Sherer loses job 1 week after sparring with South Lake Tahoe City Council

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe Community Services Director Stan Sherer was fired Monday.

“It’s kind of a shocker. I really can’t talk about it,” Sherer told *Lake Tahoe News* the night of July 23.

Sherer came on board with the city in January 2011 to lead the Parks and Recreation Department. During consolidation because of budget shortfalls his job responsibilities increased, department title was changed, as was his job title. And his department was reduced in staffing significantly.



Stan Sherer

He was verbally chastised by the City Council as last week’s meeting regarding a long-term contract he approved without the electeds knowledge.

Asked if that was why the city let him go, Sherer said no. However, the first inkling he had that there was trouble was when he met July 20 with City Manager Nancy Kerry. He would not divulge the details of that conversation.

Kerry, when reached July 23, was tight-lipped as well.

“His employment with the city was terminated effective today,” Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. She would not elaborate because it’s a personnel matter.

Sherer had come to South Lake Tahoe from Sparks, where he had worked in that city’s rec department for 16 years.

“I really wanted to make a difference up there,” Sherer said. “I appreciated my time there and wish I had more time to make a difference.”

Free lunch for cancer survivors during Relay for Life

Cancer survivors are invited to a free lunch during Relay for Life on Aug. 11.

Lunch will be served after the opening ceremony; at which survivors are encouraged to walk a lap.

The entire event is from 11am-11pm that Saturday at Kahle Community Park in Stateline.

Call Maryon Tilley with your name and phone number to RSVP, (775) 586.8330.

Taxpayers on hook for environmental lawsuits

By Asher Price, Austin American Statesman

In 2010, having successfully pressed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to consider listing as endangered six colorfully named freshwater mussels, at least one in Central Texas, Houston lawyer Peter Thompson set about getting paid.

Eventually, Thompson and an attorney for WildEarth Guardians, the New Mexico-based environmental group that led the effort and for whom Thompson served as a Texas-based counsel, were paid a total of $9,549.55 by the federal government for their work, at least 70 hours, government and attorneys' records show.

That amounts to $136.41 an hour, far less than typical corporate rates.

Attorney pay in endangered species cases recently has come under fire.

Fresh from a successful battle to keep a West Texas lizard from endangered status, Jerry Patterson, Texas' land commissioner, told the American-Statesman that suits under the Endangered Species Act too often "are not driven by science; they're driven by litigation."

Patterson also said as much at a U.S. House Natural Resources Hearing in June titled "Taxpayer-Funded Litigation: Benefiting Lawyers and Harming Species, Jobs and Schools."

Amplifying that position was committee chairman Doc Hastings, R-Wash., who said in an opening statement that the Endangered Species Act was forcing "taxpayers to reward an army of environmental lawyers to exploit vague definitions and

deadlines that realistically cannot be met.”

Hasting’s feelings about the act aside, he’s right about who pays environmental attorneys in successful cases: When lawyers for environmental groups push the federal government to list a species as endangered – and win – the government picks up the tab.

But environmental law experts say working to press the government to list species as endangered is not the way to line one’s pockets.

From 2004 to 2010, the Fish and Wildlife Service paid attorney fees of about $1.5 million in 26 cases, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The office also found the U.S. Treasury Department paid $14.2 million from 2003 to 2010 to a range of plaintiffs in environmental cases involving the Environmental Protection Agency.

The government pays attorneys out of a fund at the Treasury Department or from an agency’s appropriations. By statute, the federal government pays attorney fees in a successful suit, the premise being that the cost of litigation should not dissuade potential plaintiffs from righting government action – or a lack thereof.

Read the whole story

Money, information available to replace shake roofs in

parts of Tahoe

Lake Valley and Meeks Bay fire protection districts have money from a grant to replace wood roofs in their jurisdictions.

The Hazardous Wood Roof Replacement Grant program is designed to encourage homeowners with hazardous wood roofs to replace them with a full Class A Assembly, non-combustible, non-wood roof.

This grant program will provide eligible, participating homeowners with a 70 percent reimbursement (up to $6,000) for the costs of replacing an eligible wood roof.

For any questions and greater detail regarding the program, contact Lake Valley Fire District at (530) 577.2447 or attend the Aug. 14 6-8pm meeting at the Lake Valley firehouse in Meyers.

Serving dinner to guests with restricted diets

By Jessica Bruder, New York Times

No one would touch it.

The offending object? A footlong loaf of bread, stuffed with savory cheese, purchased at a beloved Italian bakery and presented with pride at a recent potluck meal. “This bread is delicious,” I crowed.

The kitchen went quiet. You'd think I had offered up a bouquet of poison ivy. One guest said she was gluten free. Another didn't consume milk products. The mood lifted only when someone else arrived with a large bowl of quinoa and lentils.

It's becoming harder for Americans to break bread together. Our appetites are stratified by an ever-widening array of restrictions: gluten free, vegan, sugar free, low fat, low sodium, no carb, no dairy, soyless, meatless, wheatless, macrobiotic, probiotic, antioxidant, sustainable, local and raw.

Read the whole story

Increasing number of women diagnosed with lung cancer

By San Diego Union-Tribune

Historically, lung cancer has been viewed as a disease of men. Over the past 50 years, however, there has been a dramatic increase in the incidence of lung cancer in women – even as lung cancer rates in men have declined.

Lung cancer is now the most common cause of cancer death in American women, accounting for more than one-quarter of all cancer deaths. In 2010, there were 105,770 new cases of lung cancer in women, with more than 71,080 deaths – more than breast, uterine and ovarian cancer deaths combined.

The rise in female lung cancer incidence has long been attributed to more women using tobacco, but 20 percent of women who develop lung cancer have never smoked. In the United

States, 15 percent to 20 percent of lung cancers occur in people who have never smoked, but interestingly, 70 percent to 80 percent of “never-smokers” with lung cancer are women.

We asked Patricia Thistlethwaite, a cardiothoracic surgeon at the UC San Diego and the first female program director of thoracic surgery in the nation, to shed more light on what the U.S. Surgeon General’s office has called a “contemporary epidemic.”

Q: Does anything explain the rise in cases of lung cancer in women, but not men?

A: Several factors may be contributing to the increased prevalence.

First, before 1940 few women in the United States smoked, but the integration of women into the workplace during World War II led to an increase in tobacco consumption. The prevalence of smoking in American women peaked in 1965 at 33 percent and remains at 22 percent today. In contrast, more than half of American men smoked before 1965, but the prevalence has decreased to 23 percent today. Thus, over time, there has been a more marked decrease in smoking in men compared to women.

Second, there has been a significant increase in two types of lung cancer in women: bronchoalveolar carcinoma and adenocarcinoma, which has not been seen in the male population in this country. Both of these types of lung cancer occur in younger, nonsmoking individuals, particularly women. The cause for the huge increase is not known and is being studied.

Third, there are important molecular differences in lung cancers that are suspected to be responsible for increased susceptibility in women. Women exhibit decreased DNA repair capability and increased mutations in specific cancer genes such as p53, epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR), and K-ras. Mutations in these genes are found at a much higher frequency in adenocarcinomas, particularly in women.

Finally, one of the most obvious biologic differences between men and women is hormonal and related to estrogen, a recognized factor in the development of other types of cancer. The role of estrogen and synthetic estrogens in lung cancer in women is under investigation and somewhat controversial. Estrogens have been shown to stimulate growth of lung cancer cells in tissue culture, yet clinical studies suggest that estrogen-progesterone supplementation probably promotes lung cancer rather than just estrogen alone.

Read the whole story

Annual North Shore food-wine fest expands offerings

The 27th Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival, long considered one of the region's premier gourmet events, has increased the number of its programs – now offering nine days of festivities.

Another noticeable change to this year's festival is the expansion of the event to every corner of North Lake Tahoe. Visitors can literally pick and choose when and where to partake from the lake's West Shore to Kings Beach and even Truckee, Sept. 1-9.

New events include a Labor Day Weekend Barbecue and Music at West Shore Café and Inn in Homewood (Sept. 1), the Alpen Wine Fest at the Village at Squaw Valley (Sept. 2) and educational classes at Uncorked Wine Bar in the Village at Squaw Valley and at their Tahoe City location (Sept. 3 and 6).

Attendees also have an opportunity to shop, cook, learn and

dine with chef and owner Douglas Dale of Wolfdale's Cuisine Unique in Tahoe City at his Farmer's Market/Hands-On Cooking Class (Sept. 6). Participants will shop locally with Dale, cook together and enjoy a four-course luncheon complete with wine pairings.

This year's event will also feature a first-time winemaker dinner at the famed Soule Domain in Crystal Bay (Sept. 6).

The Grape Stomp has changed location and will now be hosted at Tahoe City's Commons Beach and sponsored by Uncorked Tahoe City (Sept. 7).

Although the focus has traditionally been wine, this year's event will diverge featuring a unique beer class as part of its educational seminars on Saturday (Sept. 8) at the Village at Northstar. The "Belgian Brews and Cheese Pairing" has renowned cheese expert Laura Werlin pairing Belgian-style and IPA-style beer with a variety of domestic cheeses.

Another new class that may pique the interest of festivalgoers is the "2012 Pacific Oyster Wine Pairing Winners" (Sept. 8), which will also be at the Village at Northstar.

Many of the festival's free programs are also return for Sept. 8 at the Village at Northstar, including outdoor grilling and cooking seminars, gourmet marketplace, hands-on cooking and butchering demonstrations, as well as the ticketed Wine and Brew Walk and Blazing Pans Mountain Chef Cookoff and Charbay Artisan Winery and Distillery Release Party.

The pinnacle of the event, the Culinary Competition and Grand Tasting, returns (Sept. 9) at the Village at Northstar with more than 30 restaurants, caterers and chefs developing bite-sized dishes that pair perfectly with a single varietal or vintage wine, beer or spirits.

For more information about the Lake Tahoe Autumn Food and Wine Festival, a complete list of events and prices, special

festival lodging packages and to purchase individual event tickets, go online.

Rat poison in remote Sierra pot gardens linked to rare wildlife deaths

By Andrew Becker, California Watch

Toxic chemicals used to rid rodents from illicit marijuana gardens in the Sierra Nevada range and elsewhere in California may have inadvertently poisoned dozens of vulnerable weasel-like mammals called fishers, according to a new study released this month.

Biologists from UC Davis, the nonprofit Integral Ecology Research Center, and state and federal land agencies found that nearly 80 percent of a sample size of fishers found dead in the wild were exposed directly or indirectly to anticoagulant rodenticides – rat poison. They point to illegal marijuana cultivation as a likely culprit for the introduction of the chemicals to remote areas where the animals live.

Fishers are members of the weasel family and formerly ranged across the northern forests of North America. But logging and fur trappers lured by their once-valuable pelts drove the fishers' numbers down, wiping them out in some parts of the United States. The sample group of the rare animals, which could be listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act, were found over a five-year period ending in 2011 in Northern California and in the southern Sierra Nevada range. Some of the dead animals were found in remote wilderness areas

with no roads or campground access.

The study, which documented exposure to such poisons in fishers for the first time, raises questions about the threat to other rare forest predators, such as the Sierra Nevada red fox, wolverine, gray wolf and various owl species. It also raises questions about the long-term environmental impacts from marijuana gardens treated with the poisons, which have become increasingly toxic as rodents build resistance to the chemicals. Nearly all of the fishers that died after coming into contact with the anticoagulants were exposed to highly toxic versions of the chemical.

Read the whole story

Study: Alcohol in moderation may help menopausal bones

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

It’s well-known that exercise is good for our bones, even as we age, but how about that nightly glass of wine?

A new study of women in their 50s and early 60s finds that moderate alcohol consumption may help prevent bone loss. The women in the study consumed about one-and-a-half drinks per day.

The findings fit with prior studies, including the Framingham Heart Study, which documented that moderate drinkers – people who consume one to two drinks per day – have higher bone mineral density compared to heavy drinkers and people who don’t consume alcohol at all.

But sorry guys, this one’s just for the ladies.

The latest study, published in the journal *Menopause*, finds evidence that moderate alcohol consumption influences bone turnover. It’s a small study, just 40 women, but it helps explain why this may be the case.

Read the whole story

Thunderstorms to linger in Tahoe for a day

Expect thunderstorms in the greater Lake Tahoe area to remain through Monday.

Rain started to fall in South Lake Tahoe about 4am, and will continue on an off throughout today. However, the National Weather Service is saying no flash flooding is expected.

“There was lightning all across the Sierra last night,” Alex Hoon, meteorologist with the Weather Service in Reno told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said most of the more than 6,000 strikes were on the west side of the mountains, from Modesto to north of Truckee.

However, lightning to the east of Tahoe on Sunday is being blamed for a 1,000-acre blaze in the Pine Nuts near Gardnerville. The Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center at 6:35am did not report any significant changes to the fire overnight.

This is the first rainfall in the Tahoe area in more than a couple months. Afternoon thunderstorms this time of year are

normal.

Hoon said it would start to dry out tomorrow, with the rest of the week being sunny, with temperatures returning to normal.

– Kathryn Reed