

Opinion: Daly leaves wake of destruction

By Larry Weitzman

Terri Daly, the El Dorado County's chief administrator officer, spent the last week cleaning out her desk and office of everything personal. But it remains unknown whether any county property or more important, any county records went with her. It is also unknown the reason for her sudden departure.

At the Nov. 4 Board of Supervisors meeting she resigned.

Kathryn Reed, publisher of *Lake Tahoe News*, reported first on this story on Saturday after a Friday email from others and me about Daly cleaning out her office. She called District V Supervisor Norma Santiago to ask what Daly's actions mean.



Larry Weitzman

Santiago replied, "I'm not going to tell you. I'll call you later. Bye." Remarks like that made it sound very foreboding for Daly.

Daly in four years has ruined this county. She acted like the EDC budget was hers to do with as she pleased. She hired her friends, giving them big salaries. Many of them were incompetent or were other county rejects. She gave everyone huge raises and god help anyone who crossed her or Kim Kerr.

One point that must always be remembered, Daly has served at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. They are ultimately responsible.

A recent restudy of the budget projections from an earlier column may indicate that the cash shortfall over the next five years will not be \$103 million, but could rise to a five-year total of \$125 million (more on that in my next column). Hey, that \$20 million albatross of a lease Daly stuck Amador County with over the next 13 years is going to look like small potatoes to EDC.

Randy Rafoth suffered under the Daly regime when he questioned Daly's use of the Risk Management budget for her purposes. Because he was about three months from ending his probationary period as director of Risk Management, he was let go by Kerr. He didn't know Daly and Kerr were absolute rulers.

Then there is the recent firing of the director of Child Support Services, Laura Roth. Roth at the time of her unwarranted firing was ranked No. 2 or 3 in the state on a 58 countywide basis in total collections. She was certainly doing a good job, but that didn't matter to Daly when you cross her.

Another victim of the wrath of crossing Daly and/or Kerr was head of probation, Greg Sly. Sly complained that Kerr shouldn't have sent an email to county managers that said you should keep a tube of KY Jelly and explain to complaining employees that it will ease their pain. Sly was eventually let go for complaining that the email sent by Kerr was harassment. There was an "investigation," but it was investigated by two of Daly's cronies, both hired out of Amador County; just like Kerr.

The investigator on Sly's complaint was Karen Kramer, an employment law attorney, who was hired as an outside consultant by Daly. And yes, Kramer was a former Amador County contractor. During her investigation Kramer told employees

that all statements taken would be confidential except for the Acting HR Director Karl Knoblauch, also a Daly hire from Amador County. But employees were afraid as they knew anything said against Kerr would go straight to Daly. The investigation was whitewashed by Daly's friend, Knoblauch, and Sly was soon forced to retire. Nothing happened to Kerr. Sly's "firing" isn't over and may cost the county millions of dollars in the near future.

Daly also let outside consulting contracts with Martha Shaver, a former Amador County employee.

But wait; there are more Friends of Daly. Daly hired Kerr as she was about to get fired as the Ione city manager. When Kerr was the Ione city manager she spent time at the Amador County offices of Daly. According to employees of Amador County, they would see Kerr there often. Although Daly denies it, Daly had to know of Kerr's indiscretions while the Ione city manager.

Daly hired her and gave her a raise.

Daly also wanted to hire Robyn Drivon as county counsel. I don't know Ms. Drivon, but she was about to be let go by Yolo County as their county counsel. Was that the best choice? It was for Daly. Drivon was hired in at the top of the pay scale.

Daly also hired Pam Knorr, now head of HR as well as the interim CAO. Daly gave her a big raise and also had the BOS raise the top salary for HR director from about \$130,000 to \$160,000. Knorr left her prior position as CAO of Alpine County (population 1,100) under questionable circumstances.

Daly also recommended analyst Kelly Webb as the new IT director with a \$140,000 paycheck, a raise of about \$30,000. Webb's short lived performance was so poor she was quickly demoted by the BOS back to her original position quite recently.

In other words, Daly's departure will be good riddance. She

hired many unqualified people, paid them outlandish salaries, hired consultant after consultant, fired many qualified employees, hired hundreds of unnecessary new employees and caused EDC to be facing a five-year deficit totaling as much as \$125 million. Unfortunately, even though the door will close behind her, Daly's actions will cost the county perhaps millions of dollars in the future, notwithstanding the huge deficit. It's been a great four-plus years.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.