Barton urges vaccinations for whooping cough

By Denise Sloan Smart



More cases of pertussis – also known as whooping cough –- have popped up statewide this year than in the last 50 years.

Health officials across California are seeing a sharp spike in cases of pertussis and are encouraging parents, caregivers and older siblings of infants to seek vaccinations. Pertussis is especially dangerous for babies.

In El Dorado County, there have been at 23 reported cases of pertussis since the beginning of the year, compared to only three last year, according to Olivia Kasirye, El Dorado County health officer.

A total of 910 cases of pertussis have been reported statewide this year – four times as many cases as last year – along with six deaths, all among infants who were under 3 months of age.

There have been no reported deaths due to pertussis in El Dorado County this year.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory tract infection, spread through coughs and sneezes. It is particularly dangerous for unimmunized and incompletely immunized infants.

“Babies are more vulnerable to pertussis because under the age of six months their lungs are not fully developed and they are prone to apnea, which means they just quit breathing,”

explained Rita Wang, physician with Barton Pediatrics.

Symptoms of pertussis typically start with a cough and runny nose for one to two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes end with a whooping sound. Fever is rare.

Parents and caregivers of infants, as well as children ages 11 and older should receive the pertussis booster shot, called Tdap, which protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.

The Tdap vaccine is administered in one dose and is approved for people age 11 years through 64.

Pregnant mothers who are delivering at the Barton Family Birthing Center can receive the vaccine after their baby is born with an order by their physician.

“The pertussis vaccine for young children – licensed for children ages six and younger – called DTaP, is administered through a series of five shots, typically at 2, 4, 6 and 12 to 15 months of age, with a booster dose at kindergarten entry,” Wang said.

“Children who complete the series of vaccinations are considered well protected,” she added. “Babies are not considered protected until they have received their first three doses.”

Parents should check their child’s immunization records or contact their child’s doctor to see if their child is current on their vaccinations.

Because the vaccine’s effectiveness can wane over time, it is recommended that children 11 years of age and older receive a booster dose of the pertussis vaccine.

Parents of newborns should be cautious about their baby’s exposure to people who are sick.

“It’s common sense to wash your hands and ask others to wash their hands before holding a baby, and to refrain from being near a newborn if you have any symptoms of illness, especially cold or flu symptoms,” Wang said.

For the pertussis vaccine, contact your primary care provider. If you do not have one, you can go online to www.bartonhealth.org/physicians to find a primary care provider or go to Barton Urgent Care at Stateline Medical Center, 155 Highway 50, Stateline, for an evaluation for possible vaccination.

It is important to note that the Tdap booster vaccine should not be given to someone who has already had the vaccine within the past six years as there could be a severe reaction. Vaccines (DTaP) and booster vaccines (Tdap) are available at the Barton Community Clinic, Barton Family Medicine, Barton Internal Medicine and Barton Pediatrics.

The El Dorado County Health Services Department is also offering low-cost vaccinations for children, as well as boosters for adults. The county health department’s vaccines for children are free and $10 for those 19 years of age and older. The county health department, located on Johnson Boulevard, is open Mondays from 8-11am; Wednesdays from 1-4pm; and Fridays from 8-11am.

Denise Sloan Smart is the communications specialist for Barton Heath.

Forest thinning project

infuriates some Meyers residents

By Kathryn Reed

Passion and frustration oozed from three Meyers residents while talking about the forest thinning project in their neighborhood.

Anger was another emotion.

It was all directed at the California Tahoe Conservancy – owners of the 209 acres that are being treated in phases over the course of several years. About 30 acres are being treated this summer.

Amber LaPointe, Dave Mason and Ralph Meyberg all live in the Apache area of Meyers. All pleaded for the board to visit the site, for prescriptions to be revisited and the harvesting of large trees to stop.

LaPointe read a letter that was later published on *Lake Tahoe News*.

She questions whether the Conservancy is making money off the project.

Deputy Director Ray Lacey said with it costing about $3,000 to thin one acre, making a profit isn't possible.

"We look at a forest from an ecological perspective, not timber," Lacey said.

El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago, who is also on the CTC board, has met with these individuals. The Conservancy has had neighborhood meetings and brought out Lake Valley fire officials to explain what is happening and why.

Santiago said it’s important people have a clear understanding what the forest will look like when projects are done.

“It’s almost like it’s been clear cut,” Mason said.

To this Lacey says, “You have to cut a clear swath to get equipment in. Clear areas are part of a forest. They support different plants and wildlife.”

Executive Director Patrick Wright told the threesome the prescription for this area could be reviewed at the next meeting.

Origami for children at Zephyr Cove library

Origami will be featured at the Douglas County Public Library in Zephyr Cove on July 29 at 1:30pm.

Dennis Little has shared his hobby of Japanese paper folding for many years at the library. He will tell the history of origami and bring examples of his projects. During past programs children made fish, Olympic medals, cranes, boxes, and many more items. Come for an enjoyable hour to learn about this ancient craft and make a project to take home. For ages 5 and up; adults are welcome, too. Parents may help younger children with their projects. Sign up by July 28 to participate.

The library is located at 233 Warrior Way in Zephyr Cove. For more information, call (775) 588.6411 or go to douglas.lib.nv.us.

International water quality expert to speak in Incline

International advocate for water quality and policy Alexandra Cousteau, granddaughter of renowned pioneer Jacques-Yves Cousteau, will be the featured speaker at the 2010 Siebens Binz–Tahoe Forum at Sierra Nevada College campus on Aug. 28 at 3pm.

Parents are encouraged to bring their kids to this free public event, which will feature an visual and audio presentation highlighting Cousteau's worldwide journey to educate people about the water issues that affect us all – from Botswana to Lake Tahoe.

The 2010 Siebens Binz–Tahoe Forum continues SNC's more than decade-long tradition of bringing high-profile speakers to the community. The event was created in 1997 in alignment with the mission of Sierra Nevada College, which emphasizes environmental, social, economic, and cultural responsibility and sustainability.

Tickets are free but required for entry; to RSVP or for more information, contact Michelle McFall at (775) 831.1314 or mmcfall@sierranevada.edu, or go to www.sierranevada.edu/forum.

South Lake Tahoe won't come clean on nepotism questions

By Kathryn Reed

Nepotism, according to the dictionary, is "patronage bestowed or favoritism shown on the basis of family relationship, as in business and politics."

It's alive and thriving among employees of South Lake Tahoe (full and part time), as well as extending to City Council members and city commissioners.

Since June 30, *Lake Tahoe News* has been emailing city officials in an attempt to have disclosure of all the relationships – spousal, in-laws, children – whatever the connection, be it blood or through marriage.

Even by invoking the Public Records Request Act more than once, the city has not provided the information requested.

Initially, Human Resource Director Janet Emmett deferred the request to City Attorney Patrick Enright. After multiple emails and phone calls to Enright, a response came from him via City Manager Dave Jinkens.

The July 22 email from Jinkens says, "The city attorney provided me with information relating to your recent request for the names of persons employed by the city who are married.

"The request for information relating to marital status and blood relations is exempt from disclosure under Government

Code section 6254(c), which excludes from disclosure 'personnel, medical or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.' This includes information like Social Security numbers, home telephone numbers, home addresses, marital status, health issues etc. A 2007 California Supreme Court case in 2007, I am told, affirmed the exemption from disclosure of personnel information. Additionally, police officers have a special section [Penal Code section 832.8] which prohibits the disclosure of personal data, including marital status, family members, educational and employment history, home addresses and similar information."

But the truth is, providing relationship status really has nothing to do with personnel records. The city's refusal to disclose relationships based on this code is bogus.

Lake Tahoe News responded to Jinkens the same day by emailing, "Thank you for your email. However, not only did I ask for spouse and blood relations, but also relations through marriage like son-in-laws, as well as parent-child relationships. I would like that for seasonal, part-time workers, as well as full time. Those types of relations don't seem to be precluded from public disclosure based on the information you sent me.

"In addition to that information, I respectfully ask for the email with the names of the people it was sent to, which is a public document, that was sent by Janet Emmett the day of my initial request [nearly three weeks ago?] to all of the employees affected by my inquiry. If you need a formal Public Records Request Act, I will do so. If this can suffice, thank you.

"At the same time, I am now asking for a list of all city employees and their job titles. I think this would be pretty easy to get to me by 5pm today. If not, then I'd like an explanation."

To this Jinkens reply was, “I will ask the city attorney to reply. I have given you the best answer I have on the matter.”

Enright did not respond as of this posting. None of the council members weighed-in on the subject either and they were copied on the email.

Connecting the dots

The city’s website lists some of the employees, but not all. It doesn’t list most of the police and fire department employees, though police employees are on a separate website. The fire department doesn’t list its employees on its website. A list of part time and seasonal workers has not been secured.

On the city’s website it has the Palazzos. They met on the job. Ellen is the assistant city clerk; Gene is the director of Housing-Redevelopment.

Lori Marino is the grants administrator and her husband, Jim, is an assistant city engineer.

Maryanne Brand is an accounting manager. Her husband, Phil, is a housing rehabilitation specialist.

Debi Schild is a senior permit technician in the Building Department. Her husband, Walt, is employed by Public Works.

LTN learned Krista Eissinger, airport secretary, is the sister of police Officer Andy Eissinger.

Tony Silva, airport maintenance supervisor, is married to a police officer who has a different last name.

Nick and Heather Carlquist, not a common last name, are police officers. One is active, the other reserve. Their relationship is not known. Brad and Brian Williams are brothers who are police sergeants. There is a J. Broadfoot (dispatcher) and a T. Broadfoot (officer) listed on the SLTPD website.

Three of the council members are related to people affiliated with the city. Mayor Kathay Lovell is the mother of police Officer Ryan Wagoner.

Councilman Bill Crawford is married to planning Commissioner Jonnie Crawford.

Councilman Bruce Grego is married to planning Commissioner Geraldine Grego.

The Planning Commission hears an issue before it is referred to the City Council.

Three couples with city ties are engaged. One is Nancy Kerry, manager of Housing-Redevelopment, and airport Commissioner Howie Nave.

These are just the relationships *Lake Tahoe News* knows about. It's been a common practice through the years for the Parks and Recreation Department to hire the children of employees.

Problems with nepotism

Most cities have detailed nepotism policies. Most don't have anywhere near the number of familial ties South Lake Tahoe has – especially in a city with about 220 full-time employees.

The nepotism issue was brought up in the June El Dorado County Grand Jury Report, saying their investigation could not track down a nepotism policy for the city.

No training has been provided by the Human Resources Department in how to deal with nepotism.

It's common knowledge by workers that people who are related cannot supervise one another. This is standard in most workplaces.

But problems arise. For instance, Ellen Palazzo is a notary, but ethically she should not be notarizing a document her

husband signed. It would not be illegal for her to do so. To keep it all clean, she has never notarized anything for him.

With two married couples having ties to the Finance Department, who is watching what's spent by the departments their spouses work in?

Case law points to several incidents of third party discrimination. That would be when an employee working for one of the married or otherwise related individuals is not comfortable going to the spouse of their boss for fear of recrimination.

This creates a hostile, as well as dysfunctional work environment.

This story about Oakland's hiring mess clearly illustrates what happens when nepotism, aka favoritism, runs rampant in a city.

Here is what a law website has to say about nepotism.

A fired spouse in another locale contended their constitutional right to marry was at stake and filed a lawsuit. Read this for more on the topic.

Here is another take on married couples in the workplace.

Issues with nepotism

How all relationships came about is not known. Did they get hired because they are a couple? Did they meet on the job? Was one hired and then got their relative on the inside track at the city?

The South Shore is small. There are a limited number of qualified people for certain positions. There are a limited number of potential significant others. But none of this means the city has to be in the business of hiring relatives.

Good hiring practices mean casting a wide net for potential hires, not asking the person in the neighboring cubicle if they know someone to hire. It means hiring based on performance, not just because someone is local or is related to someone.

The issue of nepotism goes beyond how city employees are affected.

With all the relations in South Lake Tahoe government, how is a member of the public to know when she files a complaint, that the person investigating it isn't related to the person being accused?

Cities hide behind the shield of personnel records not being privy to public review. So how is the public to know hiring isn't biased and that the relative is truly the best, most experienced candidate? That question then begs, why is a relative even being considered?

Without transparency in city government, the public – for who they work and who pays their salaries – is left in the dark.

Kirkwood wine-wildflower festival

Celebrate 10 years of food, wine, and wildflowers at Kirkwood on July 31.

Take a stroll with guided hikes by local wildflower expert Laird Blackwell before savoring flavors of local Amador and El Dorado county wines. Hit the plaza and visit booths filled with the works of local artisans while The Kingtones play.

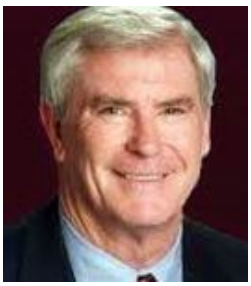
The 10th Annual Wildflower Festival benefits the Sugar Pine Foundation, a group dedicated to preserving the flora and fauna of the High Sierra. Tasting tickets are $20 per person with events happening on the Village Plaza from noon to 5pm.

Former Nev. Gov. Kenny Guinn dead at 73

By Steve Kanigher, Las Vegas Sun

Former Gov. Kenny Guinn, who served during Nevada's most explosive growth, leading with a pragmatic streak and fierce determination to do what was right rather than what more partisan elements in his party thought, has died.

Guinn guided Nevada from January 1999 through the end of his second term in 2006. He died this morning in Las Vegas after a fall from a roof after suffering a possible heart attack. He was 73.



Kenny Guinn

Clark County Coroner Michael Murphy said Guinn was pronounced dead at 11:07 a.m. at University Medical Center. He said an examination is expected to be completed by the end of the day Friday. An official cause of death is pending and a final

determination might not be known for several weeks, he said.

Read the whole story

West Shore sheriff’s meeting

El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department is having a community meeting July 24 at 10am for people to meet Deputy Greg Almos, who is the West Shore contact.

The meeting is at Marie Sluchak Park at Wilson and Pine streets in Tahoma.

Contact Deputy Greg Almos at (530) 573.3375m ext. 8935 or email wsdeputy@edso.org for information.

USFS fees force groups to cancel annual events

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

At least three groups with long-standing ties to the Eldorado National Forest have canceled recreation events this year, citing steep permit processing fees required by U.S. Forest Service cost recovery regulations.

Spokesmen for an equestrian group and two off-road motorcycle clubs say their members over the years have created and maintained trails that the Forest Service touts as amenities.

Now they’re told they must pay thousands of dollars in nonrefundable fees for environmental assessments with no assurance that they’ll receive a permit when the studies are completed.

Read the whole story

‘Rock Around the Block’ in South Tahoe

Thirty-seven young South Shore singers, dancers and actors have been hard at work the last two weeks learning their parts for the 1950’s musical “Rock Around the Block”. They are participating in Sierra Tahoe Children’s Theater annual workshop under the direction of Liz Niven and Marcia Sarosik.

Some of the participants have been sponsored by the El Dorado Community Foundation and the Sports Connection. The soda pop abd sock hop musical is set in the 1950s.

The community is invited to the production July 23 at 6pm at Tahoe Valley Elementary School’s multipurpose room and again July 24 at 10:30am.

There is no charge for the performance, but donations will be accepted at the door.