Letter: Tahoe needs to wake up and engage

To the community,

Two contentious mega projects – Martis Valley West and Squaw Valley – just got approved by the Placer County supervisors despite raucous public outcry, objections by all area conservation groups and the California attorney general.

In the case of Martis Valley West, even objections by the county Planning Commission couldn't stop the money train. Any kindergartner would know that the Squaw developer's claims of reducing traffic by 10 percent makes no sense.

Projects of this complexity are the devil's playground and even with huge groups of local citizens objecting, the governance structure in place for Tahoe doesn't represent local interest.

What's really insulting is the California attorney general got bought off for the mere price of $440,000. Kamala Harris backed off her criticism on impacts to Lake Tahoe if TRPA got the money. What a joke. Is this the new version of pay to play? Crystal Bay added two fire hydrants and replaced a short run of water lines on a short block for $470,000 plus. The $440,000 probably doesn't pay for the time spent by the public at these meetings.

How does this pittance mitigate any of the valid concerns regarding traffic, wildfires, and environmental stewardship? There is no specificity about what exactly the monies are supposed to pay for and all we know is that the money will be sucked into the TRPA black hole. Sadly, it will probably fund more TRPA public relations personnel.

All of this is a pathetic reminder of how out of control our

train wreck local government has become. No one is willing to make the tough decisions and the decision-makers don’t even live in the basin. Aspen, Colo., has awoken and instituted a moratorium on building in areas of town until a master plan can be brought forth. The public can’t trust anyone except for ourselves. We must build a local framework. North Lake Tahoe must incorporate. Contact preserve@ntpac.com if you want to help.

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance

Letter: Realtors say thank you

To the community,

The South Tahoe Association of Realtors would like to thank all of the generous donors that helped make our silent auction on Dec. 10 a success. We raised more than $1,200 toward future scholarship awards for South Tahoe graduating seniors and community service projects in South Lake Tahoe.

We want to thank: Tami Africa, Michelle Blue-Benedict, Blue Angel Café, Don & Janice Bosson, Mary Briggs, Elements Day Spa, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Homes & Land – Paul and Ann Johnson, Rhonda Keen, Dean Kellogg, Lakeside Inn & Casino, MontBleu Casino Resort & Spa, On Tahoe Time – Jana Nelson, Riva Grill, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Theresa Souers, South Shore Bikes, Yoga and Shala.

Sharon Kerrigan, STAR

Letter: Food donors help Bread & Broth

To the community,

In October, Bread & Broth reached the 27-year milestone for serving meals to the Lake Tahoe South Shore community. Currently, Bread & Broth serves a full-course Monday meal at St. Theresa Church Grace Hall and a soup and simple entrée at Second Serving at the Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church on Friday.

These two weekly meals and the food give away bags distributed at the meals are supported by generous stores, businesses and restaurants that have donated food, beverages and soups to our program throughout the past year.

Bread & Broth would like to acknowledge and extend a special thank you to the following businesses who are our partners in easing hunger in our community.

Donating twice weekly are Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, Raley's stores at the Y, and the Starbuck Stores at Heavenly, the Y and Crescent V. Grass Roots, Raley's at Crescent V Shopping Center, Safeway and Sugar Pine Bakery give on a weekly basis and twice monthly donations are made by Barton Hospital, Subway and Andy's Produce Market in Sebastopol. For the dogs and cats of our dinner guests, Lake Tahoe Humane Society & SPCA donates pet food every week.

Bread & Broth would also like to thank the following stores

and businesses that donate one to two times throughout the year: Curtis Fong Bike Rides, Fallen Leaf Lake Marina Store, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Kirkwood Mountain Resort, Sierra-at-Tahoe, and various farmers' market vendors during the summer.

The Second Serving on Friday wishes to thank our soup sponsors: MontBleu Resort Casino & Spa and Ridge Tahoe provide soup on a monthly basis and approximately every other month soups are provided by Blue Angel Café, Café Fiore, Freshies, Nepheles, Primos Italian Restaurant, Riva Grill, and Tep's Villa Roma.

When shopping, please consider supporting those stores, businesses and restaurants that support Bread & Broth. For more information on how you and your business can partner with Bread & Broth, please visit our **website**.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Letter: South Tahoe library says thank you

To the community,

The South Lake Tahoe Library would like to send a special thank you to the SOS Outreach teen volunteers for helping out with our Winter Extravaganza event.

They were a big help in assisting children, teens and adults in creating handmade holiday decorations.

We would also like to say thank you to Santa and Mrs. Claus for coming to the library to take photos and visit with the

children, which made the event extra special.

The staff at the South Lake Tahoe Library would also like to thank the community and the Friends of the Library for their continued support and to wish everyone a very Happy Holidays.

Kimberly Diebolt, library assistant

Opinion: Noting Lake Tahoe's accomplishments

By Casey Beyer

Four years ago this month, TRPA approved the 2012 Regional Plan. The landmark plan charts a course to restore Lake Tahoe's environment and revitalize our communities and it was forged through Herculean work by California, Nevada, local governments, the public, and dozens of other partners.

Many Tahoe Basin stakeholders once questioned if we could work together, but the Regional Plan ushered in an era of collaboration. Today, the answer is how can we work together more efficiently. By building and strengthening partnerships we have made remarkable progress. This year was no different.



Casey Beyer

Just this week, the icing on the 2016 cake of success came by Congress's reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. The bipartisan legislation authorizes up to $415 million in future federal funding appropriations for environmental restoration and conservation projects. Eight years of negotiation went into this legislation's passage, which was possible only because of the partnerships strengthened in 2012.

Working together, TRPA and Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team partners have also secured nearly $30 million in federal funding this year to remove hazardous fuels from Tahoe forests. These projects will improve forest health, reduce wildfire risk, and build upon the 65,000 acres of forest already treated. Next summer marks the tenth year since the Angora Fire. Work to reduce hazardous fuels and create fire-adapted communities is ongoing and it must remain a top priority as we confront the realities of a changing climate.

Local governments and highway departments are implementing transportation projects that benefit the environment, enhance our economy, and improve our quality of life. A new Class 1 bike path links South Lake Tahoe and Meyers and trails on the North and West shores continue to improve. Construction started this summer on a 3-mile trail from Incline Village to Sand Harbor. The showcase project will enhance recreation, improve safety, clean up stormwater pollution, and ease traffic and parking problems in one of Tahoe's most heavily-visited highway corridors.

TRPA's forthcoming regional transportation plan will further outline the projects and strategies needed to reduce traffic congestion and improve bike trails and transit for residents and a growing number of visitors to more easily travel around our communities and to popular recreation sites without having to get in their cars at all.

As I sat at the 20th annual presidential summit this August, I was inspired to hear President Obama give us his impression of Lake Tahoe. The president's comments brought joyous cheers from more than 7,500 people in attendance. It was Tahoe's first presidential visit in a decade and put a national spotlight on the lake and its environmental issues. While the president was joined on stage by Sen. Harry Reid, Dianne Feinstein, and Barbara Boxer, as well as California Gov. Jerry Brown, it was the sheer energy of the crowd and the beauty of Lake Tahoe that shined brightly that day.

The Environmental Improvement Program was launched at the first presidential summit in 1997 and today it is one of the nation's most successful environmental programs. Much of its success has been fueled by the original Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2000. Through the program, local, state, federal, nonprofit, and private sector partners have completed hundreds of projects to remove hazardous fuels from forests; restore streams, wetlands, and marshes; protect the lake from invasive species; upgrade hundreds of miles of roads to reduce stormwater pollution; and build bike and pedestrian trails.

Partners around the basin are working together like never before to implement the Regional Plan and projects that benefit the environment and our communities. TRPA is committed to doing its part, and is working on strategic initiatives to accelerate environmental redevelopment, upgrade transportation infrastructure and transit services, improve the health and resilience of Tahoe's forests, and examine and improve how we measure the region's success.

Congress's vote to reauthorize the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is the strongest sign yet that we are on the right track. It signals that our federal partners are committed to Lake Tahoe and that after two decades the lake's health remains a national priority. Collaboration is the cornerstone to our successes and it is the binding rule that we will see our progress grow in years to come.

Casey Beyer is the California Governor appointee to the TRPA Governing Board and the 2015-16 board chair.

Editorial: Calif. looks to lead Trump resistance

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 9, 2016, New York Times.*

Nobody knows yet what Donald Trump is going to do to immigration enforcement. Only a month has passed since the election, and the president-elect is no different from the candidate: erratic, self-contradictory, hazy on principles and policies.

But states and cities that value immigrants, including the undocumented, do not have the luxury of waiting and hoping for the best. They are girding for a confrontation, building defenses to protect families and workers from the next administration.

They fear that Trump, who ran on a pledge of mass deportation, dehumanizing immigrants and refugees, will remove humane discretion from immigration enforcement. They understand that not all unauthorized immigrants are criminals, that not all should be detained or deported and that the country cannot enforce its way out of its failure to reform unjust immigration laws.

Read the whole story

Letter: Warm room helps more than homeless

To the community,

Our community needs the temporary shelter that the warm room provides – not just for those homeless guests who use it, but for everybody else, too. Dickens' Ebenezer Scrooge could tell you why.

The warm room is open to keep people from freezing to death in the winter. It is open from mid-December to mid-April when temperatures are dangerously cold. The warm room is basically a big room with about 30 cots, a table with non-perishable food, donated items (clothes, boots, toiletries), and a toilet and sink. One staff member supervises and a crew of volunteers helps operations. Social workers volunteer their time and expertise to counsel guests to find jobs, housing, mental health counseling, medical assistance, or other needs. Local businesses and service groups are invited to donate time and resources to help with anything from haircuts and showers to job placement and blankets.



Annie Davidson

The warm room is not comfortable. Guests sleep in one room together, sharing everything from noises to smells. Food and

donations are limited. There is no shower. To stay, each guest must adhere to rules to maintain safety for the group as a whole. Guests cannot leave once they come in for the night, and they are expelled for breaking rules about drug/alcohol use or violence.

Some folks in South Tahoe are against the idea of a temporary shelter here. Their views focus on the idea that if the people find a shelter, they will stay here when they would otherwise leave. These critics of the warm room argue that the guests bring bad things to our community – and it's the warm room that is keeping them here. Just like Scrooge in the beginning of "A Christmas Carol", they suggest that it's someone else's problem to care for others.

As a volunteer last year, I saw the operations of the warm room firsthand: cleaning cots, vacuuming, stocking and cleaning the food table and donations, talking with guests and staff, listening. Helping out, I learned that I need the warm room as much as the guests do. I learned how much I need to be reminded that homelessness is complicated and those who are homeless are people, just like you or me. I learned that, by helping out, I gain compassion for others and receive kindness back a hundredfold. I learned about being grateful for the blessings in my life and how sharing blessings is at the heart of any strong community. I learned that telling people to go away when they are down and out will never solve our collective problems. For all these reasons, we all need the warm room.

You can help, too. Join the volunteer team or donate toiletries or non-perishable food. For more about the warm room project of the Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, go **online**.

And may God bless us, everyone.

Annie Davidson, South Lake Tahoe

Letter: Community came together

To the community,

For the fourth year the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and South Tahoe Refuse & Recycling teamed up to benefit Christmas Cheer All Year with a “drive and drop” at the LTVA’s California Visitors Center, and curbside collection on regular pick-up days. Once again we were overwhelmed by the generous response from our South Lake Tahoe community.

Thank you to all who participated in making the holidays a little brighter for those in need.

With gratitude,

Anne Sutterfield, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority

John Tillman, South Tahoe Refuse & Recycling

Letter: Virtual Race a success for cancer program

To the community,

On behalf of the organizers of the Lake Tahoe Virtual Race, I would like to thank Lake Tahoe community members and businesses as well as Barton Health employees and physicians

for their incredible generosity.

Barton Health recently hosted the first Virtual Race Challenge. Racers walked and ran for 72 days and recorded their mileage on a 72-mile digital map of Lake Tahoe. Together, with their financial contributors, the racers raised $4,044 in donations to help expand Barton Health’s Cancer Wellness Program.

I would also like to extend appreciation to the local businesses who gave $1,600 in post-race prizes to encourage and motivate participants. Special thanks to Heavenly Mountain Resort/Vail Resorts Epic Promise, Homewood Mountain Resort, Sierra-at-Tahoe ski resort, South Lake Tahoe recreation services, Lake Tahoe Community College, and the Barton Foundation.

It is incredible to watch our community come together to support a common cause. As a group, we can help make a significant difference for our friends, family, and neighbors who need our support.

The **Cancer Wellness Program** is free to community members undergoing cancer treatment and their families. The program currently includes guided exercise, yoga, and nutrition. The goal is to add and enhance services that support the mind, body, and spirit.

Kait M. Hemphill, wellness programs coordinator, Barton Education

Opinion: A Trump economy could make Singapore great again

By Jerry Nickelsburg

The Trump victory may well spell the end of America's previous Pacific Rim aspirations.

We will quite possibly see a significant shift of innovation and entrepreneurship westward in the Pacific Rim—indeed, so far West that the center of economic gravity ends up firmly in the Far East.

There are two big reasons for the shift. First, new trade policy is likely to diminish the competitive environment for domestic manufacturers. Second changes in immigration policy will make the U.S. less friendly to talented foreigners.

In particular, innovators and tech entrepreneurs from China (vilified in the campaign), Indonesia (the world's largest Islamic country), Malaysia (another Islamic country) and India (with a Muslim population of 175 million) will feel less welcome. Instead those smart, entrepreneurial innovators will be more inclined to migrate to another hub of technological innovation, perhaps Singapore, Bangalore, Toronto, Tokyo or Shanghai. Singapore, with centrality, two large universities and several small technical colleges and the new Singapore Technology Development Center, is especially ready to take advantage.

In 2015, Shanghai eased restrictions for foreign science and technology professionals willing to participate in the Chinese Communist Party's innovation initiatives at its new technology hub. When I was in Shanghai with a UCLA class last March, we learned that even though China ranked low on IP protection,

innovation in the new hub was starting to explode. Silicon Valley Bank, whose original mission was funding new ventures in California, is in a joint venture to fund to new Shanghai start-ups.

The U.S. election will push not only people but also the products they produce in a “westward to the East” direction. New innovative products coming out of expanding Asian tech centers will be traded among Asian countries and not as much with the U.S. This is because American trade policy will be less friendly toward imports that compete with U.S. manufacturing.

The rejection of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal and the consequent ascendency of the Chinese-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will reinforce this trend. Meanwhile, as our innovation edge erodes over time, the U.S. will likely lag in producing, and exporting, cutting-edge goods. Instead U.S. firms may come to copy what the foreign firms are doing much in the way that the Chinese now try to copy what quality U.S. firms are doing.

One might argue that the U.S. is a very large economy and therefore restrictive trade measures are not liable to have much impact. Domestic competition and the ability to sell in a very wealthy market should be attraction enough for entrepreneurs.

While that might be true, protectionist policies—what economists call import-substitution policies that include high tariffs on imports, like those suggested by Trump during the campaign—have been pursued by many countries and studied extensively. The consensus is that, by protecting domestic firms from more efficient international competitors, they hurt economic growth and manufacturing efficiency.

A desired move toward a more protectionist economy was one of the key takeaways of the Nov. 8 vote. The electorate may have

deliberately chosen international withdrawal, opting for stable but less efficient domestic industries over dynamic and nimble leading industries.

It is rare—and very valuable—for a place to achieve critical mass in a certain industry. Critical mass in entertainment occurred in Los Angeles because it was possible to film in a variety of nearby locations all year. Many states and countries have tried to counter it with subsidies, but Atlanta, Toronto and others have transferred wealth into Hollywood moguls' bank accounts in Beverly Hills, and not into a self-sustaining critical mass. The same is true with technology and Silicon Valley. The Silicon Corn Field in Iowa and Silicon Bayou in Louisiana are only shells of what the planners dreamed of for them.

We don't know right now which places are going to be most competitive and achieve critical mass in innovative industries as the Pacific Rim center shifts west. My money would be on Singapore, with its English common law, low taxes, affluent and well trained work force, major universities and central location. If Singapore (or insert your top candidate here) in fact hits critical mass, it will be very hard to dislodge. So even if the U.S decides to reverse course on immigration and trade policy in the future, we will have to live with the consequences of this shift.

In 2011, Joshua Kerlantzik in an article in Current History argued that the 21st Century was "not quite yet" the Asian Century. A shift to the west of innovation and technology may well change that.

Jerry Nickelsburg, an economist at UCLA Anderson School of Management, writes the Pacific Economist column.