Jury about to decide if Roberson killed his son

By Kathryn Reed

Jurors are expected to begin deliberations this afternoon in the South Lake Tahoe murder trial of the man accused of killing his 4-year-old son, but whose body has never been found.

Ulysses Roberson is on trial for first-degree murder in the killing of Alexander Olive in their Tahoe Keys home in either December 1985 or January 1986.



Uylsses Roberson

Roberson calls the boy Salaam – meaning peace. El Dorado County Deputy District Attorney Tricia Kelliher in her initial closing arguments on Monday pointed out what she called an irony for Roberson to name the boy "peace" when he probably never had a day of it in his short life.

Kelliher is scheduled to finish her closing arguments at 8:30 this morning in El Dorado County Superior Court. Judge Suzanne Kingsbury is presiding.

Defense attorney Monica Lynch in her closing arguments admonished local and other law enforcement for not following up on leads from people who thought they had seen the boy

between 1988-2002.

“If the government had done its job, the reliability of these witnesses would not be questioned,” Lynch said.

Sitting in the courtroom were FBI agent Chris Campion and South Lake Tahoe police Capt. Martin Hewlett – two of the primary investigators of the case.

Throughout the trial, which began Oct. 5, a slew of witnesses have taken the stand. Roberson was not one of them.

CSU Chico sociology Professor Janja Lalich, who is considered a cult expert, was brought in by the prosecution to talk about the mindsets of people who seemingly blindly follow a leader. Defense attorney Monica Lynch got her way in that the word “cult” was not allowed to be used throughout the trial.

Several of the women Roberson has been involved with have taken the stand.

Judy Olive, the boy’s mother, sat in the same row as her two sisters and brother. It was her brother who helped her to leave the cult-like home Roberson had created, where he slept with several women and fathered even more children.

After Monday’s hearing, Olive did not want to speak with *Lake Tahoe News*. “My only comment is I am appreciative of everyone doing their job,” she said.

At times she was in tears, other times she stared intently at the person speaking. She and Roberson never seemed to make eye contact.

Roberson passed notes to his attorney while the prosecution spoke. While Lynch gave her arguments, he sat stoically – engaged in what was being said.

Roberson could face life in prison without the possibility of parole if the jury finds him guilty. Jurors must also consider

two enhancements – that the crime was racially motivated and a form of torture.

Testimony during the trial painted Roberson as a racist who hated his young son for being half white.

Another issue the jury must consider is whether Raj Roberson was an accomplice to the crime. The defense must prove that this woman who essentially was wife No. 1 is not credible and therefore her testimony should be disregarded.

Lynch made a compelling case for that in her closing arguments. Liar was a repeated description of this woman who had taken the stand against Roberson.

Kelliher was forthright in depicting Roberson as an evil man whose self-absorption and need for control was often demonstrated through his abusiveness toward the women and children he lived with.

This is not Roberson's first run-in with the law. He is well known to Washington state authorities. Click here for more on his past.

Rules keep El Dorado County from opening homeless shelter

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Working against a recent forecast of rain and an overnight low of 38 degrees, members of Rescue's Foothills United Methodist Church hustled to ready shelter for El Dorado County's homeless residents.

Plans to rotate a nighttime shelter among area churches hit a snag, though. Organizers discovered some of the church sites are not zoned for such services.

The county has been without a formal homeless shelter since May 2008, when one run by United Outreach of El Dorado County at a church in Camino outgrew the facility.

Read the whole story

North Shore events fill December calendar

The Resort at Squaw Creek hosts Evenings with Family and Friends in Olympic Valley on Dec. 2, 9 and 16, 4-8pm, with free ice skating and hot cocoa, along with discounts at restaurants and shops.

Northstar-at-Tahoe brings back its Thursday Noel Nights starting Dec. 3, 5-8pm, with sâ€™mores by the fire, free ice skating, hot cocoa, shopping specials, holiday carolers and photos with Santa.

Incline Village and Sierra Nevada College host the 2nd Annual Tree Lighting on campus at Patterson Hall Dec/ 3, 4-6pm. This family-friendly event features holiday crafts and activities, in addition to the tree lighting.

The fun continues in Incline Village when the Sierra Nevada College Choir performs Benjamin Brittenâ€™s â€œCeremony of Carolsâ€ and other seasonal music during its 24th annual Holiday Concert Dec. 3, 7pm, at St. Patrickâ€™s Episcopal Church. Tickets are $15/person and are available at the door.

On Dec. 4 Kings Beach has its traditional Tree Lighting Ceremony with Santa at the North Tahoe Event Center from 5-8pm. The Holiday Fair, which opens at 5:30pm, offers refreshments, caroling and holiday shopping.

Tahoe City hosts its Family Winter Wonderland Dec. 5, 11am-3pm at the picturesque Heritage Plaza with $15 pictures with Santa and Lake Tahoe as the backdrop. Guests can also enjoy hot cocoa and are encouraged to bring a toy to donate. At 6 that evening, Tahoe Cityâ€™s Tree Lighting takes place, along with caroling.

Tahoe Mountain Club presents the Holiday Cooking Demo Dec. 6, 5-9:3pm at Coyote Moon in Truckee with a six-course wine paired tasting demo and popular chef and restaurateur Mark Estee as the emcee. Tickets are $60/person and the event benefits Project Manaâ€™s hunger-relief efforts.

One of Tahoe Cityâ€™s most popular Santa parties takes place at Granlibakken Resort Dec. 13, noon-4pm, with free sledding and gifts for children preschool to 9 years old. Put on by the Rotary Club of Tahoe City, complimentary cocoa, hot dogs and cookies will also be served.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Nov. 30



It’s a gorgeous morning in Lake Tahoe. Bring the sunscreen and sunglasses if you are headed for the slopes. Click on the ski report to know what’s going on today. The report is courtesy of Curtis Fong, the Guy from Lake Tahoe.

Teens killed in El Dorado crash indentified

By Hudson Sangree and Stephen Magagnini, Sacramento Bee

The driver of a car that slammed into a tree Sunday, killing two high school students and a third passenger on a notoriously dangerous El Dorado County Road, may face vehicular manslaughter charges, a California Highway Patrol spokesman said.

The passengers who died in the 12:40 a.m. single-car collision on Salmon Falls Road were Nan Hee Pak, 16, a sophomore at Rocklin High School; Elijah John Shaw, 18, a senior at Folsom High School; and Alex Weast, 20, CHP Sgt. Todd Brown said.

Read the whole story

Basketball fund raiser

The South Tahoe Boys Basketball program is hosting its 3rd annual Ernie’s Burger Night on Dec. 2 from 5-7 pm.

If anyone is interested in purchasing tickets they can call Chris Proctor at (530) 543.5472 and he will make arrangements to have basketball players deliver the tickets.

Cost is $10 each and includes a “burger, drink, and fries”. All proceeds go to the Boys Basketball Program.

Tahoe doctor is proof breast exams save lives



By Kelly Shanahan

I guess I am the woman whose life would be considered expendable under the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's new guidelines on mammography screening and breast self exam.

I guess Caroline, the 26-year-old medical student who sat next to me as we both got chemotherapy; and Linda, the ward clerk at my little hospital; and Melodie, the restaurant owner – all of whom felt their cancerous lumps on breast self exam – are expendable as well. I guess my patients and fellow breast cancer survivors Lisa, Karen, Marla, Chris, Carolyn, Tracey, Annette, Michelle, Jana, Diane, Alice, Shelley, Anne, Kelly, Pam, Carol, Rebecca, Suzanne and Lea – all of us diagnosed with breast cancer prior to age 50 – are unimportant.

I understand many women under 50 (1,904) will need to be screened to find one woman with breast cancer. I understand that this costs money. But breast cancers diagnosed in women in their 40s are often more aggressive, faster growing tumors, and finding these cancers earlier unequivocally saves lives. Even the USPSFT, in the same paper recommending stopping mammograms in women in their 40s, acknowledges a 15 percent reduction in the death rate in women between ages 40 – 50 who have regular mammograms. Finding cancer earlier saves money as

well – a lumpectomy is cheaper than a mastectomy, and no chemo is way less expensive than having to undergo months of chemo for a later stage cancer.

I was diagnosed with stage 2B breast cancer at age 47. If I had followed the USPSTF guidelines, I wouldn't have my first mammo for another year. By that time, the cancer may well have spread to far reaches of my body, and I would be lucky if I survived to see my sixth-grade daughter graduate from high school. If I had had a digital mammogram every year since turning 40, instead of missing one year, my cancer may well have been diagnosed sooner. Losing both breasts and all my hair, vomiting and having bone pain from the chemo was no big deal; telling my daughter (9½ when I was diagnosed) that I had cancer and not being able to be there for her 100 percent because I was too sick, well that was what really hurt.

Thanks to a mammo, a mastectomy and months of chemotherapy, I am able to continue to be a productive member of society as a practicing gynecologist, a wife and a mom for, I hope, a very long time. The 22 other women I mentioned – secretaries, nurses, teachers, businesswomen, clerks, wives, moms, daughters – are all worth saving.

I stand with the American Cancer Society in condemning the USPSTF guidelines.

Dr. Kelly Shanahan owns Emerald Bay Center for Women's Health, which has offices in South Lake Tahoe and Minden.

Sports Connection – getting

kids involved in something positive



By Amy Jackson

Sports Connection is a successful link to at-risk kids.

This grassroots prevention program was created in response to the many kids in South Lake Tahoe who are not participating in sports due to lack of finances, transportation and language barriers.

Sports Connectionâ€™s very reason for being is to help reduce teen pregnancies and gang involvement. How? By giving these at-risk kids a new sense of belonging, positive role models and a new found sense of confidence.

Weâ€™re proud that Sports Connection has become successful, yet its work is never done.

Local kids are identified by school officials, neighbors and friends. Sponsors include community members and service organizations. Kids and sponsors are then â€œconnectedâ€ and signed up for activities. We then determine if there are equipment or transportation needs. Often, coaches or other team parents become the true support and mentor for the child.

Once â€œconnectedâ€ with a child, you will remain this childâ€™s sponsor through their middle school years. By keeping their academics high, Sports Connection kids will be able to participate in these programs free of charge in high school.

Experience in their early years will give them the ability and confidence to attempt this. This will also help them define themselves in a positive way in their critical teen years.

Sports Connection currently has over 100 kids participating in AYSO Soccer, club soccer, Pop Warner Football, basketball, dance, baseball, snowboarding, theater and art.

Sports Connection is completely funded by sponsors and 100 percent of the donations are invested in these kids. Since we continue to receive more referrals, weâ€™re always looking for new sponsors. A child can participate in most seasonal sports for a just $50.

To sponsor a child for a year, the investment is closer to $150, depending on how many sports they play and at what level. The idea is to keep kids busy and involved all year, lessening the chances for any negative outside influences to take hold.

Want to invest in a child today?

Please mail your check to:

Sports Connection

557 Koru Street

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Itâ€™s an investment that pays dividends daily.

Amy Jackson is the coordinator for Sports Connection.

Winemaker dinner at the Ketch

Winemakerâ€™s Dinner returns by popular demand on Dec. 9 at 6:30pm at the Fresh Ketch in South Lake Tahoe.

Enjoy a five-course menu permeated with signature seafood and paired with choice wines from Steele Vineyards. Tickets are $65 per person or $120 a couple.

With limited space, reservations are recommended at (530)541.5683.

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3 teens die on rural El Dorado County road

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

A single-car accident early Sunday in rural El Dorado County left three teenagers dead and sent the young driver to the hospital, authorities said.

The accident happened about 12:45 a.m. on Salmon Falls Road, a winding route notorious in recent years for a number of motorcycle crashes.

The California Highway Patrol said Sunday’s accident involved a 2006 silver Subaru Impreza.

Read the whole story