

Shakeup on STPUD board, Measure R passes soundly

By Kathryn Reed

Two new faces will be on the South Tahoe Public Utility District board, incumbents are returning to Lake Tahoe Unified and Lake Tahoe Community College boards, and the recreation measure on the South Shore is officially R.

Kelly Sheehan came out of the gate with 65.13 percent of the vote compared to incumbent Dale Rise's 34.4 percent.

A clearly emotional Sheehan was cautiously optimistic with the initial results. But others near her wondered if it was mathematically possible for her to even lose at that point. She wasn't ready to claim victory at that point no matter what others said to her.



Randy
Vogelgesang
and Kelly
Sheehan
celebrate
their victory
Nov. 8 at
Steamers.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Sheehan had invited all of the utility district candidates to her bar-restaurant, Steamers. Rise was the only one not to show up Election Night. Nor did he return a call for comment.

Sheehan and Randy Vogelgesang spent part of the night huddled together – the voters' top choices. Neither had run for any political office before being on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Vogelgesang replaces Marylou Mosbacher who did not seek re-election.

He said he is humbled by the win.

Vogelgesang held on to the lead absentee voters gave him. With numbers coming out just after polls closed at 8pm, Vogelgesang led with 37.71 percent, Claude Gunsch 28.55 percent, John Runnels 20.9 percent, and Mary Kortge 12.63 percent.

With absentees accounting for the 18.9 percent turnout in early returns, El Dorado County Registrar of Voters Bill Schultz was not surprised. This, despite the county's growth in absentee voting for each election.

"With this election, everything's gonna be low," he told *Lake Tahoe News* at 10:05pm, about 15 minutes after the votes from the lake showed up at the county offices in Placerville.

By the time the final vote was tallied at 11:11pm, the numbers are below with the winners in bold:

STPUD Seat 3:

Vogelgesang – 37.18 percent, 1,128 votes

Gunsch – 28.54 percent, 866 votes

Runnels – 21.29 percent, 646 votes

Kortge – 12.82 percent, 389 votes

STPUD Seat 4:

Sheehan – 66.39 percent, 1,989 votes

Rise – 33.24 percent, 996 votes

LTUSD:

Sue Novasel – 32.73 percent, 2,283 votes

Larry Green – 29.23 percent, 2,039 votes

Michael Doyle – 27.69 percent, 1,932 votes

Michael Bischoff – 9.91 percent, 691 votes

LTCC:

Karen Borges – 49.47 percent, 2,524 votes

Fritz Wenck – 37.36 percent, 1,906 votes

Michael Bischoff – 12.54 percent, 640 votes.

All of these numbers are unofficial until certified, which can take up to 30 days. Board members will take their seats in December.

Schultz pointed out that the turnout could have been even lower if not for measures that get out the vote among a community's most motivated citizens.

"In an off year, I really think it's the passion behind whatever initiative there happens to be," he said. "I think it's whatever's personal."

In the South Shore's case, Measure R – a rewrite of the recreation initiative Measure S of 2000 – made the ballot.

R needed a two-thirds majority to pass – which it more than achieved with 70.19 percent or 2,234 votes compared to the opposition that had 949 votes for 29.81 percent.

For Schultz, it has been difficult losing Assistant Registrar

Norma Gray, a 31-year county employee who became a fixture in the Elections Department. A picture of her hangs in the kitchen as a “jewel of her memory,” Schultz said. She died in December.

– Susan Wood contributed to this story.