State moves Garrido’s parole agent after repeated threats

By Roman Gokhman, Contra Costa Times

ANTIOCH â€” The parole agent who supervised kidnapping and rape suspect Phillip Garrido has been moved to a different location after numerous threats against him and his family, the state corrections department said today.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Spokesman Gordon Hinkle said the agent and his family were moved shortly after Jaycee Dugard was discovered and Garrido and his wife, Nancy, were arrested Aug. 26.

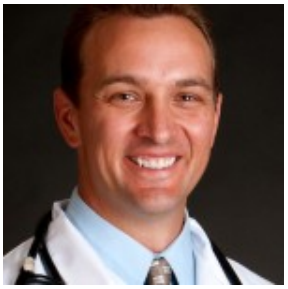
The move was “due to security concerns that the department had,” Hinkle said.

Read the whole story

Barton doctor adds letters behind his name

The Certifying Commission in Medical Management recently designated Clint Purvance as a certified physician executive.

Purvance is chief medical officer for Barton Memorial Hospital and Barton Health.



Clint Purvance

CCMM awarded Purvance the status for his educational achievements, demonstrated stature as a physician and experience in the field of medical management.

Homewood makes skiing affordable



By Kathryn Reed

Prices are plunging at Homewood Mountain Resort faster than one can schuss down the face of this West Shore resort.

This year it has some help from its sister resort Alpine Meadows. The Homewood-Alpine combo college pass for $299 allows skiers-boarders access to both resorts.

In these economic times, Homewood Mountain Resort is positioning itself to be even more friendly to a riderâ€™s wallet than it usually is. The resort on Highway 89 is billing it as nine ways to save on lift tickets. Some of those ways

are:

â€¢ An online exclusive where Homewood has randomly selected days throughout the season when skiers may purchase adult, full-day lift tickets for just $39, which equates to a savings of up to 30 percent.

â€¢ A guest who uses the Tahoe Area Regional Transit to and from the mountain receives $5 off an adult, full-day lift ticket. Restrictions apply and proof is necessary.

â€¢ Starting Jan. 7, passholders from any mountain may present their 2009-10 season pass at any Homewood ticket window to receive an adult full-day lift ticket for $25.

â€¢ Active duty military ski for free any day, including holidays.

Itâ€™s with good reason that *Ski* magazine has raved about the views from Homewood. No resort is closer to the edge of Lake Tahoe. Itâ€™s billed as skiing from peak to shore.

The 1,260-acre mountain has something for everyone. Donâ€™t let the views from the highway deceive you â€“ thereâ€™ s much more to the mountain than what one sees driving by.

â€œSnow â€“ and lots of it â€“ is something that interests any skier or snowboarder. Considering that 09/10 is forecast to be an El Nino winter in Tahoe, there is more eager anticipation than usual,â€ said resort spokeswoman Rachael Woods.

Even though powder days are phenomenal at Homewood, the resort canâ€™t open until the entire mountain is covered in white stuff supplied by Mother Nature. The resort is targeting Dec. 18 to open.

Check the website to know for sure â€“ www.skihomewood.com.

Alpine turns it up a notch with terrain parks



By Kathryn Reed

Alpine Meadowsâ€™ Errol Kerr is ready to bring home the gold in the skier cross event at the Olympics in Whistler in February.

But the Truckee resident wonâ€™t be wearing red, white and blue. This is because he will be skiing for Jamaica.

â€œI want to represent the land of my father,â€ Kerr told the *Jamaica Gleaner* last spring. â€œThatâ€™s the dream.â€

He could have skied for the United States, but his roots run deep to the Caribbean island nation.

For the thrill seekers, this North Shore resort that expects to open Dec. 5 has revamped its terrain parks. Features have been installed along several trails on the upper mountain. They are incorporated into the natural contours of the 2,400-acre mountain.

Park features will be scattered along parts of Kangaroo, Boomerang, Tiegel, lower Palisades, Terryâ€™s Return, and Loop Road.

Alpine is all about working with various types of skiers. Disabled Sports provides daily coaching and adventure to

students with physical and mental disabilities.

Equipment is tailored to the athleteâ€™s needs. This may include a mono ski with riggers, stand-up outriggers or sit skis. Lessons are offered twice a day. For reservations, call (530) 581.4161.

Alpine Meadows will be home to Tahoeâ€™s only NASTAR racecourse.

To make the whole process of getting on the mountain easier, Alpine has installed radio frequency based turnstiles. This means no unzipping your jacket to find your pass. The ticket can be anywhere on you.

Tickets can also be purchased at home. Adult tickets are $59/day.

All of this should eliminate lines for buying tickets and speed up the process to get on the chairlift.

Season passholders and Alpine Club members can link their credit card to this pass so it can be used at the resortâ€™s restaurants and retail outlets.

This durable plastic card is the size and weight of a credit card. It means less paper used each day to create individual lift tickets.

Another deal is the Homewood-Alpine combo college pass for $299 that allows skiers-boarders access to both resorts.

The Alpine Club frequent-visitor program is still going strong. Members can ski for $44, get discounts at Resort at Squaw Creek on lodging packages, and other deals. Details are on the website.

After a day on the slopes, Alpine will take up to 20 people in snow cats up the mountain for a private dinner and an evening of stargazing.

For more information, go to www.skialpine.com.

Sipping something French on Thanksgiving

By Peter Arcuri

How did French wines become the traditional American quaff for Thanksgiving? Marketing, thatâ€™s how.

Every third Thursday of November, France releases a Beaujolais Nouveau. The wine is released just six weeks after the grapes are harvested. The wine is actually a preview of the current vintage. In 1985 France passed a law to have the wines released just after midnight of that third Thursday, it is not coincidental Americans rush to pick up their wines.

The Gamay grape is grown in the Beaujolais region of France, which is actually part of Burgundy. After the initial fermentation, carbonic maceration, which extracts no tannins and retains more sugar, the wine contains a slight fizz or carbonation. The wine is light and fruity with the dominant flavors of raspberry and strawberry, two flavors that would complement most recipes served with Thanksgiving turkey.



The Lake Tahoe Wine Guy on

the Atlantic waiting for the Nouveau.

Georges Duboeuf is the largest producer of Beaujolais Nouveau. A Beaujolais Nouveau shelf life is short, drink and enjoy by New Yearâ€™s Day. They are about $25 or so.

Another traditional French wine for Thanksgiving would be Pinot Noir. This wine is also from the Burgundy region of France. You may need a Sherpa, or at least a sommelier to navigate your way through Burgundy.

Burgundyâ€™s main growing area is Cote dâ€™Or, [golden slope] which is divided into Cote de Nuits, [newee] and Cote de Beaune, [bone.] There are two main grapes grown here: Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Cote dâ€™Or contains 33 Grand Crus, about 600 vineyards merit the appellation Premier Cru, hundreds of village wines and more a 1,000 producers.

The vines that exist are passed on from generation to generation so many relatives may own the same single grape vine. Pinot Noirs are not sweet like its cousin Gamay. The flavors are more subtle with dark strawberry, sour cherry, tobacco, tar and good old fashion dirt. Some Grand Crus, for instance, Romanee-Conti or Richebourg can cost almost $1,000 per bottle especially for a vintage year like 2002.

If you would like to keep Thanksgiving American, well sort of, try a California or Oregon Pinot Noir. All West Coast grapes are vitas vinifera. This means their roots are native to France. West Coast Pinots contain more forward fruit flavors, and like the Burgundies they are not sweet. They are not as subtle as the Burgundies, which can contain multiple nuances.

French wines are still preferred in New York City and they are more affordable than West Coast wines. It costs the same, if not less, to ship wines across the Atlantic as it is to ship

wines across the country. Domaine Serene Pinots from Oregon are fantastic costing about $60 a bottle depending on the vineyard appellation and which state you are living in.

How do you overcome the rising costs of wine shipping? There are wineries and retail operations that will ship wine directly to your home, which will in turn save you money. If you are in New York, California, Oregon or any other state where wine can be legally delivered call Tom Simoneau 800-289-9463 at Vintage Wines in Sonoma County. Simoneau grows his own grapes in Sonoma Countyâ€™s Alexander Valley and he is one of the countryâ€™s best amateur wine makers. He represents many small wineries and can ship in time for the holidays.

One Pinot Noir that has received a lot of attention lately is the 2007 Sonoma Coast Platinum Series, $30. The Sonoma Coast is an ideal spot for Pinot to grow. The Pacificâ€™s marine influence and foggy conditions add superbly structured acids to the grapes. This wine has deep and dark cherry flavors with an earthy, chocolate-anise finish. The Pinot was aged in 50 percent new and 50 percent old French oak barrels, which create smooth and elegant tannins. The earthiness of the wine is an excellent complement for a roasted turkey.

Peter Arcuri is the Lake Tahoe Wine Guy.

Barnes & Noble open at LTCC



Lake Tahoe Community College’s bookstore opens today as a Barnes & Noble college bookstore.

It’s online as well at http://ltcc.bncollege.com.

The remodeled retail outlet in the main building of the South Lake Tahoe college is designed to provide students with more options, with less expense. It’s also a resource for the entire community. After all, it is the South Shore’s only bookstore that sells new periodicals.

SLT balances budget, infuriates employees

By Kathryn Reed

For weeks several council members have harped on wanting the budget to be brought before them – notably Hal Cole and Jerry Birdwell who make up the finance committee.

Finally, it was on Nov. 17. In a matter of seconds it was a done deal.

No discussion.

No comments.

Nothing but a 4-0 vote. Councilman Bruce Grego was absent.

It all seemed a bit surreal.

Most of the discussion Tuesday centered on the seven

bargaining units in the city that had been negotiating with staff to amend their contracts to help bridge a $3.4 million budget gap.

During those discussions Councilman Bill Crawford asked how without all the unions agreeing to cutbacks could the city come up with a balanced budget. Finance Director Christine Vuletich said she would explain it when the budget was before the council.

But she never had to because a vote was taken and that was that.

The last time the city discussed the multi-million dollar budget in any depth was at the Sept. 29 workshop.

What happened in last 49 days is unknown. *Lake Tahoe News* has requested the final budget to be provided now that the council has approved it.

In years past approval of South Lake Tahoe's final budget was a lengthy process with councilmembers going over it in a deliberate manner. Without their scrutiny of it in public, the public doesn't visibly know how thoroughly they have dissected it.

Considering staff and councilmembers have less than a stellar image with those who live in the city limits and surrounding area, to not have any discussion on such an important document is almost shocking.

In an era when questions keep being raised about how money is spent and who has discretion to spend it, it would have seemed logical for details to have been provided even if no one was left in the audience to ask the questions.

The summary document that was provided lacks details – as would be expected.

The summary does explain in generalities how the $3.4 million

deficit was overcome.

Nearly $600,000 comes form ongoing savings from three frozen positions, four temporary people filling jobs, the Redevelopment Agency paying the bulk of the city attorney's salary, one layoff, and $80,000 in miscellaneous savings.

About $1.4 million is saved in furloughs and equivalents.

Reserves were depleted by $1,446,792 to bring the savings to $3.42 million.

In the 2009-10 budget (the fiscal year started Oct. 1) expenses total $101,498,655, with revenues projected to be $102,352,148 for a net revenue of $853,493.

The general fund, which is the core operating budget for the city, is projected to have $28.99 million in revenues. However, expenses are tallied at $30.49 million.

Besides passing a budget more than a month late, the council managed to seemingly upset the majority of its employees who are represented by unions. This is because the three groups that renegotiated their contracts – South Lake Tahoe Employees Association, South Lake Tahoe Administrative and Confidential Employees Association, and South Lake Tahoe Safety Management Committee â€“ thought every group had to come up with a deal by Nov. 17.

It was the deadline. The deadline the council said it wanted a budget for 2009-10. Staff came through without all the bargaining units needing to amend their contracts.

The groups which didn't reach a deal were South Lake Tahoe Firemen's Association, South Lake Tahoe Police Officers Association, South Lake Tahoe Police Supervisor Association, and South Lake Tahoe Police Association (non-sworn employees).

It was the firefighters who came out in force Tuesday. They filled the back of the room, many standing because all the

seats were filled. They were visibly and audibly disgruntled with the city – accusing the city of negotiating in bad faith.

The city negotiating team is made up of City Manager Dave Jinkens, Vuletich and another finance department employee, Fire Chief Lorenzo Gigliotti, and Human Resources Director Janet Emmet.

Most of the councilmembers felt like they were caught in a "he said, she said" situation. Because of this, either Cole or Birdwell will sit in on future negotiations. The council agreed 4-0 to this procedural change.

This is unusual. Elected officials usually trust staff and are not part of a negotiating team. This is a clear signal the council has lost faith in city leadership.

Scheduling is a main issue the police and fire personnel want addressed. Both groups believe by reworking the schedules it will save the money the city was seeking.

On a 3-1 vote the council accepted the amended contracts with the unions that had signed off on them. Though it should be noted the votes to approve the amendments were not unanimous by the workers.

Cole voted no because he didn't agree with the amendment stating staff and unions would go back to the tables within in six months. He wanted it sooner.

Firefighters said they are wary of returning to the table anytime soon because they don't trust the city's negotiating team.

Comedian Ken Ober – dead at 52

By Howie Nave

Ken Ober passed away this week. I first heard about it from other comedians on Facebook. The “regularâ€ media ran with the story a couple days after his death on Sunday.

Most people probably know Ober from his MTV show â€œRemote Controlâ€ in the late â€™80s, which also introduced his announcer/second banana Colin Quinn to the nation.

Quinn later went on to appear on NBCâ€™s â€œSaturday Night Liveâ€ and â€œTough Crowdâ€ on Comedy Central.



Ken Ober

Quinn was up here this past summer performing at Harrahâ€™s South Shore Room where we opened up for him.

Ober, 52, would later wind up writing for several popular television sitcoms, but Iâ€™ll remember him always as a stand up with a great wit.

When Ken was up here visiting Tahoe he stayed over at Kent Emmons place on Kingsbury Grade. Emmons would sometimes let us â€œborrowâ€ his house and sports car when he was in Los Angeles working for National Lampoon Radio. I still have the keys, too, even though he no longer lives up here.

While Ober was up here he joined me along with comedians Adam Ferrara and Bonnie McFarlane at The Improv backstage cracking jokes and just having a good time being spontaneous. I wish he could have stayed a little longer. It was such a fun week.

Ober was also very generous. When I had my comedy golf tournament for Make-A-Wish, Ober was one of the first individuals to donate items from his MTV show along with some cool stuff for the silent auction we had in conjunction with the tournament.

Later he sent me this classic Beavis and Butthead jersey with a note saying that when my hair stood up it reminded him of Butthead. I wear it on stage over at The Improv and for those special retro events.

Ober loved Lake Tahoe and wanted to get back out again when he had some hang time, which would have been as Butthead might say, â€œCooooool.â€ But unfortunately that will never happen.

I went to his Facebook page today and the memories started flooding back with all the nice things that others had to say about him.

Howie Nave is host of the Improv at Harveys at Stateline.

Prescribed burn near Cave Rock

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations in the Cave Rock and Lakeridge areas starting Nov. 17 as weather and staffing allows.

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from

prescribed fire project areas.

Other fire protection agencies, state and local, may also be conducting prescribed fire operations during this period.

This and other prescribed fire projects are designed to reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical resources. Smoke management is part of every prescribed fire burn plan, and efforts will be taken to reduce actual or potential smoke impacts on community areas.

Adult filmmaker plans Dugard movie

Contra Costa Times

SACRAMENTO â€" An adult filmmaker plans to base a movie on the case of Jaycee Dugard, the rape and kidnap victim who was discovered to be living in the backyard of a home near Antioch for 18 years.

According to Sacramento TV station CBS 13, Shane Ryan, an actor and low budget underground filmmaker behind such straight-to-DVD movies as “Amateur Porn Star Killer” and “Sex, Kids, Party,” wants to make a movie called “Abducted Girl: An American Sex Slave,” based on the Dugard kidnapping.

Read the whole story