will raise our property values and improve safety for all South Lake Tahoe residents. Best of all, Measure C is the only solution that will ensure tourists and visitors pay their fair share for their impact on our roads. Many essential items and services that residents buy, including groceries and medicine, are exempt from the cost. We need Measure C now – the longer we wait the more expensive our

road problems will become.

When I vote yes on Measure C in November, I will do so knowing that passing this measure will fix potholes and make the repairs our neglected roads desperately need. I encourage you to join me in supporting this important measure for our city's future.

Tom Davis, South Lake Tahoe council member

Editorial: Vote no on South Tahoe's Measure C

By Lake Tahoe News Editorial Board

"Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value." – Joe Biden

That sentiment needs to be applied to the city of South Lake Tahoe and all other public agencies.

When looking at the city's budget for this fiscal year, which began Sunday, there are zero dollars for roads. If the former vice president of the United States is correct, that shows the five elected members of the City Council who last month approved this budget and the staff who presented it don't value roads.

Shame on all of you.

For months, even years, people associated with the city of South Lake Tahoe have touted how important roads are. They say what we drive our cars and ride our bikes on are in disrepair. They say something needs to be done. We agree.

But what are they doing?

Not a single road was paved in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2011 and 2016.

Still, from 1995 to today the city has spent \$11,792,473.10 on pavement rehabilitation. That is an average of \$512,7616.22 per year in each of the last 23 years. So, clearly, the city has money for roads when it wants to. At least some councils saw it as a priority.

This money was solely for paving.

Measure C on the November ballot is projected to bring in \$2.5 million annually. The proposal would have money going toward complete streets – meaning more than an overlay. It would include curbs, gutters and striping for bike lanes where appropriate.

We believe safe roads is one of the basic fundamentals government is supposed to provide. Clearly, based on this council's budget priorities, the five disagree.

This current group has neglected its duty to be fiscally prudent, cut costs, increase revenue and provide the basics for their constituents. They, instead, want people to pay a higher sales tax to fix the roads.

Measure C on the November ballot asks the residents of South Lake Tahoe to raise the sales tax from 7.75 percent to 8.25 percent.

While advocates say 75 percent of the local sales tax is paid by people who don't live in the city limits, they have not provided any proof to substantiate that fact. Even if tourists, and not just our neighbors in El Dorado and Douglas counties, were paying the bulk of the tax, that should not be a reason to say yes.

At some point the people we elect and nearly 200 workers

employed by the city need to make roads a priority. It is their job to work within the budget to provide all of us with safe roads. It is not the taxpayers job to come to the rescue every time they want something.

Higher taxes for the extras in life are one thing – like an increased hotel tax for recreation amenities or property taxes for improved K-12 facilities – are logical. Another tax for the basics, like roads, is ludicrous.

Come on city officials, do your job – make roads a priority by funding them out of the General Fund.

And voters, do your job – vote no on Measure C on Nov. 7.

Letter: Women's Fund gives thanks

To the community,

The Tahoe Women's Community Fund would like to thank all the community members who came out last Wednesday for the "Modern Family" premiere in support of local families. With a fun-filled evening of raffle prizes, popcorn, and good company, 150 locals raised almost \$6,000 for local families. These funds will go into the 2018 grant cycle of the TWCF and will be open for any eligible nonprofit to apply for.

This evening was made possible thanks to the hard work of the TWCF cabinet, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, and of course, the very popular TV show "Modern Family."

A special thank you Tiffany Zabaglo at LTRH, Kathleen Dodge of EDC, and Sally Young and her staff at "Modern Family."

Lastly, thank you to all the generous businesses who donated raffle prizes for our event: BlueZone Sports, Barton Health, Azul restaurant, South Shore Bikes, Outdoor Gear Lab, Epic Tahoe Adventure, Wendy and Kerry David, LTVA, "Modern Family," El Dorado County Film Department, Casia Hancock, and the Tides Project.

Our community is an amazing place, and I am proud to be a part of it. If you are interested in joining the TWCF and giving back more to our community in a collective giving process, check out our **website** and become a member today, or buy your ticket to join us for our membership celebration on Nov. 2, 6-9pm at Harvey's and learn more about this wonderful philanthropic organization. Thank you everyone.

Kathy Haven, Tahoe Women's Community Fund

Opinion: 1918 flu pandemic revolutionized public health

By Laura Spinney

Nearly 100 years ago, in 1918, the world experienced the greatest tidal wave of death since the Black Death, possibly in the whole of human history. We call that tidal wave the Spanish flu, and many things changed in the wake of it. One of the most profound revolutions took place in the domain of public health.

The world was a very different place in the first decades of the 20th century. Notably, there was no real joined-up thinking when it came to healthcare. Throughout the industrialized world, most doctors either worked for

themselves or were funded by charities or religious institutions, and many people had no access to them at all.

Public health policies—like immigration policies—were colored by eugenics. It was common for privileged elites to look down on workers and the poor as inferior categories of human being, whose natural degeneracy predisposed them to disease and deformity. It didn't occur to those elites to look for the causes of illness in the often abject living conditions of the lower classes: crowded tenements, long working hours, poor diet. If they sickened and died from typhus, cholera and other killer diseases, the eugenicists argued, then it was their own fault, because they lacked the drive to achieve a better quality of life. In the context of an epidemic, public health generally referred to a suite of measures designed to protect those elites from the contaminating influence of the disease-ridden rabble.

The first wave of the Spanish flu struck in the spring of 1918. There was nothing particularly Spanish about it. It attracted that name, unfairly, because the press in neutral Spain tracked its progress in that country, unlike newspapers in warring nations that were censored. But it was flu, and flu as we know is transmitted on the breath—by coughs and sneezes. It is highly contagious and spreads most easily when people are packed together at high densities—in favelas, for example, or trenches. Hence it is sometimes referred to as a “crowd disease.”

That first wave was relatively mild, not much worse than seasonal flu, but when the second and most deadly phase of the pandemic erupted in the autumn of 1918, people could hardly believe that it was the same disease. An alarmingly high proportion of patients died—25 times as many as in previous flu pandemics. Though initially they reported the classic symptoms of flu—fever, sore throat, headache—soon they were turning blue in the face, having difficulty breathing, even bleeding from their noses and mouths. If blue turned to black,

they were unlikely to recover. Their congested lungs were simply too full of fluid to process air, and death usually followed within hours or days. The second wave receded toward the end of the year, but there was a third and final wave—intermediate in virulence between the other two—in early 1919.

Flu is caused by a virus, but virus was a novel concept in 1918, and most of the world's doctors assumed they were dealing with a bacterial disease. This meant that they were almost completely helpless against the Spanish flu. They had no flu vaccine, no antiviral drugs, not even any antibiotics, which might have been effective against the secondary bacterial infections that killed most of its victims (in the form of pneumonia). Public health measures such as quarantine or the closing of public meeting places could be effective, but even when they were imposed this often happened too late, because influenza was not a reportable disease in 1918. This meant that doctors weren't obliged to report cases to the authorities, which in turn meant that those authorities failed to see the pandemic coming.

The disease claimed between 50 million and 100 million lives, according to current estimates, or between 2.5 and 5 percent of the global population. To put those numbers in perspective, World War I killed about 18 million people, World War II about 60 million. Rates of sickness and death varied dramatically across the globe, for a host of complex reasons that epidemiologists have been studying ever since. In general, the less well-off suffered worst—though not for the reasons eugenicists proposed—but the elites were by no means spared.

The lesson that health authorities took away from the catastrophe was that it was no longer reasonable to blame an individual for catching an infectious disease, nor to treat him or her in isolation. The 1920s saw many governments embracing the concept of socialized medicine—healthcare for all, delivered free at the point of delivery. Russia was the

first country to put in place a centralized public healthcare system, which it funded via a state-run insurance scheme, and others in Western Europe followed suit. The United States took a different route, preferring employer-based insurance schemes, but it also took measures to consolidate healthcare in the post-flu years.

In 1924, the Soviet government laid out its vision of the physician of the future, who would have “the ability to study the occupational and social conditions which give rise to illness and not only to cure the illness but to suggest ways to prevent it.” This vision was gradually adopted across the world: the new medicine would be not only biological and experimental, but also sociological. Public health started to look more like it does today.

The cornerstone of public health is epidemiology—the study of patterns, causes and effects in disease—and this now received full recognition as a science. Epidemiology requires data, and the gathering of health data became more systematic. By 1925, for example, all U.S. states were participating in a national disease reporting system, and the early warning apparatus that had been so lamentably lacking in 1918 began to take shape. Ten years later, reflecting the authorities’ new interest in the population’s “baseline” health, U.S. citizens were subjected to the first national health survey.

Many countries created or revamped health ministries in the 1920s. This was a direct result of the pandemic, during which public health leaders had been either left out of cabinet meetings entirely, or reduced to pleading for funds and powers from other departments. But there was also recognition of the need to coordinate public health at the international level, since clearly, contagious diseases didn’t respect borders. The year 1919 saw the opening, in Vienna, Austria, of an international bureau for fighting epidemics—a forerunner of today’s World Health Organization.

By the time the WHO came into existence, in 1946, eugenics had been disgraced and the new organization's constitution enshrined a thoroughly egalitarian approach to health. It stated that, "The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition." That philosophy wouldn't eliminate the threat of flu pandemics—the WHO has known three in its lifetime, and will surely know more—but it would transform the way human beings confronted them. And it was born of an understanding that pandemics are a social, not an individual problem.

Laura Spinney is a science journalist and novelist based in Paris.

Opinion: Embracing change in South Lake Tahoe

By Jim Wire

Change is inevitable and necessary to build a better future for the growth of Lake Tahoe. Lake Tahoe is in the backyard of several growing population centers. Its proximity means that more people are seeking a temporary escape to the lakes and the mountains. With success comes the challenges. How do you better manage tourism to make it a better experience for both the tourists and locals?

The South Lake Tahoe community is divided about multiple issues such as vacation home rentals (VHRs), housing shortage/affordable housing, redevelopment and the new pilot program of LimeBikes. Having now been a Tahoe resident for

over 34 years I've seen the town change and grow. I'd like to share some of my view points on these issues.

I'm sure many of you remember what it was like to survive the recession. There was loss of jobs, income, homes, etc. Tourism is now booming and we are all benefiting from the trickle-down economics. Vacation home rentals have become a large influence with the boost of tourism. It has created more jobs which are putting more dollars in the pockets of every local. Just ask all the people that service VHRs such as landscapers, maids, window cleaners, handymen, contractors, plumbers, snow removal, etc. Then ask all the people that serve them such as insurance brokers, accountants, doctors, dentists, etc. The list goes on.

With change comes adjustments. We were used to the quiet neighborhoods filled with empty homes, but now we see them being used on a more frequent basis. Our roads are more congested. To the disappointment of some, we now find ourselves sharing space with more people. Those that do live here, should consider themselves lucky and privileged. It seems fair that we should be able to share our space with those from out of the area who do not enjoy the beauty of Lake Tahoe daily.

I'm not suggesting that we should tolerate bad behavior from a vacationer next door. Rather I believe that with the existing VHR regulations, better practices can and will develop. As law enforcement improves and rental management companies incorporate better practices for both tourists and residents there is ample opportunity for better experiences and prosperity.

Both law enforcement and rental management companies may not have been prepared to handle the increasing noise nuisance as tourism came booming back after the recession. In a panic, the South Lake Tahoe City Council had beefed up the existing laws and added more regulations on top of it. My initial reaction

was that overregulation was not the answer. I'll be the first to admit that there were some good things that came out of it. Law enforcement had been given a specific directive for handling many of the nuisances and rental management companies became more responsive as well.

The City Council has already spent an enormous amount of time, money and energy on VHR regulation but apparently, they aren't done yet. On Sept. 5, they had considered more regulations that will ultimately reduce the number of VHR permits substantially. What they aren't considering are all the unforeseeable impacts to now existing jobs who service those VHR's.

What the City Council isn't telling you is that between the attrition rate of VHR permits and the slower VHR permit approval time, the number of homes with VHR permits are already declining. I believe that the City Council's time would be better spent on looking for ways to diversify and grow the local economy rather than extinguishing the one that is currently sustaining us. If they kill a bunch of jobs, they better be prepared to replace them.

My next topic touches on both the housing shortage and affordable housing issues. In the 34 years that I've lived here, there's always been a housing shortage. Like most locals, I worked a couple of jobs to make a living. It was 20 years before I purchased my first home. If you want to increase the percentage of primary home ownership, then wages must increase. In a tourist economy, businesses will never be able offer high enough wages to compete with the second home buyers. Without a more diversified economy, it's just not possible. The city could be more successful at increasing primary home ownership through attracting new industries and those able to work remotely from home or within a business center here.

It's true that local businesses are finding it difficult to

find employees because of the lack of affordable housing. It has more to do with a static supply and a growing demand. Then who is responsible for creating housing for the work force? Maybe it makes sense to dedicate housing that is deed restricted to low income individuals and families. In my opinion, the weekly motel rentals are a good candidate for work-force housing redevelopment. Businesses that benefit from workforce housing should also contribute to fund it. A new creation or reinstatement of a redevelopment agency (or similar group) could possibly bring new life and organization to this issue. It will take a combination of private funds, government subsidies and government cooperation. Working together, the private and public sector should be able to cut the red tape and make work-force housing happen within a reasonable amount of time.

Lastly, I'm surprised by the recent controversy over the LimeBikes. This is the thing that will give both visitors and locals better accessibility to enjoy our communities and business areas even more. These bikes are for general easy riding and fill the niche for anyone who wishes to get out and about without the addition of another traffic inducing vehicle. With more people cycling locally our bike shops will benefit with a boost in cycling Tahoe.

As commuter and recreational cycling grows, infrastructure must be developed to make it safer and more convenient. Already tourists are braving Highway 50 and risking their lives. Tahoe has been the recipient of more federal and state dollars because we are the gem of the nation. It's embarrassing that as locals, we show our appreciation by getting in our cars to go up and down the Lake Tahoe Boulevard corridor (Highway 50). Are we incapable of coming up with a better alternative? Our bus system has a lot of inefficiencies. We should applaud the efforts of the LimeBikes.

Redevelopment is the answer to environmental protection and it

has become the mantra of the TRPA for a good reason. There is still a need to redevelop much of the old and obsolescent commercial structures. Redevelopment cannot be accomplished without a public and private partnership. To build environmentally responsible structures you need developers. The process for redevelopment may not be perfect but it can be made better! By improving infrastructure for cycling and walkability, it should be possible to reduce Highway 50 traffic congestion.

South Lake Tahoe has been changing since I arrived 34 years ago and it will continue to do so. Much of it is positive but it doesn't come without some growing pains. What if there were affordable condos instead of run down motels? What if we had more locals working remotely from home which could bring higher wages to Lake Tahoe? With higher wages, maybe it is possible for more locals to afford a home. With better bike lanes along Highway 50 and throughout the neighborhoods, maybe it is possible to rely on bicycles as a better mode of transportation. Let's work together in a more positive and productive manner. With vision and focus, we can find a solution to make Lake Tahoe a better experience for tourists and locals. That's a Tahoe I want to live and thrive in.

Jim Wire is a real estate agent with Chase International.

Opinion: Embracing magic of Olympics

By Kathryn Reed

PARK CITY, Utah – I'm never going to be an Olympic athlete. I'm guessing that comes as no surprise to anyone.

I wanted to be. This probably isn't that unusual of a dream for kids who play sports. To me the Olympics are the pinnacle athletic competition— not the World Series or Super Bowl.

Swimming would have been my dream sport. I was a fish as a kid. I was in first or second grade when I started competing. Back stroke was my favorite. The farthest I aspired to was being on a leg of a relay in the Far Western Championships. This was the culmination of years of competing on an AAU team.

At some point, though, I had to realize I was pretty slow – at least in terms of Olympic speeds – or collegiate for that matter, probably even high school. (By high school I had traded a swim suit for a tennis skirt.) Nor did I have the discipline to put in the time it takes to be an athlete of that caliber.

When I was growing up the Olympics were purer, at least for much of the world. It really was amateurs competing; except for the Eastern Bloc countries. Back then it didn't cost as much to participate as it does today, nor was it so lucrative. Things really have changed.

The Olympics are big business now – for the competitor, the host city-country, sponsors, media and countless auxiliary entities.

Now professionals are competing. To me, this has tarnished the Games. But not enough to keep me from tuning in next February.

What might be extremely fun to see in 2018 is the U.S. men's hockey team because the NHL has said players under contract are not allowed to compete because it would impact the pro season. This means the U.S. team will be full of college athletes.

Could this be another miracle on ice like 1980 when it was a group of amateur young men who took home the gold in Lake Placid, N.Y., upsetting a slew of competitors – most notably

the Russians in the gold medal round?

While the Games are a little more than four months away, for the athletes the pinnacle of their careers is within sight. For most, they won't return home with a medal. It is wearing that red, white and blue, competing for their country, to say they are an Olympian that no one will ever be able to take from them. Once an Olympian, always an Olympian.

Plenty of more training will take place between now and then, but their enthusiasm this past week was palpable.

I returned to Tahoe on Thursday from a four-day Team USA media summit in Park City, Utah, for the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea. More than 100 athletes were in attendance, with six from the Tahoe area – Jamie Anderson, Maddie Bowman, Julia Mancuso, Nate Holland, David Wise and Travis Ganong. (We will tell their individual stories in the coming weeks.) Some are eager to repeat their successes and others ready to improve upon their 2014 performances in Sochi, Russia.

For some, it will likely be their last hurrah on this world stage. Age, aching bodies, and a younger generation are contributing factors. The R word – retirement – isn't being iterated by any of them because they have a job to do. That job is to start the World Cup ski and Grand Prix snowboard seasons this fall with gusto, all in the quest to podium in South Korea.

Let's hope world leaders don't escalate tensions to the point of jeopardizing these Games – in terms of safety and countries pulling out. Athletics should be a unifier. And now it appears we need these Olympics – for our country and the world – more than ever.

These athletes deserve the opportunity to compete and we spectators deserve the chance admire their resolve and to perhaps live vicariously through them if just for a moment in

time.