Incline wife killer appeals case to federal court

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

After losing an appeal with the Nevada Supreme Court, a former wealthy Incline art appraiser has taken his case to the federal court, and has filed a 250-page challenge to his murder conviction.

Peter Bergna, 57, also asked the federal judge to appoint a lawyer to his case, saying he has no real estate, stocks, bonds or automobiles, and has about $821 in the bank.

“The state’s theory that (Bergna) could/would murder his wife by staging a vehicle accident which, by its ‘design’ placed himself in mortal danger, is weird,” Bergna said in the appeal, which was ‘ghost written’ by his former lawyer Richard Cornell.

Read the whole story

Barton Foundation golf tournament

Mulligan’s are allowed during Barton Foundation’s 16th annual Golf Tournament at Genoa Lakes – The Lakes Course on July 23, but only if you pay for them.

Proceeds from the tournament benefit the foundation’s community health endowment fund.

Registration, mulligan and raffle ticket sales begin at 6:45am. The fun, scramble golf tournament starts at 8am. Competitions throughout the course give golfers the chance to take home special prizes. As the golfing ends, guests join the awards party, barbecue and announcement of raffle prize winners.

Golfers also have the opportunity to win a car with a hole-in-one, courtesy of Cardinale Way, as well as other prizes for holes-in-one on additional holes. Everyone will compete in the closest-to-the-hole and longest drive competitions.

The $175 per person entry fee, of which $100 is tax deductible, includes green fees, cart, golfer amenity package, a barbecue lunch and no host bar.

Each year Barton has made changes to enhance the tournament and draw greater interest for returning golfers as well as for new supporters.

Over the years, more than $520,000 has been raised from the golf tournament.

All proceeds help build Barton Foundation’s Endowment Fund. Endowment investment earnings have allowed the Barton Foundation to fund various hospital projects including construction of the helipad in 2001, fund the Hospice program and Health Resource Center in 2002, purchase automated external defibrillators for El Dorado and Douglas counties, pay for Life-Line units for Hospice and fund the hospital’s Healing Design program.

Tournament sponsors include Aflac, Relay Health, Northern Trust, State Farm Kingsbury Grade, Dennis and Kathy Cocking, El Dorado Savings Bank, Tahoe Telephone Directories, Harrah’s/Harveys Resort, Secure Medical Systems, HRS Erase, Western Sign Company, G.L. Hicks Finance, California Healthcare Insurance Company, Marquee Fire Protection, Lakeside Inn, McKesson and Charter Business.

To register, call (530) 543.5614 or go to www.bartonhealth.org/events. Search for Golf Tournament.

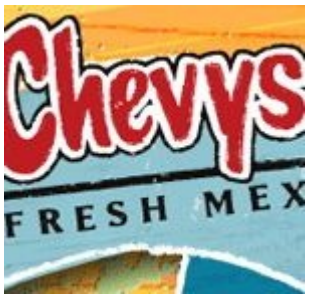
Wildflower hike

July 15 – Wonderland of Wildflowers – 9am-3pm.

Enjoy spectacular Sierra views, snow-capped peaks giving way to summer, and many varieties of wildflowers on a magical walk. See blankets of bright yellow mules ears, bowing columbine, elegant lupine and countless other Sierra wildflowers on this 4-mile hike with botanist Karen Wiese, author of Sierra Nevada Wildflowers. For class sign-ups and/or lodging reservations at Sorensen's Resort, call 800.423.9949.

Cost: $50 lodging guests/$75 non-lodging guests (fee includes bag lunch – order in advance).

Chevys spices up Taste of Tahoe



Chevys restaurant in the middle of South Lake Tahoe is this week's Taste of Tahoe eatery.

A portion of the receipts from now through July 3 will go

toward the local Relay for Life. Relay for Life is a nationwide phenomenon put on by the American Cancer Society to raise money for cancer research.

The South Shore Relay for Life is Aug. 7-8 at Kahle Community Park in Stateline.

Clock ticking on residential burning in El Dorado, Amador

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Amador and El Dorado county residents planning to burn piles of vegetation to prepare their property for the wildfire season have less than a week left.

All burn permits in areas of Amador County's and El Dorado County's western slope served by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Amador-El Dorado-Sacramento-Alpine Unit will be suspended at 8am Thursday.

Read the whole story

DOJ explains Meyers Landfill settlement

To the community,

A settlement with El Dorado County will ensure the beginning

of the cleanup, at an estimated cost of approximately $7 million, of the Meyers Landfill Site, located outside of the city of South Lake Tahoe, the Justice Department and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service announced June 29.

The agreement, lodged in U.S. District Court in Sacramento, resolves certain federal claims against El Dorado County for clean up of the Meyers Landfill site. In addition, the agreement resolves certain counter-claims made by the county against the United States for cleanup of the site.

Under the settlement, El Dorado County will be responsible for consolidating the waste mass at the site and placing it under an impervious cap. The cap and associated drainage features around the cap will prevent the infiltration of precipitation and snowmelt into the landfill waste mass thus eliminating or significantly reducing additional groundwater contamination. A landfill gas venting and monitoring system will also be installed.

The U.S. Forest Service is continuing to investigate groundwater contamination related to the site. Several years of study will be required after the landfill cap is constructed to determine the effect on the groundwater, and what remedy may be required to address any remaining groundwater contamination.

The Meyers Landfill site is a former municipal waste dump and is located wholly on National Forest System lands administered by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the U.S. Forest Service. The site is located in an unincorporated portion of El Dorado County approximately 4.5 miles south of Lake Tahoe. The site was operated as a landfill from about 1946 through 1971 under a series of Forest Service special use permits that were issued to private parties and since 1955 to El Dorado County.

Between 1991 and 1994, volatile organic compounds (VOCs),

likely produced by degradation of organic material within the landfill waste mass, were detected in the groundwater beneath the former landfill disposal area. In August 1996, VOCs, including vinyl chloride, were detected down gradient of the site, including in Saxon Creek, a tributary of Lake Tahoe. The Forest Service initiated a response action under the Superfund law or the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act to determine the extent and impacts of the VOC contamination, and in 2001 it filed litigation against El Dorado County and the city of South Lake Tahoe.

“This settlement outlines specific steps that will be taken to ensure that the contamination at the Meyers Landfill site will be cleaned up and contained,” said Ignacia S. Moreno, assistant attorney general for the Environment and Natural Resources Division. “It is important that we ensure that longstanding hazardous waste sites are cleaned up and our natural resources are protected.”

“We are excited for construction to begin on the ground; this project will provide for the long-term protection of public health and safety and water quality in the Lake Tahoe Basin,” said Eli Ilano, deputy forest supervisor, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

The partial consent decree, lodged in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, in Sacramento, is subject to a 30-day public comment period and approval by the federal court. A copy of the partial consent decree is available on the Justice Department website.

U.S. Department of Justice

Tahoe’s Special Olympians score big at weekend event

Team Tahoe sent a group of swimmers and track athletes to the Northern California State Special Olympics this past weekend.

Several medals were brought home by the local contingent.

Events were on the campus of UC Davis.



Carla McCloed helps her Team Tahoe members win the gold medal. DanThriftPhotography.com

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Cox returns to Legislature

after cancer treatments

State Sen. Dave Cox, R-Roseville, returned to work at the Capitol on Monday after being out for a couple months.

The lawmaker who represents Lake Tahoe in the Legislature has been battling prostate cancer for 13 years.



Dave Cox

He has been in the Senate since 2004. Prior to that he represented the region in the Assembly.

Bears looking for easy backyard food

Bears are finding bird feeders to be a tempting treat this year.

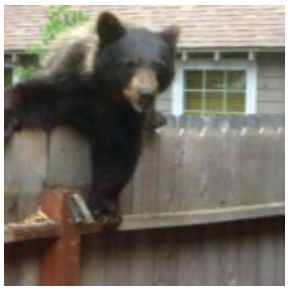
A bear on Margaret Avenue in South Lake Tahoe hopped the fence in hopes of finding some easy pickings with the bird feeder on top of the fence.



A hungry bear eyes a bird feeder in South Lake Tahoe. Photos/Judy Brown

The owner is taking the feeder down.

With bears easily scampering over fences, this could be a problem for small children and family pets playing in the yard, not to mention destruction of fences and other personal property.



A bear comes into the backyard of a South Tahoe home.

Drill tests response to hazardous material on Tahoe beach

By Austin Fay

Plumes of smoke wafted across the decontamination zone at Regan Beach.

Mike Mileski, medical group supervisor for South Lake Tahoe Fire Department was coordinating radio traffic when a plume of the nerve agent crossed his path, causing his ranking sergeant to inform him his skin was itchy and he had to lay on the ground and wait for his teammate Sophie Tetlow to provide medical attention. The radio and clipboard he was in charge was passed on to the next in command.

Placing the decontamination zone so close to the hot zone was one of the many lessons learned during the multi-agency hazardous materials drill on June 28.



Hazmat drill in South Tahoe includes all the gear and a decontamination center. Photos/Austin Fay

If the situation were real, this mistake would have put the entire operation at risk.

It’s been almost two years since there was a hazmat exercise in South Lake Tahoe. The goal is to have an exercise annually for personnel in the region to be adequately prepared to isolate and decontaminate victims of a hazardous material incident.

Briefing at the SLTFD headquarters focused on communication safety and accuracy as objectives. Many people who spoke to Lake Tahoe News justified bumps in the road as a result of it being a training exercise.

Fire trucks and ambulances arrived at the section of the beach that was blocked off, while medics in the fire department assessed victims and took control of the scripted situation.

A troupe of 26 actors in makeup was hired, complete with a distraught mother and a belligerent eager-to-help drunk.

Four actors were sent to Barton Memorial Hospital as part of a decontamination exercise. One went by ambulance, the other three were walk-ins reporting exposure to the nerve agent.

One actor “died” from a heart attack that went untreated approximately an hour after the exercise started.

Five agencies took part in the exercise: South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, Lake Valley Fire Department, Barton Memorial Hospital, El Dorado County and the Army National Guard Civil Support Team. A real hazardous materials case is nearly always multi-jurisdictional, with civilian and national entities collaborating.

The risk of something like what was simulated Monday morning is low, but “the potential is there, but very minimal,” Marty Scheuerman, SLT division chief said. The chance of a terrorist attack or situation where hazardous material might be present

is slight, but merits preparing for the situation.

“Luckily, Tahoe isn’t a huge destination for lots of nasty stuff on trucks, where something like this might happen. It’s mostly consumer goods,” Scheuerman said.

Scheuerman draws on 33 years of hazardous material responder experience in the region and cites the 2007 Angora Fire as a valuable lesson in emergency response.

“There was a need for cooperation during that fire to create a unified command to draw all the agencies and participants under one roof,” Scheuerman said.

Hazardous material was simulated as a blue cooler emitting a plume of white smoke. The smoke, as well as the “injuries,” was in line with an organic phosphate poisoning, or nerve gas. Traffic was reduced to one lane in the Reagan Beach parking lot, while the grassy area on the west end was taped off, designating it the “hot zone.”

“It looks as though the drill’s moving along as planned and we’re learning as we go,” Mark Moss, of the El Dorado County hazmat team, said.

Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District response system is the greatest help and fastest responders as they have more resources to deal with a hazardous material situation, officials said.

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