Phillip Garrido’s attorney wants documents sealed

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Phillip Garrido’s lawyer filed papers Wednesday opposing the release of sealed court documents involving kidnap victim Jaycee Lee Dugard, saying that opening up the documents would doom her client’s chances of ever receiving a fair trial.

“This court should keep these documents under seal,” El Dorado County public defender Susan Gellman wrote in documents filed Wednesday. “There is an ‘overriding interest’ here; that of a fair trial.”

The Bee and other media agencies are seeking the release of numerous documents that have been sealed in the case against Garrido and his wife, Nancy, who are accused of kidnapping Dugard in 1991 when she was 11.

Read the whole story

Estate auction in Stateline

Taylor Creek Auctions is liquidating an entire estate Nov. 20 at 167 Aynes Court in Stateline. This is a private home behind Lakeside Inn Casino.

Some of the items up for auction: two brand new Sleep Fit Mattress sets, 42 inch and 40 inch televisions, artwork, décor, handmade afghans, kitchen appliances, a lawnmower and gardening tools, three-seat couch, Marilyn Monroe collectibles, heavy solid furniture (lots of oak) – night

stands, dressers, bed frames, entertainment center and more.

The preview starts at 10:30am and bidding at 11am. No credit cards; cash or check only.

Tree of Remembrance

The annual Tree of Remembrance Interfaith Ceremony hosted by Barton Hospice and the Barton Foundation is Dec. 8 in South Lake Tahoe and Dec. 10 in Carson Valley. Attendees have the opportunity to reflect on the memories they share and celebrate the lives of those they have lost.

Attendees will be able to say the name of the person in remembrance and light a candle in their honor.

Music and song will be performed by OneVoice of Unity at the Lake at both locations.

Handmade porcelain ornaments, glazed with iridescent mother-of-pearl, will be available for $25. All proceeds benefit Barton Hospice, a specialty program providing comfort and relief of symptoms to those who are terminally ill.

South Tahoe:

Dec. 8

5:30 to 6:30pm

Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church

(2733 Lake Tahoe Blvd.)

Gardnerville:

Dec. 10

5:30 to 6:30pm

United Methodist Church

(1375 Centerville Lane)

For questions or information, call (530) 543.5909.

Sierra Nevada College Concert Choir

The Sierra Nevada College Concert Choir translates the spirit of the season into music Dec. 2 and Dec. 4 at 7pm at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Incline Village.

Forty voices will perform Puccini’s Gloria (messa di Gloria). Puccini’s lyrical melodies and emotionally moving scoring shine brightly in this composition.

Under the direction of Donna Axton, music program chair at SNC, the combined college and community choir will feature solos by two well-known singers – tenor Kevin Beiswenger and baritone David Pierce.

The concert’s second section features Ray Linn’s music and overflows with traditional seasonal carols and songs –including several familiar sing-along selections.

SNC student spotlights include Lauren Upton, Yesenia Ruelas, Valerie McIntyre, Momoko Nishiyama, Danielle Flores and Jill Colbert.

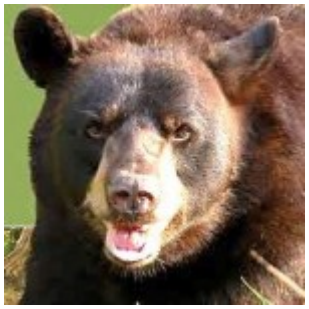
Eunice Marion’s “Incline Choraliers” will be special guests,

and Claire Roberts, Josii Johnson, and Kestral Sura will add to the fun. The orchestra for this performance relies on the talent of Katie Lauder (piano), Ben Wallek (bass), Toni Healey (flute), Darrell Moore (clarinet), Ben Benjamin (bassoon), Bruce Kanzelmeyer (horn), Virginia Bowman and Liz Glattly (violin).

Tickets are $12 in advance, $15 at the door, $10 all students and seniors. The are available in Incline at the Potlatch, Artists of Tahoe (in the Village Center), or the SNC bookstore; and in Tahoe City at Pablo's Gallery.

For more information on the concert, call (775) 881.7586 or email daxton@sierranevada.edu.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Nevada Department of Wildlife officials are expected to make a decision about reintroducing bear hunts to the state at the December meeting. Emails in support or against the proposal may be sent to ndowinfo@ndow.org.

• The open house on Nov. 23 regarding the Homewood project has been canceled because the release of the draft EIS has been moved to January.

• On Dec. 4 in San Francisco Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School fifth-grade teacher Bob Comlossy and his students will receive a Golden Bell award for their Every Day is Earth Day. The California School Boards Association recognizes exemplary programs in 19 categories.

• El Dorado County has redesigned its website.

• Maya’s Mexican Grill has replaced El Papagayo in Meyers.

• Free airfare to Reno and free lodging too? Check out the contest Southwest Airlines has.

• Jens Dressler, who recently bought Blue Angel Café, is opening a second restaurant in South Lake Tahoe. The Blue Angel Chateau will open in December at the old Christiana Inn property.

• Mt. Rose is opening Nov. 19 with $19 lift tickets and $39 first timer packages for ages 11 and older.

Rapper Dre gives away $10,000 in apparel to STHS kids

By Kathryn Reed

Rap music is coming from the classroom and teacher Bob Grant is smiling.

After all, these are the sounds one of his former students has created. Andre Tyson, better known as rapper Dreda Dre, was at South Tahoe High School on Nov. 17 giving away more than $10,000 in clothes.



Dreda Dre tags an article of clothing Nov. 17 for a STHS student. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Dressed in a black hoodie and baggie pants, he looks every bit the rapper he is.

He brought in boxes of clothes and shoes to Grant's room to give away – mostly to students who don't have much. Some of the garb he wore a time or two in video shoots. All of it looked new.

Dre just decided it was time to give back. He asked others in the business for donations, too, that's how so much was available to the nearly 600 students who came through the doors.

The room smelled like spray paint because Dre was tagging shirts for his fans. Using a stencil with his stage name he imprinted Dreda Dre onto shirts – the 2010 version of an autograph.

Sandra Tyson, his mom who lives on the West Shore, was surprised her son came up with the idea. Giving hasn't been big on Dre's to-do list, she said.

"He finally got it," Tyson said of her son. "He isn't doing this to promote himself. The tagging is for the kids."

Dre attended STHS between 2000-03. The 25-year-old keeps revisiting his roots, even though the bulk of his time is spent in the Bay Area where the music scene is much larger.

His message to students is, "The world is bigger than Tahoe. Get out there. There are a lot of opportunities in cities for

colleges and careers.”

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Deputies expect break soon in El Dorado County burglaries

By Kathryn Reed

Using reverse 911 for the first time has brought in an array of leads, and not just about the burglaries in the North Upper Truckee area of El Dorado County.

The phone system was used last week and no thefts have been reported this week. The tips are being called “promising”.

Small items that can be carried from a home like jewelry have been taken, while the bigger items like flat screen televisions and computers have been left behind. El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Les Lovell believes this is because the culprits are on foot.

“These houses are clearly being cased. One particular person was gone for three hours and it occurred,” Lovell said. “These people are watching what’s going on.”

The suspects are a higher threat level to deputies and anyone who might walk in on them because it is considered more brazen to engage in this type of burglary than breaking into a house where people are gone for a long time, Lovell said. All of the crimes have happened during the day.

“I’m hopeful we’ll have some good news in the next few days and we may be able to recover some property,” Lovell said.

The items have not turned up at local pawnshops.

A reward of $500 has been offered for anyone who provides information that leads to an arrest. Secret Witness may be reached at (530) 541.6800.

SNC gears up for holiday season

Sierra Nevada College’s gala is Dec. 3 at 5:30pm m at the Hyatt Regency Incline Village. The Lakeside Ballroom will transformed for the seated dinner.

The spotlight will shine on acclaimed violinist Daniel Heifetz, founder of the Heifetz International Music Institute, as he presents an exclusive opportunity for attendees to hear him and two virtuoso students perform. A luxury live auction and dance after party round out the event. Tickets are $250 per person. All donations to the college are tax deductible.

The night before the gala, Dec. 2 from 4-6pm, SNC will host its annual Community Tree Lighting. Designers of this year’s event have worked their magic to create an illuminated LED forest of twinkle lights on the patio of Patterson Hall.

Families can enjoy festive activities such as holiday crafts, cookie decorating, carols and music, refreshments and a photo opportunity with Santa Claus. Bring your camera.

All activities on this night are free and open to the public.

SNC will also be collecting new unwrapped gifts for Toys for Tots through the end of December in Patterson Hall. For more information about any of these holiday events, contact Debi

Noonan at (775) 881.7420 or dnoonan@sierranevada.edu.

O’Rourke: Revamp how SLT operates, create a clear vision

Publisher’s note: *This completes this three-part series on South Lake Tahoe’s budget. More stories will come in the future.*

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe’s budget is convoluted and difficult to understand. After probing by *Lake Tahoe News* started earlier this year more documents have been placed on the city’s website. This is a good first step.

Transparency, though, is still a bit elusive.

City Manager Tony O’Rourke plans to change how the next budget document looks. He wants a budget message at the front and a summary so the public can more easily discern what lies within.

Although warrants are paper clipped to the councilmembers’ agenda packets, they are not actually part of the packet. This means they are not part of that public record. Warrants are a list of checks that have been written.

Councilman Bill Crawford for years has been trying to get this practice changed, as well as to have copies available at the meetings for the public.



Tony O'Rourke

But these warrants in many ways are useless. This is because there is no record to whether the check written was for something that was budgeted. It doesn’t say what account the money came from. Nothing indicates what percentage or dollar amount of the account the money came from has been spent to date.

Without knowing if the various departments are within budget as the warrants are written, the information is as valuable as the paper it’s printed on.

O’Rourke since his arrival in early August has called for a monthly budget update to be in the council’s packet. That happened on Nov. 16, but it contained information for the month ending Sept. 30.

A case could easily be made that this is dated material, not current.

Councilmembers Kathay Lovell and Hal Cole represent the finance committee that is supposed to be working with staff. But neither has said anything about the budget at a council meeting since the 2010-11 budget was passed in August. This August approval of a budget that took effect Oct. 1 was unprecedented by a South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Ex-City Manager Dave Jinkens wanted it approved before he was out of office the first week of August.

“The budget process was highly centralized under David. It was him and the finance director,” O’Rourke said.

Not much vision

The city has seldom been forward thinking more than the end of the fiscal year. But the deficits are going to continue. Transient occupancy tax, sales tax and property tax are the three main sources of income. They are stagnant.

The Teeter Law that allows the county to keep the pass through of property tax dollars going from the convention center parcels to the city will expire in a little more than a year.

Even though hotel bookings are up going into winter, the cost of those rooms is not what they were three years ago. Full occupancy does not mean the same amount of TOT collected in years past because the price of a room night is not the same.

What does the budget look like for fiscal year 2015-16 – five years from now? No one knows because the city hasn't planned for the future.

O'Rourke is shaking things up so that last paragraph can't be written again. He has assembled 40 people to develop a five-year financial plan. Rank and file staff up to directors are part of the panel.

"We need fingerprints and DNA of staff on (the budget)," O'Rourke said. "The result is they will have greater ownership. The process should be transparent and inclusive."

This process should eliminate department heads finding out about staff reductions days before the City Council votes for them – as was the case in August.

"The City Manager [Dave Jinkens] notified the Fire Chief via e-mail on July 28, almost one week prior to the August 3 City Council meeting," Vuletich wrote *Lake Tahoe News* in reference to the freezing of a division chief's job once the person who has the position retires in January.

Strategic planning

Without goals, the budget ends up taking a shotgun approach to city services instead of being streamlined.

O’Rourke wants to convene the council that will be seated next month – with 60 percent new faces – to create a strategic plan what will be “a shared vision for the community.”

He wants to focus on a handful of goals and achieve them. From his first interviews, O’Rourke said he is results-driven. To get there he believes the city needs to change its business model.

“We need to modify the business model to reflect the priorities,” O’Rourke said. “There is a thorough lack of infrastructure. We are so deficient in curbs and gutters it’s mindboggling.

“We need to look at where we can get the money. We need to look at the expense side of the ledger, too.”

He’s well aware the city cannot be all things to all people – thus the need to create priorities. And he doesn’t want them to change on an annual basis.

A goal of his is to create a survey for staff and a separate one for the public in the next month.

“I want data to drive the decision-making,” O’Rourke.

When told the public has filled out surveys in the past only to have their wishes ignored, O’Rourke said it’s still a necessity “to make sure we are on the same playing field.”

He wants to look at the services the city is providing to the public in addition to the facilities. His face contorts a bit while mentioning the locker room at the city pool and the condition it is in. “Hideous” was the word he used.

Opinion: First-class society would rebuild water system

By Bob Herbert, New York Times

If you had a leak in your roof or in the kitchen or basement, you'd probably think it a good idea to have it taken care of before matters got worse, and more expensive.

If only we had the same attitude when it comes to the vast and intricately linked water systems in the United States. Most of us take clean and readily available water for granted. But the truth is that the nation's water systems are in sorry shape — deteriorating even as the population grows and demand increases.

Aging and corroded pipes are bursting somewhere every couple of minutes. Dilapidated sewer systems are contaminating waterways and drinking water. Many local systems are so old and inadequate — in some cases, so utterly rotten — that they are overwhelmed by heavy rain.

As Charles Duhigg reported in the *Times* last March: "For decades, these systems — some built around the time of the Civil War — have been ignored by politicians and residents accustomed to paying almost nothing for water delivery and sewage removal. And so each year, hundreds of thousands of ruptures damage streets and homes and cause dangerous pollutants to seep into drinking water supplies."

Read the whole story