

Dugard's children receive birth certificates

By Bay Area News Group

Jaycee Dugard's two girls now have birth certificates, with both listing Dugard and Phillip Garrido as their parents, and their birthplace as the home outside Antioch where authorities say Garrido and his wife, Nancy, confined Jaycee to a secret backyard lair after snatching her in 1991.

The certificates list birth dates for the girls in August 1994 and November 1997, making them 15 and 12. Dugard gave birth to the first at age 14. At the time, Phillip Garrido was 43 and on parole after his 1988 release from federal prison for the kidnapping of a woman he also raped in a Reno storage shed.

Read the whole story

Sierra Nevada specialty plate not selling well

By Paul Rogers, Mercury News

Maybe it's the bad economy, or the dinky designs. But two state campaigns aimed at raising money to expand parks, restore creeks and build hiking trails in the Bay Area and the Sierra Nevada through the sale of new specialized license plates are failing to gain traction with motorists.

Under state law, sponsors of commemorative license plates must sign up 7,500 prepaid orders in one year or the DMV won't

produce the plates. The plates cost \$50 a year.

But a proposed plate that would feature a small image of the Golden Gate Bridge and whose proceeds would help Bay Area open space projects has sold only 455 copies, and faces a deadline of mid-July. A second proposed plate, which features a bear and a mountain, would fund projects of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, a state agency. It has sold only 256 copies, and faces a September deadline.

Read the whole story

SLT goes forward with Upper Truckee River restoration

By Kathryn Reed

Assuming new vegetation along the Upper Truckee River near Lake Tahoe Airport is stable, work will continue next summer on this portion of the river.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council gave the go-ahead for the work to be completed even if the California Tahoe Conservancy doesn't have the money in hand to reimburse the city.



A water filled
berm keeps the

Upper Truckee
River out of
the new
channel near
Lake Tahoe
Airport.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Even though the state sold bonds in October, the money has not been distributed.

“We are still waiting to see if any (bond money) will be for our projects,” Bruce Eisner, CTC program manager said. “We don’t have a time frame when the bonds appropriated to us will be funded.”

City Manager Dave Jinkens had suggested the council take the money from the capital improvement fund until CTC can reimburse the city. Councilmembers Bill Crawford and Hal Cole were the most vocal about that being a bad idea. They were not about to take more money from roads and the like. Already in the last fiscal year \$1 million was cut from that budget, which instead of leaving a monetary hole allowed potholes in South Tahoe to proliferate and grow in size.

The council unanimously agreed to borrow the \$536,709 from reserves if the CTC is not flush with cash when construction resumes.

Work on this reach of the Upper Truckee River started in summer 2008 and is expected to be complete in 2010.

The idea behind the various projects on the river, which is the largest tributary into Lake Tahoe, is to restore the river to its natural flow. Years ago it was straightened in various places, which has caused erosion problems, meadows to deteriorate, overgrowth of conifers in some locations and

detrimental affects to wildlife.

As the walls of the river became steeper, it meant the natural flooding of meadows has ceased to occur.

“Before the airport was built, the floodplain encompassed the airport so it had a wider area to meander through,” explained Robert Erlich, South Tahoe engineering supervisor.

A new channel was built in 2008 that has a more natural curve. Vegetation was planted. A large water filled berm is keeping the river from flowing into the new channel. Footprints can be seen in the snow covered berm. A bear has punctured it in places, necessitating some patch work.

The plan is to gradually release the water into the new channel, which is closer to the airport, and then fill in the old channel with dirt.

This is just one of many sections of the river where work will be done. Above the airport section the river runs through Washoe Meadow State Park and the golf course that sits on state property. The environmental document for that section should be out in 2010.

Near Elks Club Road is the old Sunset Stables property that CTC now owns. Environmental review on that section is also expected next year.

Downstream from the airport the river runs through U.S. Forest Service land, private property and more CTC land. Environmental documents on all of those sections could come out this year.

“If we find the money, there should be an awful lot of work going on on the river,” Eisner said.

Obama may be a no-show at Olympics



Stephanie Levitz, Canadian Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia – U.S. President Barack Obama is not expected to attend the opening ceremonies for the 2010 Winter Olympics, but that doesn't mean he isn't coming at all.

An official announcement from the White House may come as early as next week regarding the American delegation to the Games.

It's expected that Vice President Joe Biden will be named as the U.S. government's official face at the lavish Feb. 12 event.

Read the whole story

MontBleu jobs secure as company emerges from bankruptcy

By Liz Benston, Las Vegas Sun

As the first major casino company set to emerge from

bankruptcy in the recession, Tropicana Entertainment offers a beacon of hope for cash-strapped companies in the throes of the worst downturn this industry has ever seen.

Less than two years after its bankruptcy filing, Tropicana Entertainment's debt has been wiped clean, and the company's new owner, billionaire Carl Icahn, is injecting \$150 million to pay creditors and upgrade properties.

The company is expected to come out of bankruptcy this month. Employees, including those at the MontBleu in Lake Tahoe and the Tropicana and River Palms in Laughlin, can expect to hold onto jobs that were uncertain before and during bankruptcy. (The Tropicana in Las Vegas is not owned by Tropicana Entertainment.)

Read the whole story

More storms on the way

Don't put away the snow blower just yet. The light snow forecast for Lake Tahoe is going to get heavier. After a brief respite, another in a series of storms is likely to dump at least a foot of white stuff in the mountains, according to the National Weather Service. A winter storm warning issued today calls for moderate to heavy snow and gusty winds Monday afternoon above 6500 feet, with snow dropping to lake level Monday night. This storm system is expected to last through Tuesday morning.

Tahoe seaplane being used in Haiti relief efforts

Bill and Gina DaSilva of Carson City are providing airlift for medical teams to Haiti from Opa Locka, Fla., using their 1951 Grumman Albatross Amphibious Seaplane.

Zephyr Cove-based SeaPlane Operations LLC is providing personnel, logistical support and planning services for the operation as well as publicizing the effort and soliciting donations for fuel and other expenses.

The Albatross is uniquely suited to fly direct to the shores of Haiti, bypassing the crowded airport and avoiding the damaged roads that have delayed widespread aid distribution so far.

The first relief flight departed the airport in Opa Locka Jan. 24 at 10am carrying a team of doctors and nurses from Marquette, Mich. This first trip will deliver five medical personnel and several thousand pounds of supplies.

Able to carry 4000 pounds of material to the Haitian shore and return to the U.S. without refueling in Haiti, Bill and Gina DaSilva's Albatross will continue to provide support for the medical team as well as other needs in Haiti as long funding for the fuel required is available. While the aircraft and crew services are all being donated, \$6,000 of fuel must be purchased for each round trip.

Funds are being collected by Marquette Unitarian Universalist Congregation,

P0 Box 687, Marquette, MI 49855. Write "Haiti Quake Relief Fuel" in the memo line and you will receive a letter in return making that donation tax deductible. A website devoted to this mission is up at <http://haiti.seaplaneops.com/Haiti>

and donations will soon possible through that site.

Massive solar field planned for north of Reno



Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Vidler Water Co. is proposing to build a 100-megawatt solar farm, one of the largest in the country, at its Fish Springs Ranch about 40 miles from Reno in northern Washoe County.

If approved by Washoe County and regional officials, construction is planned to start in 2011 and be phased in over 10 to 15 years.

Several larger solar projects, including two near San Luis Obispo also are being planned, said Richard Ferguson, coordinator for California's renewable energy transmission initiative.

[Read the whole story](#)

Court ruling may alter Taser

use by law enforcement



By Kathryn Reed

How and when an officer uses a Taser is about to change because of a federal appeals court ruling in San Francisco.

“The objective facts must indicate that the suspect poses an immediate threat to the officer or a member of the public,” Judge Kim Wardlaw of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals wrote in the 3-0 ruling.

The case originated in San Diego from a traffic stop involving a Taser. Now that case will go to trial.

Officers in El Dorado County aren’t sure how the decision will affect them. South Lake Tahoe police officers and El Dorado sheriff’s deputies have been using Tasers for about five years.

Both departments said Tasers are just one tool they use – with batons, control holds and OC (pepper) spray being the non-lethal items on their belt.

Sheriff’s Sgt. Bruce Rosa knew all about the decision when questioned. He said the department will assess the decision like it does with all case law that is handed down.

“We make decisions in seconds. Judges and juries get to make decisions in days,” Rosa said. “It’s not that we don’t make mistakes. We are on the defensive usually all the time. They are on the offense. We want to go home at the end of the evening.”

Amnesty International reports that between 2001-08 334 people

died in the United States after being Tasered.

"You hear a lot of people expire after a Taser. A lot of times their heart exploded from cocaine use," Rosa said.

Rosa said he was hit by a Taser in training and never wants to go through it again. It not only is painful, but also contracts the muscles.

Lt. David Stevenson at the SLTPD was not aware of the appeals court decision when *Lake Tahoe News* called. But he said Tasers have been an effective tool for his department and that work related injuries have gone down since

"Personally, I think this is one of the best tools to come around in a long time," Rosa said. "It is just a tool. We try to use it only when necessary, like any of our tools. Where cops get hurt is with batons."

Rise hearing moved

Updated Jan. 25 10:35am

South Tahoe Public Utility District board President Dale Rise was to appear in El Dorado County Superior Court Friday for a preliminary hearing on a felony charge of obstructing a police officer. The hearing has been postponed until March 1, according to the office of William Cole, Rise's attorney.



Dale Rise

Rise was arrested at his home in September after officers responded to a domestic disturbance call. He faces up to three years in prison if found guilty.