Solution to South Tahoe's city attorney vacancy

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe will be using the law firm Burke, Williams & Sorensen out of Oakland when City Attorney Tom Watson leaves at the end of the month.

Nira Doherty, a partner in the firm, has been on retainer with the city for a while. She is used in special cases, most notably the marijuana regulations. Doherty worked in the South Lake Tahoe City Attorney's Office prior to going into private practice.

Mayor Austin Sass told *Lake Tahoe News*, "She is the foreseeable city attorney until council decides to do something different."

Mayor Pro Tem Wendy David told *Lake Tahoe News*, "We are offering Nira Doherty an interim city attorney position."

There is disagreement among the council members whether a full time city attorney should be hired as has been the norm in South Lake Tahoe or if a firm should be on retainer and do the legal work.

"For me she is a good fit for what our needs are right now. We have not talked about anything beyond that right now," Sass said.

Sass said the appointment has no end date, which contradicts David's statement saying this is interim, which by definition is temporary.

Sass said the details of Doherty's employment have not been finalized so they are not yet public information. This means it's not known what she will be making or what the city will

be paying the firm for her to be here.

Sass said Doherty will be in town for council meetings and other times, but the structure of her time in South Lake Tahoe or hours doing work for the city has not been released.

Sass said he spoke to recruitment firms who said even if the city were to want to hire an in-house city attorney, it would be best to start the process after the holidays. This was the same thing the city manager told him and the rest of the council when Watson tendered his resignation earlier this summer.

International tourism to U.S. declined in early 2017

By Elaine Glusac, New York Times

Fewer international travelers came to the United States during the first few months of this year than over the same period last year, confirming concerns of some in the travel industry.

Figures released by the U.S. Department of Commerce show a drop in international visitors to the United States by close to 700,000 in the first quarter of 2017 compared to the previous year. European countries were down 10.1 percent, and Mexico was off 7.1 percent in the quarter. The largest drops were from the Middle East and Africa, though they represent a much smaller percentage of overall travel to the United States.

Overall, 697,791 fewer foreigners visited the United States in the first three months of the year, down 4.2 percent to 15.8

million. According to Tourism Economics, a branch of Oxford Economics based in Wayne, Pa., that analyzes travel data, the drop represents a loss of nearly $2.7 billion in spending.

Read the whole story

Rangers leading hikes to Sand Harbor overlook

Park rangers will be providing free, guided hikes to Sand Harbor overlook on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1.

The hike is a four-mile loop and offers views of Sand Harbor. The hike is moderately difficult. Bring water, lunch, sunscreen, a hat and sturdy hiking boots.

Meet at Spooner Lake State Park parking lot at 9:30am. Ranger will drive participants up to the Marlette Peak Campground to start the hike. Sign-ups are required and space is limited to 12 each day. The day will end about 4pm.

Grant money from ACC available to area nonprofits

Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority has $51,000 to give to local nonprofits from proceeds from the American Century Championship.

Applications are due Oct. 13.

LTVA in partnership with NBC Sports and American Century Investments, already gave $62,000 to volunteer organizations that worked at the event and to other initiatives during tournament week. Recipients included area high schools, Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, South Lake Tahoe Booster Club, Tahoe Fund and Gene Upshaw Scholarship Fund.

The application is available **online** under Community News and must be received by noon Oct. 13. Recipients will be presented with checks at the LTVA board meeting on Nov. 9 at 3pm.

Lawsuit aims to block oil drilling on U.S. land in Nev.

By Scott Sonner, AP

Environmentalists have sued a U.S. agency to try to stop it from allowing oil and gas drilling on a vast stretch of federal land in Nevada, where the government is reversing protections put in place nine months ago under the Obama administration.

The Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity say the U.S. Bureau of Land Management illegally failed to consider potential consequences of hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking, ranging from harm to the greater sage grouse to contamination of fragile desert water sources and emission of climate-altering greenhouse gases.

The suit filed last week in federal court in Reno seeks an

order forcing the bureau to rescind oil drilling leases it sold in June for as low as $2 per acre on three land parcels covering about 9 square miles.

Read the whole story

Poll: Housing a reason for Californians to move

By Angela Hart, Sacramento Bee

More than half of California voters say the state's housing affordability crisis is so bad that they've considered moving, and 60 percent of the electorate supports rent control, according to a statewide poll.

The findings from UC Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies reflect broad concerns Californians have over the soaring cost of living. Amid an unprecedented housing shortage, rents have skyrocketed and tenants have faced mass evictions, especially in desirable areas.

Of the 56 percent of voters who said they've considered moving, 1 in 4 said they'd relocate out of state if they did.

Read the whole story

Opinion: California lawmakers and their taxes



Ted Gaines

By Ted Gaines

Following the conclusion of the 2017 legislative session, I'd like to highlight just a few of the ways the Legislature voted to increase taxes and make California less affordable.

Gas Tax (Senate Bill 1)

The Legislature passed and the governor signed a transportation proposal that imposes $52 billion in permanent new gas taxes and user fees on motorists. Starting this fall, every motorist in California will pay an additional 12 cents per gallon of gasoline and 20 center per gallon of diesel. That might not sound like much, but with this and the increase in annual vehicle registration fees by as much as $175 per vehicle, it adds up to an average of $350 per household over the course of a year. If you're a commuter, live in the country, or own a business, the cost could be much higher.

Cap-and-Trade Extension (Assembly Bill 398)

The Legislature passed and the governor signed an extension of the state's cap-and-trade program. Fuels under the program already adds 11 cents to every gallon of gas. The new gas tax adds an additional 12 cents to every gallon (that number will

go up every year after 2021), and the cap-and-trade extension could add another 73 cents to every gallon of gas on top of that. While the rest of the country is paying $2 a gallon for gas, we are going to be paying a dollar and a half a gallon just in taxes and climate fees. A large portion of the money collected through the cap-and-trade program has been allocated to fund high-speed rail.

Housing Package (Senate Bill 2)

Included in a package of housing bills was Senate Bill 2, which the Legislature has approved and sent to the governor for signature. The bill would impose a $75 to $225 “recording fee” on all real estate transactions. The fee would generate as much as $258 million per year. Instead of addressing the housing crisis by reducing the obstacles to housing development, legislators have chosen to put the cost on the backs of California taxpayers.

Legislative Democrats have touted this year as ‘one of the most productive sessions in California history.’ I suppose this is accurate if you define ‘productive’ as continuing to pile on taxes and make California increasingly unlivable for businesses and hardworking working families. I will not give up. I will continue to stand up for California taxpayers that are getting nickeled and dimed at every turn.

Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou counties.

Calif. lawmakers approve $4B ballot measure for parks, water projects

By Paul Rogers, Bay Area News Group

Immigration and housing dominated the headlines from Sacramento this year. But with little fanfare, state lawmakers working with Gov. Jerry Brown also approved a sweeping measure to provide $4.1 billion in new funding for parks and water projects – everything from building Bay Area hiking trails to expanding Lake Tahoe beaches to constructing new inner city parks in Los Angeles.

The bill, SB5, passed near midnight Friday and now sits on Brown's desk. If he signs it, as expected, it would be placed on the June 5 statewide ballot. It also would represent the first statewide parks and water bond to appear on a state ballot in 12 years, since Proposition 84 in 2006, which won approval of 54 percent of voters and provided $5.4 billion.

Unlike other parks bonds in the past – all the way back to California's first parks bond, which voters approved in 1928 to preserve areas like Mount Diablo, Mount Tamalpais and Del Norte Redwoods state parks – this one is heavily tilted toward urban parks and Southern California, along with water improvements in low-income communities.

Read the whole story

Susie Laney – 1967-2017



Susie Laney

Susan (Susie) Patricia Laney passed away peacefully at home on Sept. 12, 2017, surrounded by her family after a two-year battle with cancer. She was 49.

Susie was born Nov. 24, 1967, with her surviving twin sister, Lisa Watson, to Paul Watson and Beverly Pinkley.

Susie worked as an assistant to appraiser Randee Pelcher in Gardnerville. For the past eight years she worked as the office manager for physician Scott Southard.

She was a devoted wife, loving mother, giving sister and dedicated friend. She was an active member of LifePoint Church in Minden and Sierra Community Church in South Lake Tahoe. Susie gave of herself to the In Jesus Name Medical Ministry and Overcomers Outreach. She was a grateful recovering addict and shared the gospel with everyone she met.

Her favorite thing to do was be on the lake in the sun with family and watching her daughter play sports.

Susie is survived by her children, Austin Robinson and Harmony

Laney; husband Shannon Laney and his two children, Brittany Laney and Brandon Laney; twin sister Lisa Watson, and sisters, Donna Allard and Diane Watson; brother Daniel Watson; father Paul Watson and stepmother, Vivian Watson; aunt Dorothy Watson; and many in-laws, cousins, nieces and nephews.

Susie was preceded in death by her mother, Beverly Pinkley; brother, Michael Watson; and daughter, Cierra Lisa Watson Barcus.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, make donations to Overcomers Outreach c/o Sierra Community Church, 1165 Sierra Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. You may also donate **online**.

Susie's celebration of life will be Sept. 23 at 10am at Sierra Community Church, 1165 Sierra Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· Troy Matthews is leaving Tahoe Youth & Family Services to be executive director of the Barton Foundation.

· The Nevada Department of Agriculture signed an agreement with Food Bank of Northern Nevada to provide emergency food assistance to the 95,000 food-insecure individuals in Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lyon, Mineral, Pershing, Storey, Washoe and White Pine counties.

· Cram-A-Cruiser event, which benefits B&B 4 Kids, will be Sept. 30 from 10am-3pm at Grocery Outlet in South Lake Tahoe.

· The Sept. 29 unveiling of Champions Plaza in South Lake Tahoe has been canceled because the statue is not ready. It's

anticipated the unveiling will be later this year.