

# Couples lose thousands on Tahoe wedding deposits

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

At least 10 couples lost their wedding deposits this March when the man who had claimed to own and reside on the property they booked was evicted following a five-year legal battle. The couples will follow through with their weddings under the new owners of the property, but are not hopeful about getting their deposits back.

Christian Steele, a former physician, author of “Mastering the Power of Life”, an ascension teacher, and a Tahoe City resident, had been misrepresenting his ownership of Bear Paw Lodge for five years, profiting from weddings on a property he has not owned since 2010.

According to a deed of sale in the name of Bank of America, Steele lost the Tahoe City lodge in a 2010 foreclosure after defaulting on a \$4 million loan, but Steele said he continued to live on the property until 2015. When four to five years of serial bankruptcy filings finally culminated in his eviction by the Placer County Sheriff’s Office on March 17, Steele contacted the couples to inform them he could not honor their reservations. The deposits have not been returned as of April 23, and total somewhere in the range of \$20,000 to around \$60,000, judging from Steele’s estimate of \$2,000 to \$6,000 per deposit.

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