Judge in Garrido case refuses to release transcripts

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

PLACERVILLE – The judge in the Jaycee Dugard case refused today to unseal the grand jury testimony that led to charges against Phillip and Nancy Garrido, and instead set a Dec. 2 hearing on the issue.

Judge Douglas Phimister also set a two-week competency hearing for Phillip Garrido for early March, but said his psychiatric reports must remain sealed.

Nancy Garrido's lawyer, Stephen Tapson, continued to voice his opposition to the release of the transcripts, saying they contain "evil" and tell "a tale of woe and misfortune.

Read the whole story

Krolicki retains seat; Douglas County questions pass

Updated: Nov. 4, 2010, 8:22am.

In Douglas County, 76.37 percent of the 28,597 registered voters turned out. Most voted early – 34.18 percent, while on Nov. 2 33.64 percent voted, and the remaining 8.55 percent voted absentee.

Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki is headed back to Carson City with a resounding trouncing of Democrat Jessica Sferrazza.

Krolicki, a longtime Stateline resident, won with 51.26 percent of the vote. Sferrazza has 41.87 percent.



Republican Jim Settelmeyer easily took Capital Senate District seat with 70.38 percent compared to Kevin Ranft's 25.25 percent.

Former Douglas County Commissioner Kelly Kite won state Assembly District 39 seat with 57.21 percent of the vote.

All the results are unofficial until certified.

On the Kingsbury General Improvement District board Darya Vogt and Dan Norman were elected. However, there is a tie for the third seat between Natalie Yanish and Robert McDowell.

Douglas County Question No. 1 – the airport ordinance – passed with 50.67 percent. The yes votes are 10,468 to 10,190 no votes.

Question No. 2, which would restrict the state from raiding county coffers, was approved with 62.96 percent of the vote.

– Kathryn Reed

Totals change, winners don't as they plot path for S.

Tahoe

Updated Nov. 5, 2010, 8:28am.

By Susan Wood

A qualified congratulations came early and from far away Wednesday to longtime South Lake Tahoe resident Claire Fortier, when her 86-year-old father L. “Ren” Renshaw called at 5:30am Eastern time to wish his daughter well for ending up as the prospective front-runner in the City Council race.

Angela Swanson got an early-morning kiss goodbye from her husband declaring: “You’re ahead,” when in the darkness he left his wife, the third in line for three seats on the City Council. She later received a call from former fellow school board member Larry Green, who she encouraged to run for his seat for Lake Tahoe Unified. The gesture seemed to come full circle in South Lake Tahoe civics.



Tom Davis knows the fence at El Dorado Beach, aka Lakeview Commons, is a sore spot with residents. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Veteran former Councilman Tom Davis started the morning with a congratulatory call from current Councilmember Hal Cole, who has served alongside the former vacation rental property manager and casino marketer during his 12-year run on the town's board.

This year, 10 candidates ran for the seats being vacated by Kathay Lovell, Jerry Birdwell and Bill Crawford. Fortier took in 1,402 votes at 16.62 percent; 1,279 ballots, or 15.16 percent of the vote, were cast for Davis; while Swanson edged out the rest of the pack with 1,024 votes at 12.14 percent of the tally. The trio takes office Dec. 14. Those numbers were updated as of 5pm Wednesday.

However, 1,000 votes still need to be counted along with the 222 provisional votes, elections officials told *Lake Tahoe News* Thursday morning.

All results are preliminary pending until final tabulations, which are expected in the next 10 days. The deadline is cut short by the state from the usual mandated 28-day certification to be able to turn around results from the special election, which was on the same Nov. 2 ballot, for the 1st District Senate race. There will be a runoff Jan. 4 between Ted Gaines and Ken Cooley to replace the late Dave Cox. If Gaines wins, he'll vacate his Assembly seat and a special election will be necessary.

El Dorado County voter turnout was 54.57 percent. Election officials had predicted it to be 65 percent. In South Lake Tahoe, 41.8 percent of the 8,747 registered voters cast ballots. Those numbers could go up slightly as the provisional ballots – or problem forms – are counted by hand.

County elections data cruncher Joe Zitzelberger admitted the close contests are "subject to change." Swanson increased her lead with the latest numbers to 48 points over fourth place businesswoman Joy Curry.

The city's Measure E, which aimed to raise the business tax in the city, lost by seven votes based on the most current data. It had been a dead heat when first reported. Mayor Pro Tem Hal Cole did not know if the city would seek a recount.

"I don't think I've ever seen a 50-50," Zitzelberger said before the count changed.

Ready to take office

Despite the vote totals not locked in, the three frontrunners for council are looking ahead to tackle a lengthy list of tasks facing the city – from the beleaguered BlueGo transit system to Lakeview Commons' bankrupt construction project, a site designed as a gathering place for a community in need of something to cheer about.

"Yes, we have a heck of a lot to do, but rather than it seeming overwhelming, I'd like to think that this is one group who can focus on achieving," Fortier said.

Jumping out of the starting gate, Fortier – a former newspaper editor and medical office chief – wants to have at least one council retreat to "immediately" nail down a few priorities. Other councils have developed a long list of goals.

Davis, who has a prolific history of South Shore volunteerism, would also like to narrow the goals to ensure the emphasis remains on the highest priorities.

"What I learned on the campaign trail is we all have the same goals," he told *Lake Tahoe News*. Davis listed tourism, recreation, public safety and roads as core priorities in need of attention.

"I think we have a great council. This is not about me. It's about we," he said, later quoting the late city Mayor Norm Woods' advice to him: "Tom, all you need to do is count to three." Woods was referring to a quorum needed on a five-

member board to get the work done.

Davis, Fortier and Swanson admitted to being three different people with varying approaches, but pledged to work together.

Swanson commended Davis' community mindedness and Fortier's smarts. The school facilities planning consultant and former school board member plans to use her contacts in Sacramento to get the city a little help from the state. She was pleased to learn Proposition 22, which bans the state from taking funds from local jurisdictions, was headed for passage.

"I think people are sick and tired of the state not taking care of its financial house," she said. Still, the reality of closing a $15 billion shortfall could prove painful for California, she added.

Like Fortier and Davis, Swanson anticipates working closely with the current council, consisting of Cole and Bruce Grego.

"We all have different approaches, and don't always agree, but I've found myself saying 'I'd never thought about (things) that way,'" she said. "We all share the same passion for the community."

Nancy Garrido's lawyer wants 'evil' transcripts to remain sealed

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

In the strongest possible terms, Nancy Garrido's attorney is arguing against release of grand jury transcripts involving

the kidnapping of Jaycee Lee Dugard, saying they contain such “evil” that his client could never get a fair trial if they are made public.

Stephen Tapson, arguing against an effort by The Bee and other media organizations to force release of documents that have been sealed in the case, filed papers in El Dorado Superior Court saying he and Nancy Garrido oppose the release of any sealed documents.

The issue is scheduled to be argued in a court hearing in Placerville on Thursday, and Tapson left no doubts in his court declaration that the case against Nancy and Phillip Garrido could be severely damaged by release of transcripts from a grand jury session held in secret in September.

Read the whole story

Fortier, Davis, Swanson take over South Tahoe council

By Susan Wood

With all precincts reporting from El Dorado County at 1:30am Wednesday, Claire Fortier, Tom Davis and Angela Swanson have won the tight South Lake Tahoe City Council race consisting of 10 diverse candidates.

The trio going for the three seats vacated by City Councilmembers Jerry Birdwell, Kathay Lovell and Bill Crawford has name recognition – with Davis and Swanson already having served to mold public policy in a town that Fortier has declared is at "a tipping point." Davis served on the council for 12 years. Swanson held a seat on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board.

Fortier – a former editor of the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* – is the top vote getter with 16.57 percent, or 1,283 votes. She's followed by Davis with 15.28 percent of the vote, 1,183 ballots; and Swanson at 12.05 percent or 933 votes.

All votes are preliminary and must be certified by the county. Final votes for all races are usually tabled within a few weeks. The council candidates will take office Dec. 14.

For a job that pays less than $500 a month, they are apt to be making pennies per hour.

They come in having to deal with two stalled construction projects – Lakeview Commons and the convention center. The latter is in bankruptcy court. They also must deal with a bankrupt transit system that is mired in lawsuits.

Unemployment is near 18 percent in the city, roads necessitate four-wheel drive without snow or mountain bike tires, storefronts are empty, the electorate angry.

Rounding out the council ballot are:

Joy Curry, 899 votes, 11.61 percent

Alice Jones, 877 votes, 11.32 percent

Elizabeth Hallen, 820 votes, 10.59 percent

Steve Kubby, 830, 10.72 percent

Adrian Gooch, 442 votes, 5.71 percent

Georg May, 205 votes, 2.65 percent

Clint Schue, 146 votes, 1.89 percent

Doug Cichowicz, 96 votes, 1.24 percent

Other Tahoe related issues

Measure E, the business tax fee hike for South Lake Tahoe, came in dead even with 1,462 for it and 1,462 against it. It needed to pass by one vote to proceed.

City Clerk Suzie Alessi and city Treasurer Dave Olivo had an easy Election Day – they ran unopposed.

Assemblyman Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, won both of his races – to retain his Assembly seat and in the special election against three others for the state Senate seat of the late Dave Cox. Gaines will face Democrat Ken Cooley on Jan. 4 in a run-off for the state Senate seat. If he wins, he will have to resign the Assembly seat, which means a special election to fill that vacancy.

Rep. Tom McClintock will easily retain his congressional seat that includes the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. He has nearly twice the number of votes as his Democrat opponent Clint Curtis.

D’Agostini surges ahead to take EDC sheriff’s race

By Kathryn Reed

After the initial results came in, John D’Agostini was surprised, but not worried. He felt confident the numbers would turn in his favor.

He was right.

D’Agostini is headed to be El Dorado County’s next sheriff. With 100 percent of the precincts reporting, he has a 51.16 percent lead over Craig Therkildsen who has 48.55 percent. There are 1,287 votes separating the men.



John
D'Agostini

“The first thing after the swearing in is getting to know everyone, getting to know folks, who has the best skills in what areas,” D’Agostini told *Lake Tahoe News* early Wednesday morning. “I will have to dive into the deficit head first.”

He praised interim Sheriff Fred Kollar for the job he has done tackling the budget to date.

The next sheriff takes over a department that has been accused of sexual misconduct by deputies, is facing $1.6 million in cuts for the 2011-12 budget, has already sustained staff cuts with more pending, and a structure that no longer calls for having an undersheriff.

There is also the longstanding us vs. them mentality that divides the West Slope and Lake Tahoe.

D’Agostini campaigned on wanting to bring a change to the department. He said it remains at the top of his list after

dealing with the budget.

“Then I make culture change with customer service. I do it by being an involved leader and setting an example, setting expectations and holding people accountable,” D’Agostini said.

D’Agostini and Therkildsen were the last two of six standing after the June primary.

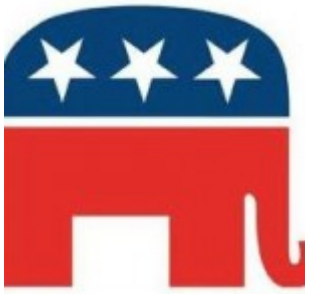
The choice voters had was someone from inside the department – Therkildsen, who is a captain; and someone from outside – D’Agostini, who has worked for the Amador County sheriff’s and district attorneys offices. One thing that separates them is D’Agostini has been elected before – to the school board for Pioneer Union School District.

The vacancy in the department was created when Jeff Neves quit last December. Undersheriff Fred Kollar took over. At that time the job of undersheriff was done away with by the Board of Supervisors. Kollar will retire in January when the new sheriff is sworn in.

National political balance shifts right

By Mark Z. Barabak, Los Angeles Times

Republicans seized control of the House on Tuesday and shrank the Democratic advantage in the Senate, dealing a major setback to President Obama and sweeping a number of “tea party” insurgents into power.



The nearly coast-to-coast blowout – a result of voters' frustration and deep economic anxiety, promised to once more change the country's political dynamic, presenting challenges to both parties in a newly divided government.

Obama, who pushed through the most expansive legislative agenda of any president in generations, could spend the remainder of his term just trying to preserve what he has accomplished. Republicans, with a measure of power, will share some responsibility for governing and may have to do more than simply thwart the president and his fellow Democrats – or face a similar repudiation by voters in 2012.

Read the whole story

DCSD trustees retain seats

By Stephen Ward

As the final votes are tallied, Douglas County School District trustee candidates can finally unravel their anxieties after a drawn-out period of uncertainty.

Voters are sending Sharla Hales and Tom Moore back to the board. Ross Chichester will take over Keith Roman's seat. Roman did not seek another term.

In the race for Area 2, after being narrowly split for the majority of the night, is expected to be seized incumbent Sharla Hales, who leads in the unofficial results by 43 votes. She has 8,479 votes, or 50.13 percent, compared to Scott Forvilly's 49.87 percent or 8,436 votes.



Hales told *Lake Tahoe News* as polls began to close that she has a tight focus on student achievement, along with the accountability of everyone.

“My priority in the coming year will be holding people accountable,” she said.

According to Hales this is something she has done successfully in the past, mentioning her 2008 revision of superintendent examinations. Being instrumental in this initiative is what she considered as one of her biggest accomplishments.

“The old procedure was a big, general process,” she said. “Now, it has a lot more to do with student numbers and how they respond to different aspects.”

Results for Area 6 show incumbent Moore over challenger Wayne Archer with 8,086 votes (51.12 percent). Archer trailed by 354 votes.

Moore could not be reached for comment.

Area 7 of the Douglas County school board goes to Ross Chichester with 54.36 or 9,279 votes compared to Jeanette Turnbeaugh’ 45 percent or 7,790 votes.

Chichester was excited by his lead when interviewed earlier in the night, and was quick to explain his objectives for the future.

“First and foremost, I think we need to reunite the school board,” he said. “We need to make sure we do the right thing for kids. The biggest challenge in the Legislature will be to act responsibly.”

Former Area 7 Trustee Keith Roman is stepping down for personal reasons after 10 years. In an interview with *Lake*

Tahoe News, Roman urged the new board of trustees to tailor students to the demands of the 21st century.

“We need to concentrate on educating kids by implementing media systems and preparing them for the 21st century,” Roman said. “We also need to produce kids that know something, and who have an idea as to what they want to be when they grow up.”

Douglas County commish seats go to McDermid, Bonner

By Stephen Ward

An incumbent and a challenger have won the Douglas County Commission seats.

Incumbent Nancy McDermid is the winner in the race for county commissioner of District 4, defeating challenger Lawrence Howell with 51.2 percent of the vote with all the votes counted. However, these are unofficial results until certified.

This District 4 seat is considered the Lake Tahoe seat even though the person does not have to reside at the lake. McDermid lives in the Carson Valley, while Howell lives in Stateline.



Nancy McDermid

This will be McDermid’s second term as county commissioner.

McDermid shared her appreciation with *Lake Tahoe News* after the final count came in.

“It’s been a long year,” she said. “I’m very honored and humbled to be elected once again to represent the people of Douglas County.”

The re-elected commissioner went on to discuss the parallels between her experience in the lodging business and the priorities she has for the coming term.

“Lodging properties provide the same amenities, so it really comes down to serving the people,” she said. “That’s what I’m here to do. We need to meet the challenges Douglas County faces and work together with the board, staff … to craft solutions to the problems we face.”

McDermid, 67, cites cooperation as the main reason she was able to balance the 2010-11 budget. She believes the county’s tourism infrastructure needs to be vastly improved and aspires to make public transit a vital component of transportation on the South Shore, even though the transit agency she was chairwoman of is now in bankruptcy.

McDermid spent the majority of her night making stops at various locations, such as the Republican headquarters and Doppelgangers Brewery and Grill in Carson City.

Lee Bonner has unofficially won the District 2 seat with 50.72

percent over incumbent David James Brady.

Bonner, a 51-year-old Minden resident for more than five years, told *Lake Tahoe News* he was pleased with the results as he arrived home after spending the night with roughly 60 supporters and close friends at the Tahoe Ridge Winery in Minden.

“First off, I’d like to say I’m very humbled the people of Douglas County have trusted me to be their commissioner,” he said. “It has meant a lot to me. I’ve only been here about five years, and to get the people’s vote … it means a lot.”

During the interview, Bonner also thanked Brady for the five years he spent as commissioner, wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

Bonner campaigned on creating jobs as a focal point, as well as promoting education and dealing with the state Legislature when it reconvenes in February.

Brady was appointed to the Douglas County Commission for District 2 in 2005 by the late Kenny Guinn, and was elected to the position in 2006.

The winners will take office in January.

Marijuana initiative being extinguished

By Anthony York, Los Angeles Times

California voters appear to have rejected Prop. 19, an effort to legalize marijuana and allow local governments to tax the

sale of the drug.



Prop. 19 received national attention, but relatively little money was spent on the campaign. While millions of dollars was spent on other ballot measures, the Prop. 19 campaign was modest by California political standards. Still, no issue received more attention around the state.

The measure was opposed by law enforcement groups and elected officials from both political parties.

U.S. Atty. Gen. Eric Holder had said the Obama administration would “vigorously enforce” federal drug laws against Californians who grow or sell marijuana for recreational use even if voters passed the legalization measure.

Read the whole story