Douglas County doctor set to be paroled faces murder charges in Arkansas

By Steve Timko, Reno Gazette-Journal

A former Douglas County emergency room doctor, scheduled to be released Sunday from Nevada on second-degree kidnapping charges, was charged Friday with capital murder in the death of the ex-husband of the woman he kidnapped.

Arkansas authorities will seek the extradition of Richard Conte, 61, to face murder charges in the May 18, 2002, deaths of Carter Elliott, 49, and his employee, Timothy Robertson, 25, in Conway, Ark.

Both Conte and Elliott had been married to Lark Gathright-Elliott. Conte's marriage to her in 2001 lasted three months.

A month after the pair were slain in Arkansas, Conte kidnapped Gathright-Elliott from Utah and took her to his Clear Creek Canyon subdivision home. A contract physician with Carson-Tahoe Hospital, he drugged her. Sheriff's deputies rescued her.

Conte pleaded guilty in 2003 to second-degree kidnapping and to illegally administering a controlled substance and received a 15-year sentence.

Read the whole story

Aug. 31 deadline to win a Lake Tahoe News T-shirt

Lake Tahoe News turns 2-years-old next month. We think everyone should wear a *Lake Tahoe News* T-shirt that day to celebrate. It would be your gift to us.

We have T-shirts to give away. Just post a comment stating what you like about *Lake Tahoe News* or what story you've liked that *LTN* has covered in the past two years. You must be willing to have your full name posted as one of the winners. Winners will be picked randomly.

If you aren't picked to win a free T-shirt, there are other ways to get one.

The older shirts are for sale at the Tuesday farmers' market in South Lake Tahoe for $15.

The other way to get one of the new T-shirts like what will be given away as part of *LTN's* birthday celebration is for subscribers to send in a check of $40 or more. For each check received, in addition to the T-shirt, you will be added to our special NEWS list. People on this list will qualify for special benefits like the recent ticket give-away to the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament.

(Subscribe by putting your email address in at the bottom right of the home page. Then you will receive the morning digest.)

Send checks to Lake Tahoe News, P.O. Box 13406, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151 or pay via credit card through PayPal on the website at the bottom right of the home page.

Please include your email address so we can ensure you are subscribed to receive the daily digest. To receive the daily

email, which lists what has been posted in the last 24 hours, enter your email address at the bottom right of the home page.

Please don't forget to include your mailing address and shirt size – S, M, L, XL or 2X.

And thank you for making *Lake Tahoe News* the success that it is with nearly 60,000 readers a month in more than 100 countries, and more than 3,500 cities.

Kathryn Reed, LTN publisher

Opinion: Football field donors recognized by LTUSD

By Angie Keil

The excitement at South Tahoe High School was palpable Thursday, as athletes, coaches, donors, and staff members poured in to celebrate the completion of the artificial turf field. The 44-year-old stadium has undergone major renovations since June and the South Tahoe Vikings will play the first game under the lights next Sept. 2 against Fallon.

"This renovation project will revitalize our programs and instill a renewed sense of community spirit," Superintendent Jim Tarwater said. "We are so proud and appreciative of how members of this community have stepped up to help make this a reality".

A Buy-a-Brick campaign began in May, with over 100 bricks purchased to date. The bricks will be installed at the new concession stand this fall.

Kiwanis of South Lake Tahoe has pledged $35,000 for the lights and Tony & Diana Gooding and the Gooding Family Foundation have contributed over $30,000.

The fundraising efforts were spurred along in July when Heavenly Mountain Resort and the South Tahoe Alliance of Resorts challenged the community to match their donations of $10,000 each.

That match came in August, when Barton Health and John Cefalu stepped up with a match of $10,000 apiece. John Cefalu is the secretary/treasurer of Barton Health board of directors and husband of school board member Judy Cefalu. Stephen Bannar, doctor with Tahoe Orthopedics & Sports Medicine, also contributed $5,000. Barton Health continues its history of supporting local schools through various health grants and now through this generous donation, which demonstrates their commitment to building a healthy community.

South Tahoe High School continues to be transformed, and the renovated stadium is a welcome addition. $1.5 million is needed to complete Phase I of the renovation. To date, $1,332,753 has been raised. The district earmarked $1.1 million of developer fee funds for this project and applied for a $92,000 tire-derived product grant from California. STHS Principal Ivone Larson is also applying for a $50,000 grant from Field Turf, the manufacturer of the artificial turf.

ADA bathrooms, concession stand, and fencing should also be completed this building season. However, additional fundraising is needed to complete Phase II, which incorporates new bleachers and a press box.

Contact Angie Keil at (530) 541,2850, ext. 225 to contribute.

Cheer coach Lia Story invites everyone to “come out and support the Vikings under the lights on Sept. 2 and be a part of history.”

Angie Keil is the spokeswoman for Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

Forest Service burning piles to reduce risk of wildfire

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit fuels crew on Thursday had a prescribed fire operation on the West Shore near Rubicon Bay.

This is part of an aggressive program to reduce wildfire risk.

Weather conditions have allowed the Forest Service to treat a total of 1,800 acres in the past year, including 400 acres this summer.



A controlled burn on the West Shore. Photo/Lisa Herron/USFS

California board looking at ways to collect unpaid taxes

By Kevin Yamamura, Sacramento Bee

A state tax board is examining more aggressive ways of persuading residents to pay taxes on out-of-state purchases, from sifting through shipping records to requiring tax preparers to ask clients if they bought goods online.

The five-member Board of Equalization, which oversees sales and use tax collection, contemplated such ideas this week while discussing unpaid taxes. Long-standing law requires California residents to pay “use tax” on out-of-state purchases.

Board researchers estimate that $2.3 billion, or 5 percent, of sales and use taxes went uncollected during the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2010. Use taxes account for $1.2 billion a year, they said.

California has debated online sales tax collection for years, but the issue reached a political peak this summer after Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation aimed at forcing out-of-state retailers to collect California sales taxes. Amazon.com has already contributed $5.25 million toward a signature drive to upend the law, Assembly Bill X1 28.

The Seattle-based retailer has not collected taxes so far on California purchases, believing that it remains exempt because it severed ties with “affiliates” who previously referred customers to its website. Under a 1935 law, Californians still owe use tax on out-of-state purchases, though few pay it.

The most controversial items proposed by Board of Equalization staff were pilot projects in which the state would sift through shipping records and marketing data to determine which

residents have probably purchased goods out of state.

The idea is to identify Californians most likely to owe use tax, avoiding the need to blanket all residents with appeals to comply with the law. Board aides emphasized the state would inform residents of their responsibility rather than send itemized bills.

Still, it would mark the most direct approach the state has taken in contacting individual consumers. Since 2004, the state has offered taxpayers a way to voluntarily report use tax on personal income tax forms, but it has never communicated individually with consumers.

Read the whole story

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2 arson suspects caught on video

Surveillance cameras captured two males running from the where a fire was started Aug. 25 at the Bijou Center in South Lake Tahoe.

Officers are hoping the public can help identify the men.

When police and fire units arrived about 3:45am they found a trash can on the outside of the business complex engulfed in flames and saw the overhang of the building starting to catch fire.



Two people are seen on surveillance tape at the time the fire started. Photos/Provided



Police are looking for help in indentifying this person.

Arson investigators found evidence that the fire was deliberately set, but are not releasing what the evidence is.

If you recognize the people in the photos or have information on this incident, call Detective Doug Sentell at (530) 542.6100 or call Secret Witness at (530) 541-6800 to remain anonymous.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Edible Pedal 100

Grab your bike and join the Rotary Club of Reno Sunrise and *edible Reno-Tahoe* magazine for a bike ride like no other. Edible Pedal 100 is Reno-Tahoe's newest fundraising bike ride celebrating the scenic beauty and culinary bounty of the region.

Riders will feast on local fare as they pedal their way through forests, meadows, farmland, quaint towns, and Lake Tahoe. The ride will take place Sept. 18, beginning at the historic Bowers Mansion in Washoe Valley, (15 miles south of Reno), and offers riders a 10-, 50- or 100-mile route.

While cyclists gobble up the beautiful landscape, they'll also enjoy local fare proven to satisfy even the most discriminating palate.

The charitable ride includes all support and food and is $35 for the 10-mile route, $55 for the 50-mile route, and $65 for the 100-mile route. There's also a commemorative bike jersey available for purchase.

Money raised will support local and international children's programs, including Urban Roots, a Reno garden classroom program that assists Washoe County public and private schools in creating and maintaining edible school gardens. Other beneficiaries are the Virginia Palmer Elementary School in Reno, Rotary Youth Exchange, and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards.

For more details, route maps, featured fare and registration, go online or email info@ediblepedal100.org.

Placerville voters to have a say in future of redevelopment

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

A small group of Placerville redevelopment opponents qualified a referendum asking the City Council to repeal the town's redevelopment plan or put the matter to a public vote.

About eight people circulated petitions on behalf of Save Hangtown from Redevelopment and Eminent Domain (SHRED), said Sharlene McCaslin, one of the group's leaders. They began the effort after the council adopted a plan in May.

"We were forever hopeful that the city would not pass it," McCaslin said.

The group opposes the potential for eminent domain – despite the plan's restrictions on its use – and questions its financial benefits.

"The city is spending money we don't have," McCaslin said.

The group submitted signatures of a tenth of the city's registered voters, which were verified by the El Dorado County Elections Department.

Read the whole story

Nevada small businesses need access to cash, agency says

By Ben Miller, Reno Gazette-Journal

Federal funding in Northern Nevada could mean hope for small businesses, officials from the Small Business Administration said Wednesday during a visit to the region.

With Nevada's unemployment rate hovering between 12 percent and 13 percent, small businesses and innovation remain important economic drivers.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has increased loan guarantees nationally for small businesses by $45 million this year, opening up credit that otherwise would not be available, said Elizabeth Echols, a regional administrator for the SBA. The agency also will give $1 million to the Rural Nevada Development Corporation, which will act as an intermediary lender to small businesses, today.

The availability of small business credit is essential to stirring motion in the local economy, Echols said. Small businesses often can't grow because they don't have capital needed to invest in equipment and expansion efforts, she said.

"As I've been touring around Northern Nevada, the number one thing I hear from small businesses is that they need access to capital," Echols said.

Read the whole story

Red Cross training

Red Cross has scheduled a Shelter Operations class on the South Shore for Oct. 8 from 9am-4pm.

Call (949) 291.9699 to reserve a spot or for more information.