

South Tahoe man pleads guilty to sex trafficking

By Sean Emery, Orange County Register

An Irvine man was sentenced to 22 months in federal prison today for transporting prostitutes over state lines to work at Seattle-area brothels disguised as massage parlors and tanning salons.

Along with the prison sentence, Jesus “Jesse” Deleon was ordered to pay \$152,000 and turn over eleven luxury watches at his sentencing hearing in a U.S. District Court in Seattle, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation officials said.

Deleon, who investigators say has already served 22 months in a California state prison for a similar crime in Sacramento County, will also serve three years’ probation after his release.

Deleon, along with Donald Kerry Frey of South Lake Tahoe, pleaded guilty to the sex trafficking charges in July. The two co-owned the Aloha Tanning Resort in Renton, the Avalon Spa in Seattle and the Malibu Tanning Spa in Tukwila.

Read the whole story

Electric rates increase in

Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Northern California residential customers of Sierra Pacific Power will notice their electric meters spinning faster this month thanks to a 7.75 percent rate increase that took effect Dec. 1.

Most bills will go up by \$5.49 a month to \$81.65. This is based on using 650 kilowatt-hours of electricity.

This is the first general rate increase in three years. On Sept. 1, 2008, NorCal customers received a 15.2 percent rate decrease.

The increase is to offset the \$47.5 million Sierra Pacific put toward infrastructure improvements. The increase will bring in an additional \$5.5 million to the power company's coffers.

Sierra Pacific Power Company is a subsidiary of NV Energy Inc., which primarily serves the Lake Tahoe area of California. In April, NV Energy announced it was selling its California electric distribution and generation assets to California Pacific Electric Company, a newly formed company jointly owned by Algonquin Power Income Fund and Emera Inc. Following state and federal regulatory approvals, the companies expect the transaction to close sometime in 2010.

What this means for rates is not known.

South Tahoe Realtors need president, VP

By Kathryn Reed

It will be a busy first week in office when the directors of the South Tahoe Association of Realtors take office Jan. 1.

They must appoint a president and vice president because the incoming leaders who were elected to the positions (both ran unopposed) resigned before they took office.



Mike
Phillips
resigned
before
taking
office as
president
of STAR.

Mike Phillips, who was to be president, told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I need to pull my reins in and focus on my family and business. Sometimes you have to put yourself first.”

He said the time commitment would not allow him to do the job adequately. Phillips added that he has enjoyed his time as an officer (he was president-elect this past year) and that he intends to stay involved.

In a statement given to the association, Jill Stanton-Bricker

who was to be vice president, said, "After long and serious consideration of how I can best serve the South Tahoe Association of Realtors, I am stepping down from the 2010 vice president position. I will focus my efforts as Local Governmental Relations chairperson."

The next president and vice president could be one of the eight directors or any member of the organization. Two of the sitting directors " Davey Pavia and Theresa Sours " have been president before and therefore might be able to step into the positions easier than someone who has not had a leadership role.

STAR finalized the vote counting for the directors positions on Dec. 1. A second vote was needed because a glitch with the fax machine the first time didn't allow for all the votes to be counted.

All 97 ballots " 10 more submitted than the first time " were legible. The four incoming directors are Pamela Francis, Judith Hanson, Michael Mulligan and Kathy Southern.

Amanda Adams is president-elect and Jill Teakell secretary-treasurer.

The installation dinner is Jan. 8 at Edgewood Tahoe " a primary reason the eight board members need to pick leaders in the first week.

Tourism skid forces layoffs at Reno visitors authority

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority laid off seven full-time employees Tuesday as part of nearly \$1 million in budget cuts, resulting from the continued recession of the local and national economies, RSCVA officials said.

The layoffs and budget cuts were anticipated since RSCVA officials said two weeks ago that it would have to fill a projected \$1.6 million deficit for the current fiscal year.

Falling room taxes from a soft summer season are the major component of the RSCVA's current budget problem, according to RSCVA documents. The RSCVA saw declines of more than \$6.6 million in room tax revenues, or a drop of 11 percent, in the traditionally strong months of June, July and August when compared to the same months of 2008.

[Read the whole story](#)

Tahoe boat inspections continue in off season

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

With winter's arrival weeks away, few boats are taking to Lake Tahoe's increasingly frigid waters.

But any that are launched will continue to be inspected for the possible presence of aquatic hitchhikers posing a huge environmental and economic risk to the Sierra lake.

The danger posed by quagga and zebra mussels requires constant vigilance, officials say.

[Read the whole story](#)

Rules keep El Dorado County from opening homeless shelter

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Working against a recent forecast of rain and an overnight low of 38 degrees, members of Rescue's Foothills United Methodist Church hustled to ready shelter for El Dorado County's homeless residents.

Plans to rotate a nighttime shelter among area churches hit a snag, though. Organizers discovered some of the church sites are not zoned for such services.

The county has been without a formal homeless shelter since May 2008, when one run by United Outreach of El Dorado County at a church in Camino outgrew the facility.

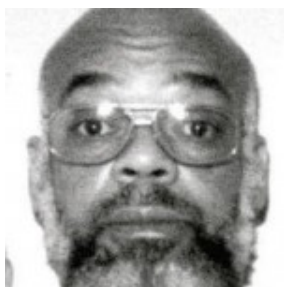
[Read the whole story](#)

Jury about to decide if Roberson killed his son

By Kathryn Reed

Jurors are expected to begin deliberations this afternoon in the South Lake Tahoe murder trial of the man accused of killing his 4-year-old son, but whose body has never been found.

Ulysses Roberson is on trial for first-degree murder in the killing of Alexander Olive in their Tahoe Keys home in either December 1985 or January 1986.



Uylsses
Roberson

Roberson calls the boy Salaam – meaning peace. El Dorado County Deputy District Attorney Tricia Kelliher in her initial closing arguments on Monday pointed out what she called an irony for Roberson to name the boy “peace” when he probably never had a day of it in his short life.

Kelliher is scheduled to finish her closing arguments at 8:30 this morning in El Dorado County Superior Court. Judge Suzanne Kingsbury is presiding.

Defense attorney Monica Lynch in her closing arguments admonished local and other law enforcement for not following up on leads from people who thought they had seen the boy between 1988-2002.

“If the government had done its job, the reliability of these witnesses would not be questioned,” Lynch said.

Sitting in the courtroom were FBI agent Chris Campion and South Lake Tahoe police Capt. Martin Hewlett – two of the primary investigators of the case.

Throughout the trial, which began Oct. 5, a slew of witnesses have taken the stand. Roberson was not one of them.

CSU Chico sociology Professor Janja Lalich, who is considered

a cult expert, was brought in by the prosecution to talk about the mindsets of people who seemingly blindly follow a leader. Defense attorney Monica Lynch got her way in that the word “cult” was not allowed to be used throughout the trial.

Several of the women Roberson has been involved with have taken the stand.

Judy Olive, the boy’s mother, sat in the same row as her two sisters and brother. It was her brother who helped her to leave the cult-like home Roberson had created, where he slept with several women and fathered even more children.

After Monday’s hearing, Olive did not want to speak with *Lake Tahoe News*. “My only comment is I am appreciative of everyone doing their job,” she said.

At times she was in tears, other times she stared intently at the person speaking. She and Roberson never seemed to make eye contact.

Roberson passed notes to his attorney while the prosecution spoke. While Lynch gave her arguments, he sat stoically – engaged in what was being said.

Roberson could face life in prison without the possibility of parole if the jury finds him guilty. Jurors must also consider two enhancements – that the crime was racially motivated and a form of torture.

Testimony during the trial painted Roberson as a racist who hated his young son for being half white.

Another issue the jury must consider is whether Raj Roberson was an accomplice to the crime. The defense must prove that this woman who essentially was wife No. 1 is not credible and therefore her testimony should be disregarded.

Lynch made a compelling case for that in her closing arguments. Liar was a repeated description of this woman who

had taken the stand against Roberson.

Kelliher was forthright in depicting Roberson as an evil man whose self-absorption and need for control was often demonstrated through his abusiveness toward the women and children he lived with.

This is not Roberson's first run-in with the law. He is well known to Washington state authorities. [Click here for more on his past.](#)

Teens killed in El Dorado crash identified

By Hudson Sangree and Stephen Magagnini, Sacramento Bee

The driver of a car that slammed into a tree Sunday, killing two high school students and a third passenger on a notoriously dangerous El Dorado County Road, may face vehicular manslaughter charges, a California Highway Patrol spokesman said.

The passengers who died in the 12:40 a.m. single-car collision on Salmon Falls Road were Nan Hee Pak, 16, a sophomore at Rocklin High School; Elijah John Shaw, 18, a senior at Folsom High School; and Alex Weast, 20, CHP Sgt. Todd Brown said.

[Read the whole story](#)

3 teens die on rural El Dorado County road

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

A single-car accident early Sunday in rural El Dorado County left three teenagers dead and sent the young driver to the hospital, authorities said.

The accident happened about 12:45 a.m. on Salmon Falls Road, a winding route notorious in recent years for a number of motorcycle crashes.

The California Highway Patrol said Sunday's accident involved a 2006 silver Subaru Impreza.

Read the whole story

Crystal Bay's Biltmore ready to reinvent itself



Publisher's note: *On Dec. 1 from 5-7pm the Biltmore will host an open house. On Dec. 9 at 9am the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Advisory Planning Commission will meet at Stateline to discuss the Biltmore project. On Dec. 16 at 9:30am the TRPA Governing Board will meet in Incline Village to discuss this matter.*

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

The planned upgrade of an aging and “retired” hotel-casino on Lake Tahoe’s north shore is described by supporters as a shining example of change needed to protect a sensitive environment and revitalize a troubled economy.

Critics say it may be a little too much for one place at one time.

Proposed are the demolition of Crystal Bay’s Tahoe Biltmore hotel-casino “famous for its wooden wagon wheel sign that towers into the air in dubious distinction” and its conversion into a plush and scenic resort offering a vision of future redevelopment around the lake.

Read the whole story