Tour de Manure

Tour de Manure bike ride is June 11.

Go online for more information about the cycling event in Sierraville.

Opinion: Raiding S. Tahoe's general fund was criminal

Publisher's note: ***This letter was sent by the author to South Lake Tahoe's city attorney and is reprinted with permission.***

To South Lake Tahoe City Attorney Patrick Enright,

As our city attorney, it is my duty to inform you that it appears serious crimes have taken place and no effort has been made to solve these crimes, or even acknowledge they took place.



Steve Kubby

Here are the relevant facts:

1. Sometime around 2002 someone stole $7,007,000 from the general fund, without the knowledge or consent of the City

Council.

2. Those funds were deposited to the Redevelopment Agency, again without the knowledge or consent of the City Council.

3. The purpose of this theft was to cover the financial failures of the RDA and the Park Avenue development.

4. The public was kept in the dark about this serious matter, while the City Council conspired to cover up the theft with a fraudulent “loan” agreement to pay back the stolen funds with TOT revenue, which was already due to the city anyway.

5. Not one penny of the $7,007,000 stolen funds has actually been repaid.

6. No investigation or effort has been expended to find out how this theft occurred, to report this crime to the authorities, or to disclose this crime to the people of South Lake Tahoe.

7. Redevelopment has been deliberately and criminally misrepresented to the public and those responsible for this economic debacle continue to hold decision making positions on the City Council and the RDA.

8. The recommendations of the El Dorado County Grand Jury have been virtually ignored.

9. There is a pattern and practice of stealing funds from road repairs and maintenance, in order to prop up the RDA, that has resulted in an unfunded liability of somewhere between 150 to 250 million dollars, just to get our roads back up to par.

10. An honest accounting of the city will show that it is hundreds of millions of dollars in debt. Currently, the city does not calculate huge, escalating, unfunded liabilities which include: road maintenance and repairs, retirements, health benefits, and unresolved litigation over past RDA mistakes.

11. The official policy of the city is to praise redevelopment and ignore past failures and criminal efforts to cover up those failures. The city attorney and city manager can no longer ignore the theft of $7,007,000 from the General Fund, nor can anyone continue to argue that the loan agreement of March 16, 2004 is legal or anything other than a fraudulent attempt to cover up a crime by agreeing to pay back a loan with money that was already due to the general fund.

12. The city of South Lake Tahoe could face astronomical lawsuits for its past redevelopment sins, because its claim of blight, can be shown to be bogus. That is exactly what is happening now in the case of National City, a suburb of San Diego, where the City Council wanted to seize their property under eminent domain to facilitate construction of a 24-story condominium building. To make the seizure legal, the city declared the property to be blighted and needing to be cleared for new construction.

As reported by Dan Walters for the Sacramento Bee, “taking property in that way was given broad clearance by the U.S. Supreme Court in its now-famous – or infamous – Kelo decision having to do with a similar case in Connecticut. But to exercise that power, National City still had to meet the state’s requirement that it prove blight.”

One property owner, the Community Youth Athletic Center, resisted and challenged the city’s blight designation. The center, which gives boxing lessons to underprivileged youth, received support from groups opposed to the broad exercise of eminent domain. And San Diego Superior Court Judge Steven Denton sided with the gymnasium as well.

Last month, Denton issued a 50-page ruling that found National City’s claim of blight to be bogus. “Because most or all of the conditions cited as showing dilapidation or deterioration are minor maintenance issues, the court cannot determine with reasonable certainty the existence or extent of buildings

rendered unsafe to dilapidation or deterioration," he wrote.

Dana Berliner, a lawyer for the Virginia-based Institute for Justice, an anti-eminent domain organization that backed the Community Youth Athletic Center, put it this way: "Their blight designation was a total sham."

Denton's decision, if it survives, is important because it indirectly upholds state redevelopment reform laws that have tightened up the definition of "blight" and compelled local redevelopment agencies to prove its existence to continue their activities.

Redevelopment agencies have chafed at those reforms, fearing that they won't be able to comply as they seek to renew redevelopment projects facing expiration. And that's become an issue in the legislative wrangle over Brown's proposal.

The governor wants the property tax money that redevelopment agencies skim off the top of the local tax pool. The redevelopment industry has offered, in effect, to give the state some money if the state will ease the blight requirements on project extensions. But Brown's not biting, at least so far.

The National City decision offers a cogent example of why redevelopment should either be abolished, as Brown proposes, or redirected toward cleaning up real blight, not the imaginary kind.

The City Council has forced nearly 50 businesses to close, based upon questionable claims of blight. If those claims can be successfully challenged in court, the city, our businesses, our homeowners and our residents will all find ourselves in a world of hurt and economic ruin. Perpetuating this cover up of the theft of $7,007,000 will only make our day of reckoning more painful. This is a serious matter that demands serious attention.

I will look forward to your response and plan for addressing the theft and the coverup.

Here are the relevant, smoking gun, document.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Kubby, South Lake Tahoe

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Jazzie is a nice medium-sized shepherd mix who will make a great addition to just about any family.



She is just under a year old, is house trained and gets along well with the other dogs at the shelter. She loves to play and would be happy in a home with older children. Jazzie will be great at keeping the cats and squirrels out of your yard. She needs a family who will take her on long hikes, as she has lots of energy.

Jazzie is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She 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.

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

Bread & Broth thanks Heavenly for support

To the community,

Bread & Broth would like to thank Heavenly Ski Resort for their continued support with adopting yet another Adopt-A-Day of Nourishment. Volunteers from Heavenly spent the day helping Bread & Broth volunteers serve those in need a hot, nutritious meal to over 150 people from the community.

Co-coordinator that Monday Martha Trier, was excited that Heavenly was there to offer their support for our Adopt-A- ay of Nourishment through the Bread & Broth program.

Bread & Broth is able to continue its mission of feeding the hungry of South Lake Tahoe in large part because of the generosity of the local community. A $250 sponsorship covers the cost of food and beverages for the approximately 100 people who visit each Monday evening.

To find out how your family or business can Adopt A Day of Nourishment, contact Connie Blue at midwest2tahoe@yahoo.com or (530) 544.4945.

Volunteers from Heavenly Resort are:

1. Claude Goode, executive chef

2. Michael Allen, director skier services

3. Cathie Rahbeck, area manager Heavenly Sports & SSV

4. Marsha Ticas, area merchandise manager, Heavenly Sports & SSV.

Bread & Broth staff

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5 South Shore grads earn scholarships from real estate group

Every year the South Tahoe Association of Realtors awards scholarships in honor of past President Barbara Kelly.

The applicants must be graduating with a 3.2 gpa and be an offspring or a stepchild of a current STAR Realtor or affiliate member. This year each recipient was awarded $600.

There were four graduates from South Tahoe High School and one graduate from Whittell High School.

This year’s recipients of the STAR Barbara Kelly Memorial Scholarship from South Tahoe High School are Sarah Benedict, daughter of Dana and Michelle Benedict of Pinnacle Real Estate Group; Kristin Riegel, daughter of Ken Riegel of ReMax Realty Today; Rebecca Sanders, stepdaughter of Jill Sanders of Real Estate eBroker; and Madison Treiber, daughter of Mark Treiber of RPM Mortgage. The recipient from Whittell High School is Matthew Schorr, son of Sue McCall of McCall Realty.

Sarah Benedict will be attending the University of Oregon; Kristin Riegel, CSU Long Beach; Rebecca Sanders, UCLA; Madison Treiber, St. John’s College; and Matthew Schorr, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

Tour de Nez cycling event moves to July

By Jim Krajewski, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Tour de Nez cycling race is returning to its roots this year, but at the same moving up in the cycling world.

The 19th annual local cycling race will be just a one-day affair this year, July 31. In recent years it has been held over three days.

The race has always been held in mid-June, to coincide with the anniversary of its namesake, the Deux Gros Nez coffee shop. But Deux Gros Nez closed five years ago, and owner Tim Healion, who produces the Tour de Nez, said there were too many other cycling races in June.

So when he found an open date in late July, he snapped it up.

“There are too many conflicts in June every year. Last year there were six other significant races in North America on our weekend,” Healion said. “This should be the biggest and strongest pro field ever for us.”

This year, the Cascade Classic in Bend, Ore., is the week before the Tour de Nez and a major race in Elk Grove, Ill., is the week after.

Healion said the July 31 date should attract a strong field of riders, especially as teams wrestle with budget concerns.

Read the whole story

Slashing victim in another battle – perp up for parole

By Kathryn Reed

Susie Rizk Laney was nearly shredded to death at the hands of a former boyfriend. Looking at her and listening to her it would be hard to know the hell she has been through. That is, until she rolls up her sleeves, lifts her shirt above her waist and pushes aside her shoulder-length hair to show her neck.

Scars.

They are everywhere on her body.



Susie Rizk Laney is fighting to keep the man who tortured her in prison. Photos/Kathryn Reed

They are the physical reminders of what Steve Wasserman did to her on Oct. 25, 2005, with a 2-foot-long Samurai sword. Their

daughter who was 4 at the time watched as daddy tried to kill mommy at their South Lake Tahoe home.

Laney had gotten a restraining order against Wasserman the day before the attack. But a piece of paper is little deterrent to a desperate, angry man with a freshly sharpened sword.

“The last thing my daughter saw was me bleeding to death and then she didn’t see me for four weeks,” Laney said. She was 35 when the incident occurred. Wasserman was 32.

She praises God for the strength to live, to carry on each day. Laney also believes it was the Lord’s intervention that led her to meet and marry Shannon Laney. Although he is a sergeant with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, the incident is not how they met.

The two started dating in 2007 and were married the following Valentine’s Day. Laney adopted Harmony after Wasserman agreed to give up his parental rights. Now it’s a family of five with Laney’s two children from a previous marriage.

“I was praying for protection over our lives after the attack. I never expected He would send me a police officer,” Laney said. “My God used something so tragic and turned it into something so beautiful. It is a perfect union. We are best friends.”

The Laneys sat down with *Lake Tahoe News* to discuss the latest chapter in this ordeal and to bring the community up-to-date with where Susie Laney is since the near-fatal attack that left her with 19 cuts, requiring more than a dozen surgeries and how she is coping with losing the range of motion in her hands.

Emotionally, Laney is now confronted with Wasserman being eligible for parole. His hearing is July 25 at 1pm. If he were granted parole, he would be let out in October 2012.

Wasserman was given a seven-year to life sentence for burglary, aggravated mayhem and the use of a deadly weapon. He accepted the plea deal the day the jury was being interviewed. He had threatened to plead insanity, which could have let him out on the streets sooner. This is why Laney didn't push for attempted murder.

What the Laneys want is for Wasserman to stay behind bars while Harmony is still a child. He could be put on a three-, five- or 15-year cycle for parole hearings. They want him on a 15-year cycle. That would put Harmony at age 24 before he were able to come up for parole again.

They have no intention of letting Harmony see Wasserman until she is an adult – assuming she wants to then.

"This guy needs to be stopped. He almost got away with murder," Laney said. "It's not about revenge. It's not about payback. It's about protecting my family."



Scars are a constant reminder of the ordeal Susie Rizk Laney went through.

Her husband says, "We believe in forgiveness, but we don't have to forget what a threat he is to us or anyone else."

He believes Wasserman would be a repeat offender.

Worst-case scenario if Wasserman is let out next year, is the Laneys believe they would have to home school their children, hire someone to stay at the house if the sergeant is working and be always looking over their shoulder.

For the most part, though, the Laneys lead a normal life. They do the typical family stuff – camp, wakeboard, go to church.

But Laney admits not a day goes by that she isn't reminded of what happened to her. She has to look at the scars every day. She knows it's her daughter's biological father who did it to her.

She spent 1½ years in physical and occupational therapy. Her right hand was nearly sawed off. Her knee plate was cut in half. She couldn't talk or walk. She wasn't able to comb her daughter's hair, let alone take care of some her own basic needs.

"It's not always easy, the recovery process," Laney said. "Certain things have been taken away, things I can't do. I get frustrated and mad."

While mother and daughter have been to counseling, both are in a stable mental state now. The nightmares have subsided. Harmony knows what happened, remembers the day vividly.

"She remembers her dog licking the blood off her mom's head," Shannon Laney said.

The Laneys say Wasserman knew what he was doing, that the attack was premeditated. Officers apparently found a hit list at his home with names of people he planned to kill.

Laney can't say enough good things about Officer Ric Martinez who stormed the San Francisco Avenue residence and saved her life.

"He's my hero," Laney said. Martinez arrived to find Wasserman over Laney with the sword on her heart. Blood was everywhere.

Laney is working for an orthopedic surgeon. She is able to share her story with others, to bring them hope, to show them that life does go on.

A Facebook page has been set up to keep people informed about what is going on regarding Wasserman's parole hearing. Pictures of Laney when she was in the hospital show some of the gravity of her wounds.

Letters to the parole board are due July 4. Address letters to: Confidential, Classification and Parole Representative, Mule Creek State Prison, P.O. Box 409099, Ione, CA 95640; RE: BPT Hearing 7/25/11; Steven Wasserman-F41068.

Sailing classes on West Shore

Novice Sailing Classes on the West Shore at Obexer's Marina, June 20-23, 10am-4pm. Cost: $209/child.

More advanced classes also available for children and adults.

For more information, go online.

Touched on Memorial Day

To the publisher,

Just wanted to drop a line to you and thank you for the article about Memorial day. Whether intended or not, that was a touching thought you put in there about those that

sacrificed their life not in war.

I thought of my son when reading that part. It was very much appreciated. Thanks, Kae.

Ken Curtzwiler, Meyers

Stand up paddle board event at Sand Harbor

The 2nd Annual Thunderbird Run stand up paddle board event is June 11, 7am-4pm starting at Sand Harbor State Park just outside Incline Village.