

Victims' right crowd captivated by Dugard kidnapping story

By Guy Kovner, Press Democrat

Terry Probyn came home late from her second job and stepped outside her home in Riverside to gaze at a large, bright full moon on the night of Aug. 23, 2009.

"OK, Jaycee, where the hell are you?" Probyn called out, continuing a dialogue with her daughter, Jaycee Lee Dugard, who had been kidnapped 18 years earlier.

That same night, 420 miles to the north, Dugard had "an uncontrollable desire" to look up at the moon from the backyard of a convicted sex offender's house in Antioch.

"It was full and it made her think of me," Probyn said.

Three days later, Dugard and the two daughters she had during her captivity were freed from the clutches of Phillip Garrido, who is now serving a 431-year prison sentence for kidnapping, rape and false imprisonment.

Probyn, 53, held a crowd of about 300 people spellbound Tuesday in Santa Rosa as she recounted the "18 hellish years" of separation from Dugard, who at age 11 was snatched from a South Lake Tahoe street on June 10, 1991 in one of California's most notorious kidnappings.

Probyn was the guest speaker at a Sonoma County Crime Victims' Rights Week event at the Family Justice Center on Mendocino Avenue.

It was just the second time she had told her story in a public setting, Probyn said.

Read the whole story

STHS student's photography singled out

South Tahoe High School student Angelee Brown received first place in the CaliforniaStreaming.org Digital Photography Contest and finalist in the *National Geographic* photography competition that had more than 1,800 entries.

Brown's black and white photo of her little sister caught the judge's attention. The photograph titled "Playing Dress Up" was submitted in the student category.



South Tahoe High student Angelee Brown took this award-winning photo.

So much great writing about California – what should you read?

By Allen Pierleoni, Sacramento Bee

Everybody knows California is a nation unto itself, culturally and geographically unique. From Gold Rush argonauts to Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, we've always been at the forefront of daring and innovation.

Hey, we invented the movie industry, hard-boiled noir fiction, Mickey Mouse and the digital age.

It follows that we literate Californians owe it to ourselves to cherry-pick from the millions of California-centric books available to us and take a look – even if it's just to remind ourselves of how special we are (or think we are).

But which ones? What would a “dream list” of California reading look like?

We asked a group of book-savvy Californians to come up with their best recommendations of books we Californians should have read or should read, along with their brief comments. Think of their choices as a sampling of the Golden State itself – full of predictable and surprising entries.

Read the whole story

Dugard's mother to speak in Sonoma County about crime victims

By Chris Smith, Press Democrat

Jaycee Lee Dugard's mother will be in Santa Rosa on Tuesday to address a public observance on the rights of crime victims.

We can be sure that as folks listen to Terry Probyn recall her daughter's abduction and 18 years of imprisonment and torment, they'll be thinking also of a more recent victim of breathtaking violence – slain Petaluma teacher and mother Kim Conover.

District Attorney Jill Ravitch said she's hoping Tuesday's National Crime Victims' Rights program at the new Family Justice Center on north Mendocino Avenue will focus energy and attention on how to protect others from becoming victims of such crimes.

Probyn will speak about noon. Earlier, at 10:30 a.m., there will be a "Walk a Mile in Their Shoes" march from the Board of Supervisors' chambers to the Family Justice Center.

Probyn's daughter, Jaycee, was 11 when she was abducted from South Lake Tahoe in 1991. She was held until her rescue in 2009 from Phillip and Nancy Garrido, who are serving sentences that could – and should – keep them in prison for the rest of their lives.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Jacob is one of several beautiful black cats at the shelter.



Black cats often stay at shelters longer than lighter-colored cats, through no fault of their own. Jacob is about 5 years old, and has been at the shelter since January. He is a friendly and affectionate cat, and would do well in just about any home.

Jacob is neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online to see photos and description of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Homeowners keep renovations simple, budget-friendly

By Wendy Koch, USA Today

Glitzy is out and comfy is in as Americans take a simpler

approach to home renovation.

With real estate values still in the doldrums, people are seeing their houses less as investments and more as, well, homes. Since they're staying put, they're taking on targeted – rather than extreme – makeovers aimed at livability.

Home remodeling is expected to pick up and post solid growth in the second half of this year, making 2012 the strongest year since 2006, according to a report Thursday by the remodeling futures program at Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies. Driving the market will be midsize kitchen and bath projects, maintenance work and energy-efficiency upgrades.

In fact, unlike a few years ago, Americans are now spending more on remodeling than on new construction, says Stephen Melman of the National Association of Home Builders. He says they're moving less now than at any time since World War II, so they're thinking less about the resale value of a remodel.

"They do it, because they want to. That's a major change in the psychology," he says.

Read the whole story

Expanded Cabo Wabo to open before Hagar arrives in town

By Allen Pierleoni, Sacramento Bee

Get ready, fans of Sammy "Red Rocker" Hagar. The soft opening of his expanded Cabo Wabo Cantina at Harveys in Stateline is set for April 27, with food and drink specials and live music

by local bands. Hagar originally opened the restaurant-bar-music venue in 2004, amid – shall we say – much festivity.

What can fans look for in the revamped cantina? For starters, an expanded menu, more seating, raised ceilings and a stage that will be twice as big as the original. At the bar, Hagar's signature Cabo Wabo blue-agave tequila will be joined by his new brand, Sammy's Beach Bar rum.

Read the whole story

Elegant Evening lives up to its name

STATELINE – With \$55,000 in donations, the sold-out crowd at Saturday night's Elegant Evening had plenty of choices when it came to items to bid on.

Most offerings came in the form of silent auction items, though a few pricy things – like trips to the Caribbean and a full set of braces – went for thousands of dollars in the live auction.



Nearly 500
tickets were

sold for
Soroptimist's
April 21
Elegant
Evening at
Harrah's.
Photo/LTN

This annual event put on by Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra raises money that is then given back to the community. Issues affecting women and girls are the emphasis of this service club.

People were decked out in sorts of attire – none of which could be called mountain-wear or Tahoe casual.

This sit-down dinner was followed by a lively dance floor in the convention center of Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

– Kathryn Reed

Components of Earth Day found in everyday life

April 22 marks the 42nd anniversary of Earth Day – a day intended to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's natural environment. The day came from reaction to a massive oil spill in waters near Santa Barbara in 1969.

According the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated revenue for residential nonhazardous recyclable collection services in

2010 for U.S. firms was up 26.5 percent from 2009 to \$715 million.

Less than 2 percent, or 2.2 million, houses in the U.S. are heated by wood. Solar heating is even less common, with 38,100 households in 2010 using the sun. This compares to the 57 million housing units that use gas for heat.

Of the new single-family homes built in 2010, 88 percent included air conditioning. In 1974, it was 48 percent.

The average commute time for workers 16 years and older across the country in 2010 was 25.3 minutes, up from 25.1 minutes in 2009.

The average size of a single-family house built in 2010 was 2,392 square feet, down from 2,438 square feet in 2009.

Valhalla annual art-music fest ready to dazzle crowds

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – If people didn't know why it's called the Great Lawn before Saturday, they did after the cleanup session at the Tahoe Tallac Site.

Bag upon bag of pine needles were filled as volunteers descended upon the South Shore venue to spruce it up before the season kicks off in June.

While the Tahoe Tallac Association has been without an

executive director since last August, the volunteer board is committed to keeping the 33-year-old Valhalla Arts and Music Festival alive for decades to come. The board of directors has had some turnover, volunteers are returning, and the dedicated paid staff is hanging on with limited hours.



Tahoe Tallac Association volunteer Jenny Sweatt on April 21 helps clean up the site. Photo/Kathryn Reed

On top of all of that, changes within the local office of the U.S. Forest Service – the landowners – have led to a better working relationship. The feds have even agreed to allow more events on the lawn, and for wedding receptions to filter from the Grand Hall onto the adjacent grass.

A bugaboo between the Forest Service and TTA in the past has been the gate across the driveway just off Highway 89. It limits access to the site. People would have to walk in after parking in the neighboring dirt lot. For some, that just isn't an option, and for those who didn't know what was on the other side of the gate, they might not have ventured forward on foot.

"We have been told they are moving the gate," TTA board President Ginger Nicolay-Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Even when a show is not going on, artists in residence are working in the small cabins – which are open for the public to see. Plus, the historic buildings are worth visiting in their own right.

By the end of May a USFS sign that has been controversial with the board because it seemed to detract visitors will be coming down, according to Nicolay-Davis.

Fifteen percent of the gross receipts each year per the contract with the USFS is supposed to go back into the site. That hasn't always happened. But better accounting practices are ensuring it gets done.

Exterior painting will occur before the festival season begins and carpet will be replaced.

Revenue from weddings is expected to be double what it was a year ago.

With cash in the bank, the association will be able to pay someone to take care of the lawn this year instead of board member Dave Hamilton pushing his mower over the grass.

After this season, the board may consider hiring someone to take over more of the heavy lifting.

"We are very hopeful we will be able to hire at a minimum a summer director for the festival. The board can't do this forever," Nicolay-Davis said. "In a perfect world we want to become a summer theater venue and mix in music and other stuff as part of our mission."

Three plays will be staged at the Boathouse Theater this summer. "God of Carnage", a Tony-award winning comedy, starts the theatrical season on July 5. That is followed by the comedic play "Death by Golf" later in July.

The locals' favorite "Guilty Pleasures" is returning in August with new, updated material – including a segment on the Ta-

hole and revisions to the TRPA skit. Hamilton is the mastermind behind the words and lyrics.

All three plays will be for multiple days, including evening and matinee performances.

Music on the lawn will be one day a month starting in June. (June 17, July 8, Aug. 19 and Sept. 2.) It is geared to locals. A variety of genres will be represented during the free noon-2pm performance.

Plus, there will be several musical acts in the boathouse, though those cost money.

The improv, which has always drawn a crowd, will be one day a month, as well – July 3, Aug. 7, and Sept. 4.

“My thought was to have really good events, but not as many (overall),” Nicolay-Davis said.

For more information about the festival, go online to the revamped website that was launched earlier this month. Here is the Valhalla 2012 schedule. And right now a membership drive is going on, which entitles people to free tickets. For details on membership, click on the ad at the top of *Lake Tahoe News*’ home page.

