

Perez backs Hillman for EDC sheriff

To the community,

I write to inform you that I have chosen to endorse former Undersheriff Ernie Hillman to become our next sheriff. I know all the candidates, what they stand for, their strengths and weaknesses, and which is best suited to serve as Sheriff. In my opinion having been a chief for the past decade, Ernie is uniquely qualified for this position as CEO of our 400-member sheriff's department.

Ernie is the only candidate who has been an undersheriff and acting sheriff, has managed more than 80 officers/deputies, and has the training and education for this office. Nobody comes close to Ernie – nobody. Ernie stands head-and-shoulders above the crowd.

I would be honored if you joined me in supporting Ernie for Sheriff of El Dorado County.

Thank you,

Stan Perez

Coordinating service projects in South Tahoe

To the community,

I am compiling a list of service projects that South Lake

Tahoe area nonprofits and other groups would like to see done this summer.

Is there a lot that needs weeding? A building that needs painting? Seniors in need of some assistance in their homes? Low-income families in need of their house painted or defensible space incorporated? A fence fixed? What do you need done?

Once this list is accumulated I'll be contacting local clubs and the community in general to try and have a community-wide service day, called "Tahoe Cares." Please call me your list(s) with location and contact person's name and phone number. Please also mention if you have some supplies already to get the job done. Also, if you'd like to help organize this day, please let me know.

Thank you,

Paula Peterson, Tahoe Douglas Rotary and Tahoe Youth & Family Services BOD

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Use of ski helmets, metal bats may be regulated by government

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the April 2, 2010, Santa Rosa Press Democrat.*

Two safety-related bills now making their way through the state Legislature are being viewed as either examples of

exemplary caution or inexplicable nannyism.

While we understand the sentiment of those wanting to protect free choice, we see these bills – one we support and one we oppose – as examples of legislators acting with legitimate concern, not acting like Mary Poppins.

The first is Senate Bill 880 by state Sen. Leland Yee, D-San Francisco, which would require minors to wear a helmet while skiing or snowboarding. The legislation is in response to the many head injuries that occur due to collisions on the slopes involving skiers and/or snowboarders. At the main trauma center in Lake Tahoe, doctors report seeing at least one a day. A study by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission found that 53 percent of the ski and snowboard injuries suffered by children under 15 could have been prevented or would have been less severe had they been wearing a helmet.

Read the whole story

Spread of casinos continues to take its toll

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the April 7, 2010, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

It was only about 30 years ago that Nevada admitted that the gaming genie was out of the bottle and would never go back in.

That's when Nevada, which had long enjoyed a monopoly on casino gambling among the states, agreed to allow gaming companies doing business here to join the gold rush that followed New Jersey voters' decision to authorize casinos in

Atlantic City.

It all seems rather quaint today as Nevadans tally up the damage that the spread of casinos has done to their home-grown gaming industry, as well as the collateral damage to state and local governments that long depended on gaming taxes to pay the bills.

Read the whole story

Embracing National Poetry Month



Dear Bona Fide Readers,

Each year in April, I recommit to finding a new poet every month and reading [purchasing] their work. Poets have an important job, keeping their eyes open and reporting what they see while the rest of us go about our lives. I hope that you will consider celebrating National Poetry Month by attending a reading, sharing a poem, or perhaps making your own chapbook. The Academy of American Poets has great ideas – you can sign up to receive a poem a day, or download a Poem Flow app for your iPhone.

In April, let us engage with those who do not avert their eyes. In Tahoe, poet and playwright Nathalie Handal, editor of “The Poetry of Arab Women: A Contemporary Anthology” and co-editor of “Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry

from the Middle East, Asia & Beyond” will read from her new book in two locations. Benjamin Arnold and Bethe Cause will rock Reno, the Berkeley Slam Poets will MC the annual poetry slam at Sierra Nevada College, and the cowboy poets are riding into Genoa – you can check it all out here.

Who are your local poets? What do they see?

Thanks for reading,

Kim Wyatt, publisher & editor, Bona Fide Books

Rethinking the South Shore music scene

To the community,

I would like to see a club that could hold 500-1,500 people, and would have live music playing every night. A venue this size could attract some great bands in a variety of music genres, and would be a popular asset to both locals and tourists.

Something along the lines of The Knitting Factory that just opened up in Reno. Maybe we could get in the loop with them and get bands to play a day at each venue. To tell the truth, I have no idea how these places run, or how profitable they are, but maybe someone around here does.

Personally, I would love to have some variety of music in town. Harrah's does what they can, but it's either not in their best interest or they just aren't into anything other than the older bands or country.

A larger Whiskey Dick's type venue is what I'm thinking, with a cover of \$8-\$30 or so, depending on who's playing. Of course the bigger bands would be on the weekends, but we still could have some interesting up and coming bands on the weekdays, and mid-week specials to pull people in.

This would create some jobs, fill some beds, and the bands/people that come up to see them would spend their money around town. I know, it could be said that these people probably won't be "big spenders",

but some of them will, and we have many motels to fill, and burger/pizza joints to keep busy, all business is good.

An eclectic mix would be cool – blue grass, rock, punk, folk, alt country, rap, jazz, reggae, etc.

Location? My suggestion would be Bill's. If the "Pearl" is approved down the road, it will not conflict. The location is great, and it's the right size.

Janill Gilbert, South Lake Tahoe

EDC applauds South Tahoe's delay on redevelopment

To the community,



The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to

send a letter outlining their concerns regarding South Lake Tahoe's plans to adopt a redevelopment plan without consulting them first.

The April 6, 2010, county letter sites various issues related to the city's definition of blighted areas and parcels included, the speculative intention of the scope and size of the area, the city's environmental and financial analysis, utility company concerns, and the lack of communication with the county on this redevelopment plan.

County board members wanted to be clear that this letter and their concerns were not intended to prevent the city from proceeding with redevelopment goals, but, they did however state, "While the county does not wish to unnecessarily impede the city's planning and development goals in the proposed Project Area, the documentation prepared by the Redevelopment Agency does not provide sufficient evidence that the proposed Project Area is blighted, as defined by the California State Community Redevelopment Law."

Supervisor Norma Santiago, South Lake Tahoe's representative on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors emphatically agrees.

"I fully support redevelopment as a method and tool to improve blighted areas, and as a great opportunity to communicate with involved agencies to implement a common vision," says Santiago.

The county's letter also states that staff estimates that, even with statutory pass-through payments, the County is likely to lose between \$4,660,176 and \$16,953,025 in property tax increment over the life of the proposed Redevelopment Project, depending on the success of the Project. This loss of tax increment would put a severe strain on the county's ability to provide needed public health and safety programs throughout the region.

Santiago sees this as a good opportunity for the county and city to work on the project together, noting also that the South Tahoe Public Utility District joins the county in its objections to the project definitions.

“Jurisdictions like the utility district and the county have the responsibility to protect their constituents and make sure their tax dollars are spent correctly. While we realize doing nothing to address blighted areas would be detrimental to all jurisdictions and constituencies, we have to insist that this project is done legally and correctly for all involved; the city, the county, special districts and our constituents,” she added.

The city of South Lake Tahoe, at their public meeting (April 6), agreed to postpone the adoption of the Redevelopment Project Plan Area No. 2 and work with the county and utility district on their concerns.

“It’s a new day, let’s play ball together, on the same team, and let’s come up with something that works for everyone concerned,” said Santiago.

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Mental health care costs come with a price

Publisher’s note: *This editorial first appeared in the Sacramento Bee on April 3, 2010.*

No doubt there will be several official reviews into this week’s shooting death of mental health patient Linda Carol

Clark. Administrators at Placerville's Marshall Hospital will be asked why they don't have a locked psychiatric unit at their facility or why Clark wasn't adequately monitored or restrained.

The El Dorado Fire Protection District will review why its ambulance, the one Clark took, was not better secured.

Placerville police will spend time and money reviewing aspects of their slow chase. The officer who shot Clark will face hard questioning.

Read the whole story

SLT city manager explains use of outside counsel



To the publisher,

As I mentioned I am writing to respond to your voice message. As I mentioned, I was out of the area when you left your voicemail, and I am now back in the office. I appreciate you contacting me on this matter.

Let me address the questions you posed regarding legal assistance provided to Mr. [Bruce] Grego in early 2009 and give you a little background information. Early in 2009 issues arose regarding the eligibility to vote on matters relating to

RDA Project Area No. 2 for Councilmember [Hal] Cole. New council members or returning former members need to be certain that they check to see if they have any conflicts of interests and this is done for all members. Sometimes an opinion is kept in-house with the city attorney.

For maximum protection however to all parties, an FPPC (Fair Political Practices Commission) opinion is sought because I understand that in a major conflict issue the opinion of the city attorney cannot save an elected official from fine etc if in fact a conflict of interest exists. For certainty, an FPPC opinion is sought. Sometimes outside legal counsel is sought because the legal expertise needed does not exist in-house or the city attorney is away from the office, etc.

Framing the question and providing the Fair Political Practices Commission [FPPC] all of the facts become an important component of getting a good answer from the FPPC.

1. Yes, an outside legal opinion was obtained from Richards, Watson & Gershon [RWG] on Feb. 2, 2010, for Councilmember Cole discussing his eligibility to vote on proposed Project Area No. 2. I approved seeking the opinion. Our practice was to ensure that members of the City Council did not fall unwittingly into a conflict of interest trap [creating liability for themselves and possibly voiding a vote on a city/RDA matter] by seeking expert legal advice.

2. At some point, the issue of Councilmember Grego's eligibility to vote came up in regard to the Chateau Project because he represented the Lakeside Park Association. As you will recall, prior to the Chateau bankruptcy the developers were bringing forward a new interim financing plan that required a council vote. Staff needed a determination as to whether Mr. Grego could vote on a proposed financing for the project. As I recall, the city attorney was out of the country on vacation, and staff was preparing to seek an outside legal opinion in regard to the situation. When I alerted Mr. Grego

to the fact that staff was seeking an outside legal opinion regarding his eligibility, he asked me if he could use the services of local attorney, and former City Attorney and STRA Agency Counsel Dennis Crabb. He said that he thought Mr. Crabb would have a better grasp of the factual situation involving his situation and framing the question for the FPPC.

3. Given Mr. Crabb's past experience as South Lake Tahoe's city attorney and agency counsel and his current work as city attorney in other cities, the request to use his services, upon reflection, was reasonable. Initially I was going to contract directly with Mr. Crabb for assistance. Mr. Grego said he would pay for the work performed by Mr. Crabb directly, and then decide whether to seek reimbursement. I told him the use of Mr. Crabb was reasonable to me under the circumstances and would in my opinion be an eligible city reimbursement request.

4. Before engaging the services of Mr. Crabb, Mr. Grego discussed the matter with me and asked if I thought it proper. I did and I also told him at the time that seeking reimbursement seemed proper to me.

5. The former city attorney reviewed the matter and thought the approval by my office was retroactive. It was not. Mr. Grego discussed using Mr. Crabb with me before he engaged his services. I believed the use of Mr. Crabb, a skilled and experienced municipal lawyer, was proper and told him that I thought reimbursement was appropriate if he later sought it.

6. It is reasonable in my view for the city to reimburse Mr. Grego for outside legal services in relationship to this matter based on the facts and circumstances as discussed here. Had Mr. Grego not needed a timely review by the FPPC, had the city attorney not been out of town, had the outside attorney not been one with vast municipal services, and had the attorney not been one who is most familiar with the facts and circumstances in this matter, I would not have approved

reimbursement.

7. Prior to approving reimbursement to Mr. Grego a review of the matter was sought from the city attorney who approved payment and wrote a lengthy opinion in regard to the matter. The opinion is part of the public record and was provided to an interested member of the City Council along with backup upon inquiry to the Finance Department.

I hope this answers any questions you have. I am sorry I did not get back to you sooner.

Best wishes,

Dave Jinkens, South Lake Tahoe city manager

Remembering a miracle worker in Nevada

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the April 4, 2010, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

When the history of the long-running battles over the Truckee River is written, the late Marcia de Braga will get much of the credit for the agreement that finally brought peace to those troubled waters.

The five-term Democratic assemblywoman from Fallon died at home on March 24. She was 72.

De Braga will be well-remembered as a legislator, a civic leader, a newspaper columnist and more, but her most important contribution to Northern Nevada may be her successful effort to bring all the interests together in 1999 to hammer out an

agreement over future use of the water in the river that runs from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake.

Read the whole story