

Partying tourists confronted with reality that South Lake Tahoe wants quiet neighborhoods



South Tahoe code enforcement officer Danny Loyola confirms details with dispatch. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

It's about 12:30am Saturday and a distinct conversation can be heard coming from the back yard of the next street. It's a group of about 10 who are up from the Bay Area partying. They are here for this long weekend.

They are going home with a \$270 citation for excessive noise at a vacation home rental.

They claim they had no idea they needed to keep things down starting at 10pm. Danny Loyola, enforcement code officer for

South Lake Tahoe, informs them excessive noise anytime of day won't be tolerated.

In this case, a neighbor backing the Dedi Street rental called the police about the noise.

Loyola, who works Thursday-Sunday from 4pm-2am, is the man responsible for keeping the peace between loud out-of-towners and locals.

The woman who called about this house on Sept. 5 said she was woken up from a deep sleep. She tried conversing with the visitors over the fence. They reportedly told her they would keep it down. They didn't. They were "obnoxious" according to the caller, so she called SLTPD.

Loyola drove around the neighborhood to gauge the sounds from various vantage points. The vacationers were loud. It wasn't just muffled sounds.

No sign was on the house designating it as a vacation home rental (VHR), which is mandated on the permit. Loyola makes a note of this.

For every encounter he has on a shift Loyola fills out a disturbance advisement card. It gets placed in the permittee's file so there is a record of how many times enforcers are called to a particular house and for what reason. Noise is the primary reason the enforcers are called out at night. Garbage and parking are bigger issues for the day shift enforcers.

At each call Loyola asks to speak with the person who rented the house. In this case it was an intoxicated woman. She's coherent to a point. She understands they were loud and that this is a bad thing. However, she seems confused as to why she is getting the citation. Loyola is patient with her. Her two male friends try to explain it.

Loyola had called for backup from a sworn officer. It just

felt better. He goes into these situations not knowing who will be on the other side of the door. Most times he confronts people who have been drinking. His radio, flashlight and pepper spray are his "weapons" if things were to go sideways. That's why when it's possible, an officer with more firepower is by his side. More important, it's just another body.

South Lake Tahoe is taking a more proactive approach to enforcing the rules about vacation home rentals. This includes having people dedicated to patrolling the streets during the likely days and hours when guests are more prone to misbehaving.

On this particular Friday-Saturday shift, Loyola receives just two calls. The other is on San Jose Avenue. From the street the voices are much more subdued compared to the other house. They are from Ohio and say they have no idea about the rule concerning noise.

Everyone seems to be out of the hot tub by the time Loyola leaves. He issues them a warning and says he hopes not to see them for the rest of the weekend. They agree.

Loyola has been much busier on previous weekends compared to this last long weekend of summer. When he's not on a VHR call he is doing code enforcement of a different kind. This includes finding abandoned vehicles, cars parked on city streets without current registration and other infractions, as well as making sure all is well at the city parking garage at Heavenly Village. He also is another pair of eyes for law enforcement for anything suspicious that might be going on that falls outside of his scope of work.