

S. Tahoe woman on Grammy-winning album



Anne Roos at her first Grammy's is a winner.

Photo/Provided

The album South Lake Tahoe's Anne Roos contributed to won a Grammy on Feb. 8 for best New Age Album.

"Winds of Samsara" is the album, with track No. 8 "Eyes of Wonder" where Roos comes in with her harp. Ricky Kej composed the album and played keyboards, while Wouter Kellerman was the flutist.

Roos attended Sunday's awards ceremony in Los Angeles. The presentation for her category was made before the televised performance.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Chuck

Chuck is a 3-year-old American Staffordshire terrier who is smart, friendly, and well behaved.

He walks nicely on the leash, and knows sit, stay, and down.

Staffordshire terriers are often compared to pit bulls, but while they have similar characteristics, they are generally shorter and stockier. Both breeds are known for being loyal, fearless, and affectionate. Chuck appears to have all of these traits, and will make a great pet for just about any household.

Chuck is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information

on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

STPUD plots rate plan for capital upgrades

By Kathryn Reed

Pros and cons of various time lines to complete capital improvement projects were discussed last week by the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

No action was taken, but the board is on track to go forward with the multi-year rate increase plan for sewer and water customers that was approved last year. Rates will go up another 6 percent on the sewer side and 6.5 percent on the water starting July 1.

The district looks at projects in 10-, 20- and 30-year intervals.

The three biggest issues facing South Tahoe PUD are installing the state mandated water meters, replacing water lines so there is adequate fire flow and replacing the aging sewer system.

The remaining 7,000 meters should be installed to all residential customers within five years. The district obtained a \$21.5 million zero percent loan from the state to be able to complete the project.

With the projected rate increases going forward, it will take

the district 30 years to install all of the water lines to meet today's standards. While inflation is built into budgets when looking forward, it is impossible to know what other rules might come down the pike.

In the next 10 years it means spending \$69.5 million, and \$173.8 million in 20 years. The district has spent \$59.4 million in the last 10 years on water projects.

Staff looked at three alternatives – no water or sewer improvements, appropriate/adequate improvements that would accomplish the goals in 10 to 15 years. This is the least risky choice, but also the most expensive.

The board is going with the third, or delayed, plan. For the water line replacement to be done in a 30-year period, it means rate increases of 6.5 percent through 2017, 5 percent in 2018, 2 percent between 2019 and 2024, and 4.5 percent from 2025-44. The currently quarterly water fee is \$130.25, by 2034 it would be \$288.92, and \$448.67 by 2044 if the increases are approved.

For the \$140.6 million worth of sewer improvements that have been identified to be completed in 20 years, the rates would have to increase by 6 percent in years 2015-18, 2 percent from 2019-24 and 4 percent from 2025-2034.

The quarterly bill will go from \$100.02 to \$210.49.

Board member Jim Jones advocated for a more aggressive plan to replace the infrastructure. Other board members want a more tempered approach that people would be better able to afford.

Only two people showed up for the Feb. 5 workshop – a former board member and a contractor.

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Notes:

- There will be a board workshop March 3 at 2pm.
 - May 7, 6pm – public hearing.
 - May 21, 2pm – public hearing and consider rate approval.
 - All meetings are at the district office, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.
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Opinion: EDC refuses to sever ties with ex-workers

By Larry Weitzman

Jorge Santayana said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat.” It seems the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors is again guilty of violating this basic principle of leadership.

At the Jan. 27 BOS meeting there was a small innocuous item on the consent calendar agenda. The consent calendar is supposed to be used for perfunctory matters that are easily understandable and have little consequence to EDC. Past CAO Terri Daly snuck things through on the consent calendar regularly; her most infamous use was when she was the CAO of Amador County when she had an item on the consent calendar that ended up costing Amador County nearly \$20 million.



Larry Weitzman

This particular item was consent item No. 25 wherein the CAO was recommending the BOS sign an amendment to a contract with Alliant Insurance Services Inc. to provide employee benefit consulting for human resources and risk management extending it until Jan. 31, 2016, and increasing the fee charged to EDC by \$100,000, not to exceed \$610,000. Not exactly chump change. But wait there is more to this item, a lot more.

First is the failure to disclose pertinent information on the agenda item with respect to this Alliant contract. It was the county auditor, Joe Harn, doing his job as auditor who put CAO Pam Knorr and the BOS on notice the day before the hearing. He alerted them to the very important fact that the county administrator on this contract from the time of her employment at EDC until her termination about a month ago was none other than Kim Kerr. Harn also advised the CAO, two BOS members and county counsel that Kerr's new employer was, that's right, Alliant who now wants to extend the contract for another \$100,000. Perhaps that fact alone creates an air of impropriety. We all know how incompetent Kerr was just by a simple examination of the Van Dermiden Study and/or a recent Amador County Grand Jury report.

The actual text of Harm's email to the CAO, BOS members Brian Veerkamp and Ron Mikulaco, and the county counsel is as follows: "I think we should disclose in big bold letters that Kim Kerr works for Alliant. Kim used to be the contract administrator for Alliant. This looks real bad. We should make sure that it doesn't look like we are trying to sneak one by the public." Harn then suggested that the matter be continued

for a week for research, deliberation with all the facts and disclosures.

At the Jan. 27 meeting and now with obvious knowledge of this disturbing fact, the acting CAO, Knorr, said to the BOS with respect to this item No. 25 that a former county employee who administered this contract now works for Alliant. What Knorr left out was the employee's name, Kim Kerr. That would be considered an incomplete disclosure, considering the circumstances.

But a more significant problem is within the contract itself and its administration requirements. At the hearing during a short discussion I revealed the name of the county employee involved and suggested that the contract needed study and the possible conflict of interests of Kerr and Alliant. At the Feb. 3 BOS meeting I went into more detail as to the potential conflicts and significant, potentially negative, contract provisions.

First, the contract plainly provides that on top of their fees of \$100,000 or more as specified, Alliant can charge insurance placement fees. In other words, if Alliant places 500 employees with XYZ insurance company, Alliant may get a placement fee of so many dollars an employee over and above their stated monetary compensation. Making matters worse, Alliant has to only report these fees to guess who? That's right Kim Kerr. Do you think anyone at EDC knows of this or the amount? Doubtful. Additionally these placement fees could be considered a conflict of interest with respect to Alliant as to what is in the best interest of their client, EDC; Alliant earning the best placement fees or EDC's obtaining the best health insurance deal?

Second, is the fact that Alliant could pack the employee premiums with expenses charged to Alliant from its several subsidiaries, raising the cost of insurance to every EDC employee. This also was apparently unknown to Knorr and the

BOS and probably to all EDC employees. But evidently the BOS and Knorr didn't care to put the matter over for some understanding and investigation. It was a 4-0 vote approving the contract, with Mikulaco abstaining.

In the aftermath of passing this item, Harn, the county auditor, sent an email to Knorr asking for a contact at Alliant so he could ascertain what, if any, additional fees did Alliant charge the county. Instead of cooperation, Knorr stonewalled Harn in saying you can work through her or her designee and they would work with the appropriate contact at Alliant. What is Knorr afraid of? Don't you love government transparency especially when transparency eludes the auditor?

According to this contract, only Kerr or Daly was to be advised of these fees. Keeping that knowledge from the county could have been beneficial for Alliant and bad for EDC. Was Kerr feathering her bed and that of Alliant at the same time? We don't know as of yet. But the BOS (except for Mikulaco) in its finite, limited wisdom and knowledge approved the contract instead of more investigation and a further vetting as suggested by the county auditor. It's obvious that Knorr and the BOS didn't care or protect the taxpayers and employees of EDC, even though they had more than a chance and were so advised prior to their vote with enough information that more vetting was absolutely necessary.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.

Alcohol not a good choice for

athletes

By Devon Jackson, Outside

If you exercise, chances are you also drink. I know this because according to a study from Northwestern Medicine, people tend to drink more alcohol on the days they've exercised. Especially beer.

It could be because we reward ourselves with a post-run brewski, or because we've used up all of our willpower on exercise, so we have none left to deny ourselves that drink or two. Whatever the reason, if you're drinking thinking that it'll help you sleep, relax your muscles, numb the pain, or increase blood flow to help you recover faster, as they say in AA, that's just stinkin' thinkin'.

"It's detrimental to drink alcohol after any type of exercise or workout," says Professor Matthew Barnes of New Zealand's Massey University School of Sport and Medicine. "I've never really seen anything that says it's useful as far as recovery."

He's also never seen anything that says alcohol is useful for completion. Barnes' most recent study on the impact of alcohol on sports performance and recovery in men concluded that "the consumption of even low doses of alcohol prior to athletic endeavour should be discouraged due to the ergolytic effects of alcohol on endurance performance." Ergolytic meaning performance impairing. These effects, the study's authors wrote, "are likely to inhibit recovery and adaptation to exercise."

Read the whole story

Key figure in CalPERS bribery scandal lived large

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Living like a high roller right to the bitter end, Alfred Villalobos had himself chauffeured to the shooting range where police say he killed himself last month, putting a bullet through his head.

The man accused of bribing the chief executive of California's giant public pension fund was staying at the posh Silver Legacy Resort Casino in downtown Reno when he rode a chauffeured limousine Jan. 13 to an indoor shooting range on the outskirts of the city. Once there, he downed two cans of Red Bull purchased from a vending machine, rented a pistol and stepped into the range.

Villalobos, a stocky 71-year-old with jet black hair who used to live in Stateline, fired more than 100 rounds at a silhouette target before shooting himself, according to an investigative report compiled by Reno police. He died a little more than a month before he was supposed to go on trial on bribery charges in California, where he was facing up to 30 years in prison.

Villalobos' macabre demise effectively ended the federal government's prosecution of the bribery case that shook the nation's largest public pension fund – but left a tangle of questions about the finances of the man in the middle of the scandal.

With the California Public Employees' Retirement System, earning \$50 million in commissions off the pension fund investments he brokered for his big Wall Street clients. But after the state of California named him in a civil suit in 2010, claiming he bribed his way to his millions, he filed for

bankruptcy protection and watched as court officials systematically liquidated his treasures to pay his debts.

His Lake Tahoe mansion was sold, along with a vacation home in Hawaii. Out went the fancy wine collection and the multimillion-dollar art collection. Toward the end, Villalobos was getting by on just \$1,800 a month, mostly from Social Security and Medicare, said Sheila Van Duyne, one of his lawyers.

Read the whole story

English Beat rocks despite issues at Vinyl



The English Beat rocked Hard Rock Lake Tahoe on Feb. 7.
Photo/Adrian
Boot/UrbanImage.tv

By Kim Wyatt

STATELINE – Tahoe is going to have some sore knees, and it's

no thanks to snow. The English Beat brought its signature ska to a lively show at the newly opened Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Saturday night. The almost two-hour set was packed with crowd-pleasing tunes that afforded the largely middle-aged mob a chance to bop and fist pump to the late seventies Birmingham sound.

Progenitors of the 2-Tone ska revival, The English Beat brought hit after hit to the audience of a few hundred, who seldom stopped dancing. Founding Beat member, vocalist, and lead guitar player Dave Wakeling, a rebel in a red polo shirt, brought an impish charm to a show riddled with sound issues.

The concert was staged at Vinyl – formerly the Cabaret – touted by the Hard Rock as an “intimate” setting. Intimate is right. A few dozen folding chairs lined the wall, and tall tables were scattered randomly on the dance floor in the tiny showroom. Since this was The English Beat, the expectation was that we would not be sitting, but it’s a fairly bleak environment in contrast to the vibrant scene just outside the door. A porta-bar in the corner provided the best cocktail value at the Hard Rock.

Because this is the Hard Rock, I reasoned, perhaps they focused on the sound in the smaller venue, rather than its appearance. I expected the Hard Rock to have state-of the art-sound. But the sound was unbalanced and muddled, with lyrics to even the most straightforward songs, like “Sooner or Later” and General Public’s hit “Tenderness,” unintelligible. Fortunately, the audience knew the words and helped carry the songs through.

Wakeling was joined by band members Rhythmm Epkins (drums, vocals), Matt Morrish (sax, vocals), Kevin Lum (keyboards, vocals), Larry Young (bass, vocals) and Jared Palazzolo (guitar, vocals). Sharing the stage on this leg of the tour, Trinidadian reggae singer King Schascha brought the rasta, calling for love and unity, and Roddy Radiation, formerly of

the Specials, guested for a three-song set injecting the show with some Specials-style cool.

In addition to English Beat hits, the band performed songs from Wakeling's post-English Beat band with Ranking Roger, General Public. The English Beat also performed three great covers, "Tears of a Clown," "I'll Take You There," and "Can't Get Used to Losing You." And in testimony to Wakeling's songwriting talent, even the new songs sounded like hits.

But the sound. The sound was so inconsistent it detracted. Wakeling, visibly frustrated by a lack of communication with the sound crew, carried on.

"I hope you can hear my vocals, because I can't," he said during "I Confess," a song that must have been vocally challenging even in his prime. During other songs, instruments would drop off or disappear.

Yet the hits kept coming, culminating in a rocking performance of the 1980 anthem "Mirror in the Bathroom."

In the end, fans are willing to forgive a lot to fist pump for a night. I wanted to muse here about mortality and nostalgia – these were the songs of my freshman year in high school (and music is probably the only part I want to remember). The English Beat is now an oldies act. Even so, the writers of infectious songs that have permeated our culture should have better sound. While it's great to have another affordable music venue in town, here's hoping that Vinyl gets a tune-up.

Kim Wyatt was an arts reviewer for the Anchorage Daily News and now owns Bona Fide Books in Meyers.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Friends of the Library in South Lake Tahoe is having a book sale March 28 at 10am. Book donations are being accepted now – 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

- Tahoe Donner Association's general manager, Robb Etnyre, is now on the California Association of Community Managers board of directors.
 - Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for the week.
 - The 12th annual Drug Store Project is March 31 at Lake Tahoe Community College. It is a drug prevention even for sixth-graders. For more info, email lhuard@ymail.com.
 - The Wild & Scenic Film Festival is March 26 at 6pm at MontBleu in Stateline. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased online.
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Fitness training offered for LT running events

Barton Health's is initiating a Train for an Event Fitness Challenge from March to June.

Fitness experts will provide the training, skills, and workouts to prepare participants for the Rock Tahoe Half Marathon or Burton Creek Trail Run. This includes sports

performance clinics, individualized weekly workout plans, and training sessions.

The 16-week training challenge starts March 2 and runs through June 21.

Barton Health's certified coaches will lead six training sessions each week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Sessions will focus on cardio and core workouts, speed and interval training, cross-training, and distance walk and/or run sessions.

The training culminates with the Rock Tahoe Half Marathon on June 20 or the Burton Creek Trail Run on June 21. Burton Creek options include a 6K (3.7 miles), 12K (7.5 miles), half marathon (13.1 miles), or 50K (30 miles). The Rock Tahoe Half Marathon will end at the Hard Rock Casino with a pool party.

All participants receive a Barton Health tech-shirt, unlimited access to training sessions, and team discounts on event registration. Discounts are \$15 off the Rock Tahoe Half Marathon and 15 percent off any Burton Creek Trail Run.

This program costs \$99. For details or to register, email Krista Carson at kcarson@bartonhealth.org or call 530.600.1958.

North Tahoe-Truckee promoting shopping locally

The Business Association Chamber Collaborative in conjunction with the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association launched the Show Your Love-Shop Local this January. The year-

round campaign supports local businesses and the economy in North Lake Tahoe and Truckee.

It comes on the heels of a successful Shop Local Holiday Contest that gathered \$407,476 in local revenue.

The goal of the North Tahoe Truckee Shop Local branding and awareness campaign is to stimulate the local economy and promote shopping locally to help grow business volume year-round. The program is designed to keep dollars in the local economy, reduce the carbon footprint of traveling to shop, protect local character, and support friends and neighbors. Money spent at local businesses recirculates through wages and taxes, benefiting the economic health of the entire community.

A shop local starter kit is \$15, which includes a Shop Local window decal, 10 Shop Local love stickers, explanatory postcards, a plastic display holder, and a listing on the Shop North Tahoe Truckee website.