Lawyer: Garrido to plead guilty Thursday

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee



Accused kidnapper Phillip Garrido is expected to plead guilty Thursday to the 1991 abduction of 11-year-old Jaycee Lee Dugard in a bid to show compassion for Dugard as well as his wife, Nancy, one of the lawyers in the case told The Bee today.

Stephen Tapson, Nancy Garrido's attorney, said this afternoon that a deal was reached last week that calls for Phillip Garrido to enter a guilty plea and spend the rest of his life in prison. However, Tapson said he expects Nancy Garrido to face trial unless El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson agrees to a compromise that might allow Nancy Garrido to be released from prison in 30 years or so.

Neither Pierson nor Phillip Garrido's public defender, Susan Gellman, could be reached immediately today.

But Tapson said Phillip Garrido's expected guilty plea will allow Dugard to avoid testifying against the man who kept her captive for 18 years and whose sexual assaults of her resulted in two daughters being born in captivity.

He also said Garrido was showing mercy to his wife by agreeing to plead and showing that "the major evil person is out of the way."

Phillip Garrido's lawyer has conceded there is no way her 60-year-old client can ever hope to win release from custody. But Tapson holds out hope that Nancy Garrido, 55, may be able to win a deal that could see her walk free in 30 years. Tapson said prosecutors originally offered Nancy Garrido a 40-year

deal and that he was told the Dugard family did not object to that. But prosecutors later upped the offer to 184 years, he said, adding that it made no sense for him to accept an offer like that rather than go to trial.

Tapson said he still is hoping for an offer “within reason to avoid the tribulations of a trial at great cost to the taxpayers.”

The Garridos are accused of snatching Dugard off the street outside her South Lake Tahoe-area home as she was walking off to a school bus stop.

Nancy Garrido is believed to have been the one who dragged Dugard into the car. The couple is accused of taking Dugard to their Antioch home and keeping her captive in tents in the backyard and locked sheds until she was rescued in August 2009.

Both suspects admitted to their involvement in recent interviews with detectives, including one with Nancy Garrido that Dugard watched, Tapson has said.

Phillip Garrido, a convicted kidnapper and rapist, was on parole at the time of the kidnapping. Jaycee Dugard won a $20 million settlement from the state of California over parole agents’ failure to detect her presence at the Garrido house for years.

Dugard, who is now living in seclusion in Northern California and writing a book, has yet to speak publicly about her ordeal.

Her mother, Terry Probyn, filed a civil suit against the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation seeking special and general damages for negligence, failure to discharge mandatory duties, negligent hiring and training and infliction of emotional distress.

The suit, filed March 22 in Sacramento Superior Court, accuses the department of “egregious conduct” that caused Probyn to suffer “severe emotional distress learning of the torture and abuse her daughter endured while a captor of Garrido’s and trying to re-establish the relationship lost over all those years.”

Carson City man has plan to save American Flat

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Neal A. Dach admits he has no background in developing tourist attractions.

The Carson City native is a former Army bomb detection and disposal specialist, an Iraq war veteran and a graduate student in neuroscience at Harvard University. But when it comes to the historic American Flat ruin near Virginia City, he has one major question:

If millions of dollars of taxpayers’ money are going to be spent on the 52-acre site, should they be used to turn the area into a revenue-generating tourist attraction or to blast it from the face of the earth?

“Demolishing the United Comstock Merger Mill devalues Nevada history,” said Dach of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s plan to turn the 89-year-old complex of eight buildings back into a sagebrush desert.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe League founding member dies

By Steve Timko, Reno Gazette-Journal

Fritzi Huntington of Glenbrook was remembered as a powerful, long-time advocate to protect Lake Tahoe and a friend of the environment in general. Huntington died March 10, 11 days after her 90th birthday.

“She loved Lake Tahoe and everyone who loved Lake Tahoe loved her,” said Rochelle Nason, executive director of The League to Save Lake Tahoe. “She was a delightful, kind, charming and generous person who made a great impression on everyone around her.”

Huntington was a founding member of The League to Save Lake Tahoe in the 1960s, Nason said, and served as its president from 1984 to 1986 and from 1987 to 1988. Forming the league also led to the creation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Huntington was a member of the Lake Tahoe Area Council, which preceded the TRPA.

Read the whole story

Ski report: Blue skies



It’s shaping up to be another warm, sunny day to get out on the slopes. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Incline Village woman arrested after firing at man

By Reno Gazette-Journal

Washoe County Sheriff’s deputies arrested an Incline Village woman after she allegedly fired a gun at a man she was arguing with at her home.

Michele Maher, 45, remains in the Washoe County Jail on charges of assault with a deadly weapon, discharging a firearm where a person is endangered, and possession of a firearm while under the influence of alcohol. Her bail was set at $6,890.

At around 9:40 pm Friday night, Maher was arguing with the man, 42, when he attempted to leave a residence on Crest Lane, Sheriff’s spokesman Armando Avina said. Maher allegedly fired a shot from her .40 caliber Smith and Wesson at him, and then moved towards him as he hid behind a car, Avina said.

Maher and the male victim had both been drinking alcohol at the time of the argument, Avina said.

The two struggled for a bit before the gun went off again, hitting Maher in the left hand. When Sheriff’s deputies

arrived at the scene, she was bleeding heavily and was transported to Renown Regional Medical Center. The man did not suffer any injuries.

Neighbors who heard the shot told deputies that the bullet may have struck their home, and officers found a copper bullet from the dry wall of the couple’s bathroom, Avina said.

Anyone with additional information is encouraged to contact the Detectives Division at (775) 328.3320 or remain anonymous by calling Secret Witness at (775) 322.4900.

Highway 89 reopens amid caution

By Susan Wood

With Highway 89 reopening Monday evening at Emerald Bay near Eagle Falls after an avalanche buried a vehicle a few days before, at least one area resident would not be fooling when she says she won’t be driving it.



An avalanche at Emerald Bay on Highway 89 buries Karrie Kunich's

vehicle.

Karrie Kunich of Markleeville recounted with *Lake Tahoe News* the scare of her life on Friday afternoon – April Fool's Day, when the snow tumbled onto the major thoroughfare between the Vikingsholm turnout and Inspiration Point.

When all was done, a 60-foot wide, 10-foot high wall of snow buried her sedan, allowing a very small space for her to escape on the driver's side. She recalled traveling southbound on 89 at 1:18pm and becoming annoyed at a motorist in front of her driving about 20mph because she had an appointment.

"All of sudden he sped up," she said Monday.

He beat the slide, but it was a whiteout in front of her. She slammed on the brakes, and the sound that roared over her car became increasingly louder. Her windshield shattered, and the vehicle stopped. There was snow everywhere.

"I was terrified. I thought I was going to be crushed," she said. "I literally said to myself when it stopped: 'I didn't die.'"

The rescue crew had to cut her out of her seatbelt. Emerald Bay Towing responded – a company her husband John Baker runs.

A devastating thought crossed her mind that her 4-year-old son usually sits where much of the snow landed.

"He wouldn't have made it," she said, her voice quivering.

A few bruises and scratches later, along with much soreness, she admitted to having a little stress related to driving – especially in winter. And, she has no intentions of driving on Highway 89.



The car has to be dug out on the passenger side by rescue crews.

“I’d like to see that road closed all winter. It’s dangerous. I may be the minority here, but (opening it) isn’t worth somebody’s life,” she said.

The winter storms have kept the avalanche danger reports fluctuating between extreme to considerable, where it now sits. But more snow is expected in the forecast later this week.

“If we get a certain amount of snow then we’ll have to watch it,” Caltrans South Lake Tahoe Supervisor Bill Netto said Monday evening.

A Caltrans crew conducted a long assessment of the snowslide area on Monday afternoon to ensure no movement may occur.

K’s Kitchen: Cooking with quinoa

By Kathryn Reed

Some things are worth waiting for – like a recipe.



At a New Year’s Eve party my friend Brenda made quinoa – pronounced keen-wah. Oh, how yummy it was.

This grain has been around forever, but seemed to become all the rage in the United States just recently. It is native to the Andes Mountains – Peru, Bolivia and Chile in particular.

The nutrition content, besides the flavor, is one of the selling points. It is a complete protein. What’s significant is this is the only plant based complete protein.

For vegetarians and vegans this is huge cause soy is often the protein that is relied upon. Quinoa is a fun alternative that can be incorporated in different dishes.

Finally, last month Brenda sent me the recipe she devised. She also brought a smaller container the day we skied at Heavenly. This was quite a treat.

I asked her how the recipe came about.

“I bought some quinoa, decided to make some one day and thought it looked very ordinary,” Brenda said. “I just started pulling things out of the refrigerator to put in it.”

It worked.

Quinoa Rainbow Dish



Quinoa Rainbow Dish

1 cup dry quinoa

2 T olive oil

3-5 cloves of garlic, chopped

½ red onion, diced

3 mini sweet bell peppers, diced. Use a combination of red, yellow and orange – about 2/3 C total

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 T cumin, split in half

½ C frozen corn kernels

½ C frozen shelled edamame

1 can black beans, drained and rinsed

Cook quinoa according to instructions.

In a large pan, sauté the garlic, onion and peppers in olive oil. Add salt and pepper.

Add ½ T cumin. Sauté for a few more minutes.

Add corn and edamame. Lower heat and sauté for another 3-4 minutes.

Add black beans. Stir until everything is warm.

Add cooked quinoa to vegetable mixture.

Stir in remaining cumin.

Mix well together in pan.

Can be served hot, warm, or cold.

V&T Railroad gearing up for summer season

The 2011 season for the Virginia & Truckee Railroad is high-balling down the track toward opening weekend, May 27–29 in Carson City.

Before the official opening weekend, the railroad is offering a sneak peek into the historic route with a special event on Mother's Day, May 8.

Families hopping aboard the special edition train in celebration of mom can surprise her with a rose en route to Virginia City, then enjoy an afternoon of shopping, antiquing or lunch before returning to the depot. Tickets for the May 8 Mother's Day excursion from Carson City to Virginia City are $29 for adults, $16 for kids under 12 and $26 for seniors over 65.

Season opening festivities slated for Memorial Day weekend showcase steam and diesel engines with round trip and one-way rides from Carson City to Virginia City. After opening weekend, trains run weekly Friday – Sunday through Oct. 30. With the first two seasons' impressive complete sell-outs, getting "all aboard" now preserves a window to Old West history.

The V&T Railroad’s 16 miles of track re-opened in August 2009 after 70 years of non-operation. Each 90-minute ride includes scenic vistas of the Carson River and majestic Sierra Nevada, passing through two tunnels, by abandoned mine shafts, old cemeteries and offering occasional sightings of wild mustangs. The historic train travels the same silver route paved by the miners of the infamous 1860s Comstock silver boom.

For tickets, go online.

TOCCATA sets spring concert schedule

TOCCATA will present selections from J.S. Bach’s St. Matthew Passion in a series of concerts April 17-23.

Concerts are:

April 17 at 5:30pm at Trinity Episcopal Church in Reno;

April 20 at 7:30pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe;

April 22 at 7:30pm at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Incline Village;

April 23 at 3pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Tahoe City.

Tickets are available at the door or online for $35 preferred, $25adults, $20 seniors, and $5 students. For information, call (775) 313.9697.

Opinion: Convention center follies aren't unique to South Tahoe

By Jeff Jacoby, Townhall

Back in November of 1999, as Boston's 516,000-square-foot convention center was about to go up near the South Boston waterfront, I wrote a column about the futility of building exhibition halls with taxpayer money. Such facilities, I observed, are invariably touted as engines of economic growth, guaranteed to stimulate the creation of new jobs, the development of new hotels, and gushers of new spending by visiting conventioneers. Then, when the promised boom fails to materialize, the subsidized facility is blamed for being too modest and taxpayers are told they must underwrite a venue even grander and more expensive.

"So here we go again," I predicted. "More construction, more rosy rhetoric — and more disappointment when the new convention center fails to meet its boosters' promises. . . . I give it about a decade. And then the droning will resume: If only we had a bigger convention center. . ."

Ten years later to the month — how's that for prescient? — the Boston Globe reported on its front page that Massachusetts officials want to double the size of the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, already the largest building of its kind in New England. The story noted that the convention center had never lived up to the exuberant promises made by its promoters. For example, a state-commissioned feasibility study had estimated that by 2009 the convention center would be

doing enough business to generate 670,000 hotel room nights per year. In fact, the real figure turned out to be less than half, or about 313,000 room nights.

To a disinterested observer, it might seem obvious that Boston is no different from so many other cities competing for conventions and trade shows in a national market glutted with space. Over the past two decades, the amount of square footage available for exhibitions nationwide has soared nearly 75 percent, growing from 40.4 million square feet in 1990 to more than 70 million square feet today. Cities everywhere have been enlarging their convention centers. San Diego, Phoenix, Denver, Atlanta, Orlando, Chicago, Las Vegas, Philadelphia — all of them have either recently finished or are planning an expansion, all of them at taxpayer expense, and all of them justified with the same argument being made once again in Boston: If only we had more capacity, we could attract bigger shows, lure more visitors, stimulate more business, generate more growth.

Jeff Jacoby is an Op-Ed writer for the Boston Globe, a radio political commentator, and a contributing columnist for Townhall.com.

Read the whole story