

Victim in South Tahoe fight dies; no arrests ever made

By Kathryn Reed

The man involved in a South Lake Tahoe bar fight in May has died and still there has never been a single arrest stemming from the now fatal incident.

"Zippy passed away last night. His grandma Rose, my wife Debbie and myself were with him," Wayne Penaranda told *Lake Tahoe News*. He died Oct. 17, about four hours after the trach was removed.

Derek Penaranda, better known to his family and friends as Zippy, was in town to celebrate his 30th birthday.



Derek
"Zippy"
Penaranda
and Katie
Musselwhite
had hoped
to one day
marry.
Photo/Provided

That celebration took a tragic turn when a phone call came in the early hours of May 20 telling Debbie and Wayne Penaranda to get to Barton Memorial Hospital.

Penaranda didn't leave Mo's Place on his own. From Barton he went to Renown Medical Center in Reno. He then was moved to two specialty rehabilitation facilities in the Bay Area. But his insurance stopped covering him because he was not making progress, according to his dad.

Besides all the normal strife that comes with a loved one in such a serious medical state, Penaranda said it was hard on the family, who lives in Ripon in the Central family, to be more than 100 miles from Zippy. Eventually the younger Penaranda was at Rossmoor Care Facility in Walnut Creek – still 100 miles away.

On Aug. 20 he was “neurologically classified as permanently vegetative state,” Pernaranda said of his son.

Pernaranda said he spoke with El Dorado County Assistant District Attorney Joe Alexander on Sept. 28 “to cover some issues, including the possibility of this case turning into a homicide.”

South Lake Tahoe police when questioned Thursday morning about why no arrests have been made, issued a press that says, “The circumstances surrounding Penaranda's death are still under investigation by the South Lake Tahoe Police Department. There is no information being released at this time concerning the possibility of criminal charges being filed, what those charges would be, or when they would be filed.”