

Fallen Leaf Lake residents up in arms



A full house gathered Sept. 5 at Fallen Leaf Lake to argue about who is going to run the marina and store



As scenic as the Fallen Leaf Lake is, the community is divided over how things are being operated.

By Susan Wood

FALLEN LEAF LAKE — Tears, cheers, jeers and sneers encapsulated a contentious community meeting last weekend at this normally quiet hamlet that backs up to the Desolation Wilderness near South Lake Tahoe.

At stake for the standing-room-only crowd is the hub of the

village – the marina and general store. Long-time, fourth-generation residents John and Ruth Rich have run it for 14 years under the auspices of Fallen Leaf Landing.

Despite the backing of a vocal part of the community, the Rich family has been embroiled in a disagreement since April with the Community Services District board over control of the operation.

The district was formed to represent the interests of the Fallen Leaf Lake Community. The board's handling of the concessionaire issue has some wondering if board members should be recalled. Others are in favor of how the board is handling the situation.

The board solicited other vendors to operate the marina and general store, but only the Rich family responded.

The CSD led by President Dana Clark has suggested the district run the marina and general store if no agreement with the Riches can be reached. But residents wonder how the board thinks it has the time and expertise to do so.

A big issue between the district and the Riches is money. The two sides have wrestled over a contract, but they have not been able to reach common ground. The primary issues that remain are the amount of rent the CSD is expecting and disclosure of accounting practices.

The dual operation brings in \$550,000 in annual revenue, while the Rich family pays \$90,000 in rent to the district. The CSD board has tried to get more money in a new contract. Negotiations started at \$134,000, with the latest figure whittled down to \$103,000.

Clark said by phone Monday that the community district needs more money so it can rebuild reserves in case a complete overhaul of the facilities is necessary. He figured at least \$500,000 would be needed, adding the district has \$170,000 in

reserves.

“What we’re looking for is a partnership with trust on both sides,” Clark said. He admitted the issue has divided the community.

When all was said and done the Saturday of Labor Day weekend, the board wrapped up the 3.5-hour meeting by agreeing 5-0 to make one last stab at hashing out a contract by Sept. 19. What happens if those negotiations fail remains to be seen.

The “R” word “recall” has come up by a segment of the community, with Betsy Wheeler circulating a petition to demand the board continue to grant concession operations to the Rich family.

“They are the face of Fallen Leaf Lake,” said Chuck White, who accused the board of not appreciating the efforts of the Riches.

Plan B for the CSD also involves having a task force help design a CSD-run operation, which would be partly paid for by an endowment. Some in the community doubt the financial soundness of relying on these donations. The board says it has \$30,000 in hand for the endowment. Other funds have been pledged, but have not materialized.

Clark is convinced it can get another operator in place with the \$170,000 it has in the bank.

Other issues that have surfaced with district board members range from uncompleted maintenance jobs to boat-washing irregularities to the use of the so-called extra room over the general store and the Riches’ overall performance versus its return on investment for the district.

Rich said by phone after the meeting that he hopes the two sides can come to an agreement, although he believes the board’s problem has been “all personal” thus far.

That Saturday, when everyone gave up a glorious Tahoe morning to be indoors bickering, Rich addressed the crowd with his wife by his side. He provided tearful testimony of hard times trying to run the marina and the store while feeling abandoned by the district.

“The board didn’t bail me out then,” he said of his economic situation. “And I don’t think I let the community down.”

He was greeted with a standing ovation.

After much time, the couple was asked if they would accept a one-year contract designed to place the operators on probation. Ruth Rich declined the temporary offer. It’s hard for them to conceive being on probation after operating it all these years.

“We have to get on with the rest of our lives,” she said.

John and Ruth Rich will be negotiating with board members Terri Thomas and Mike Kraft.

“I’m just grateful we’re moving closer to a solution,” resident Debra Barnes said.

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Construction zone greets STHS students on first day of

school

By Kathryn Reed

It felt more like going to a construction site than school for students and staff at South Tahoe High School on the first day of school.

The campus on Sept. 8 looked a whole lot different compared to when everyone left for summer break in June. Building is under way, big equipment is everywhere and the sounds are not the usual quiet of Gardner Mountain.

A senior prank ended up being costly. A couple students put "2010" in chalk and mustard on the new concrete. The oil in the mustard stained the concrete.

"It was almost all cleaned up. The rest will be (today) by Leadership," student body President David Stewart told the school board Tuesday night.

Steve Morales, district facilities director, said seeing the "prank" was a heart stopper. But, he added, it's not permanent and they know who did it.

The career tech building that is under construction at the top of Viking Way has taken out a swath of parking places. Not all students have a spot. Those getting first priority are seniors who had good attendance records last year.

Auto shop, construction, architectural design and art will be taught there.

On the other side of campus by the tennis courts is a two-story, 15-room building under construction. Math, environmental science and ROP will be housed there.

Both buildings should be ready for use in the 2010-11 school year.

The tennis courts will be used in the winter to stage equipment. The district promises the courts will be repaired and resurfaced when construction is complete. Look for that to happen in June-July 2010.

Only one play will be performed at the school this year because the little theater is likely to be gutted in early 2010.

The district is using part of the \$64.5 million bond that voters approved in November 2008 to build the new facilities.

This summer Lake Tahoe Unified School District learned it was awarded a \$4 million joint-use grant for STHS. The school will erect a student union and classrooms, while the city of South Lake Tahoe can use the second floor for meeting space.

Lake Tahoe Unified walked away with one-third of the money the state allocated for joint-use grant dollars. November's bond had \$3.5 million allocated for a one-story building, so the grant allows a larger, multidimensional structure.

The district is at the top of the waiting list for a \$10 million interest free bond that is part of the federal stimulus package. Word could come this month if the dollars are rolling to Tahoe. The money would be used as a bridge to keep the construction project on track while the state continues to delay the matching money it owes the district.

"I have no doubt we'll get funded," Deb Yates, district CFO, told the board.

The 15-year bond is principal only. The idea is if the feds award LTUSD the bond, it will be paid back with what the state owes the district. Part of the federal criteria is to show the project is ready to go " something the district has no trouble proving.

It would also save taxpayers \$35 million in interest payments because it means \$10 million less in general obligation bonds.

Word from the state is that \$6 million of the \$15 million it owes LTUSD in grants could come this month for career tech education.

The first day was less dramatic at other school sites. There were the usual tears from the little ones. It seemed to be a bit of a fashion show at all levels.

Enrollment figures on the first day indicate there will be plenty of students to use the new facilities.

The kindergartners, or class of 2022, total 342 students. Previous kindergarten classes were in the 285 range. Tahoe Valley Elementary will hire another teacher because the numbers are higher than expected.

Overall, elementary enrollment was 1,712 on day one compared to 1,708 on June 12.

At South Tahoe Middle School, enrollment was expected to drop by 40, but on day one it was down 56. South Tahoe High is expected to lose 30-50 students from last year.

Jim Watson, director of human resources, said he is encouraged by the numbers because usually the district adds students after the first few days.

photos by Kathryn Reed

Parents complain about lack

of buses

By Kathryn Reed

Parents filled the Lake Tahoe Unified School District boardroom Sept. 8 to complain about the bus routes taking students living in outlying areas to Bijou Community School.

Liz Muckerman and Heidi Hill Drum spoke on behalf of the parents. Both said they understand the state has cut \$200,000 from the district's transportation budget, but they contend the changes from last year to this year are not equitable throughout the district.

Parents have scoured the bus route system to find ways to make it work to bus students enrolled in the two-way immersion program who live in Meyers.

They brought up a lot of information that pointed to the magnet school seeming to get preferential treatment. District officials said that's not the case.

However, board member Larry Green pointed out that the Spanish-English program went from two classes last year to four this, therefore it's likely more students would need to be bused.

Christy Blach, transportation manager, said she used June numbers when it came to making the routes.

She also said ridership is not normal the first couple of weeks as younger students sometimes don't ride the bus right away.

The board agreed 5-0 to have the transportation department work with Bijou parents to try to find a solution.

"I don't feel we got what we wanted. Ideally, the board would have said 'restore a bus to Bijou' or 'ensure more equity is

brought into the equation so that Bijou isn't bearing the majority of the budget cuts' or something a little stronger," Drum said after the meeting. "But, we will stay on it until a satisfactory solution can be found. It is not OK that all students who attend the magnet school have the option to ride the bus, but we do not – especially since part of the reason many parents signed up for the immersion program was that transportation would be provided."

Another issue was when parents were notified about the bus routes. Superintendent Jim Tarwater said it was Aug. 11. Drum provided information after the meeting that showed the TWI stops intact in that email.

The parents don't want to add a route; they want to work with the buses that are in service.

Heather Kovac was about to buy two bus passes for her kids but was told her son who's a first-grader at Bijou would have to catch the bus at Magic Pine Tree. The day care center near Barton Memorial Hospital is halfway from her house in Meyers to Bijou, so driving all the way makes more sense to her.

Kovac said her son is devastated to not ride the bus because after watching his older brother ride he was looking forward to it.

4 survive Truckee plane crash

TRUCKEE – Four people survived a single-engine plane crash Monday night while taking off from the Truckee Tahoe Airport.

The Associated Press is reporting that National Transportation Safety Board officials will arrive today to begin the

investigation.

The plane reportedly flipped over and landed upside down.

AP said one person was airlifted to an area hospital, while the other three were taken by ambulance.

It is not known where the the plane, which was made in 1966 and registered to Trolan Enterprises of Missoula, Mont., was headed.

South Tahoe's city attorneys' jobs on the line today

By Kathryn Reed

One or both of South Lake Tahoe's city attorneys may be asked to pack up their office after having only been on the job since June.

In a special closed session meeting today at 9am the City Council will meet to evaluate Patrick Enright and Jacqueline Mittelstadt, the two attorneys.

It seems like something regarding the City Attorneys Office comes up at nearly every City Council meeting. Some of the initial problems stemmed from no transition plan being in place when they came on board.

Plus, in the past South Tahoe has always had one city attorney. Mittelstadt was hired as city attorney, and Enright as assistant city attorney/redevelopment counsel. Part of their short time in town has been spent working out of a conference room because their offices were being renovated.

Some of the issues appear to be territorial. City Manager Dave Jinkens has had the authority to hire outside special counsel at his discretion. The council unanimously is trying to curtail that activity – thinking two city attorneys could help in that matter.

Another issue is new employees have their way of doing things, which isn't necessarily how things have been done in the past. They have rubbed a few department heads the wrong way.

"The City Attorneys Office noted some internal irregularities in the city and reports of which were not necessarily well received," Mittelstadt said by phone Labor Day weekend. She is hoping for an amicable resolution to the problems. She would not elaborate about the report or the people named in it.

City Council members are being mum about what is going behind closed doors.

Mittelstadt at the Sept. 1 council meeting asked to meet with her five bosses in closed session to discuss personnel issues. They denied her request.

But in an odd twist of circumstances, it was agreed 3-2 to give her a performance evaluation at a special closed session two days later. Mayor Jerry Birdwell and Councilman Bill Crawford were not in favor of that idea.

Usually new employees are reviewed after six months, with annual reviews after that.

Mittelstadt's review was not made public. Birdwell spoke briefly to her after the Sept. 3 meeting. The conversation has not been made public. She will not be at today's meeting because of previous plans to be out of town.

Enright will be there today, though it's unknown if he will be in council chambers during the council's deliberations.

If someone is let go, it will have to be done in open session

per state law. Enright and Mittelstadt's contracts say they must be given 90-days notice.

Other business:

Following the closed session, the council has a special budget meeting set for 10am.

No signs in 18 years pointed to Garrido as suspect



Phillip and
Nancy Garrido

By Kathryn Reed

Despite Phillip Garrido's now-well publicized criminal exploits with women, his name was never one that crossed the desks of law enforcement after Jaycee Lee Dugard was abducted June 10, 1991.

"We didn't have anything that was remotely close to these people. These people just did not come up on the radar screen at all, for whatever reason," Lake Tahoe-based FBI agent Chris Campion said of Phillip and Nancy Garrido in a podcast released Aug. 31.

Phillip Garrido, 58, and Nancy Garrido, 54, face 29 felony counts of kidnapping someone under 14 years of age, kidnapping for sexual purposes, forcible rape and forcible lewd acts on a child. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Both pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The Garridos were transferred from the Bay Area on Aug. 27 to the El Dorado County Jail in Placerville. They are being held without bail. They have been under suicide watch.

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury will decide if the case is heard in Placerville or South Lake Tahoe. The Garridos' attorneys could petition for a change in venue.

Phillip Garrido once lived in South Lake Tahoe. This was in the 1970s with his first wife, Christine Perreira Murphy.

In 1976 he was sent to prison for kidnapping Katie Callaway Hall of South Tahoe and raping her in a Reno storage shed. Murphy subsequently divorced him.

Garrido was sent to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Kansas for those crimes. He found religion behind bars, as well as his current wife. Nancy Garrido was at the prison visiting a family member when the romance between them began.

He was paroled in 1988. Sentencing and parole regulations have become stricter in the ensuing years. The couple then made their home in Antioch.

El Dorado County Undersheriff Fred Kollar spent part of the morning of Aug. 27 at that house which is where Dugard apparently lived for the last 18 years. He had an hour to look through the single-story house on the outskirts of Antioch in the East Bay of San Francisco.

After the press conference that afternoon at the county fairgrounds, Kollar said it would have been easy to not know the tent-shed compound existed because of the false back fence.

However, had law enforcement in the Bay Area followed up on neighbors' calls, this case may have been resolved years ago.

A simple search on GoogleEarth also would have told the story in a picture. The makeshift living quarters are clearly visible on the Internet.

Lt. Les Lovell of the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department was one of the original people on the investigation. He had recently finished a stint with the DEA, so the leads he followed had to do with drugs.

"One lead at the time was a possible drug, white slavery type of connection," Lovell said. "That was my focus the first couple of months – narcotics related tips."

He said more than 30 investigators were on the case at one time. Thousands of leads filtered in.

During the 10-year anniversary walk in South Lake Tahoe to remember Dugard, a slew of undercover officers were in the crowd. Past experience has proved that suspects like to return to the scene – even years later.

Authorities questioned one person, but he was let go – and he was not Phillip Garrido.

Campion was also part of the investigation from the get-go. He was unavailable for an in-depth interview. He was one of the more than 2,500 people who walked in a parade of pink through South Lake Tahoe on Sept. 6

"I can say that Terry Probyn, Jaycee's mom, is very grateful to the South Lake Tahoe community for all their support over the years," Campion said in an email to *Lake Tahoe News*.

It was Lovell who got the call from the Concord Police Department on Aug. 26 saying they thought they had the now 29-year-old Dugard. Lovell put them in contact with the cold case specialists in Placerville.

From there, the truth started to come out about the last 18 years.

Economy sputters in Lake Tahoe



17th Hole 2009
Celeb Golf
Tourney

By Susan Wood

Businesses and agencies in the two states flanking Lake Tahoe are reporting double-digit declines in lodging, gaming, retail and travel demand.

Lake Tahoe tourism officials say most every commerce indicator points to a struggling economy in the world of tourism for the summer season, which in the basin officially ended Labor Day weekend.

Compared to 2008, bookings as well as lodging tax revenue were down this summer by 10 to 16 percent, the California Travel and Tourism Commission and Nevada Commission on Tourism said. The properties under the wing of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority were all over the map – with drops ranging from 2 to 30 percent.

Passenger counts and daily departures in June declined by 13 and 21 percent, respectively, in comparison to 2008, the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority reported. (These are the most recent statistics available.) The drops have prompted the transportation agency to turn it into high gear, adding a nonstop flight on Horizon Air between Reno and Mammoth in

December. A month later, Southwest Airlines will place another nonstop departure to and from Phoenix on its schedule.

Still, a U.S. Travel Association survey conducted in July found that 63 percent of American adults plan to take at least one leisure trip in the next six months. That's up by 61 percent from last year.

Even though Tahoe is not doing well, other destinations have experienced greater losses. Plus, a few bright spots do exist.

The saving grace for some properties and tourism-related businesses is location, location, location. Lake Tahoe is a weekend's drive from the greater San Francisco area. Sacramento Valley residents can escape the heat for the day.

When the mercury went up in July, the people came up as well. The American Century Championship at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course brought out 36,000 enthusiasts – a 16 percent jump in attendance over last year.

“We do know that with travelers staying closer to home that our drive markets are still inclined to travel to South Shore, albeit for (fewer) days. So, if we're looking at the glass half full, we have the advantage that our largest market doesn't have to fly to get to us,” LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin said.

Then there are the bargain hunters, and Tahoe – at about \$110 a day – tracks lower in what a family spends on entertainment and lodging than more upscale markets such as Napa, Vail and Monterey.

Perhaps, ironically, the poor economy has answered the cry of those declaring Tahoe shouldn't turn into another Aspen.

The slumping economy driven by an overinflated housing market, plunging employment numbers, faltering investments and free-wheeling corporate business practices have given way to a U.S.

travel outlook showing leisure spending off by 11 percent in contrast to 2008, according to the Travel Industry of America Association.

However, the conventional wisdom is if it's cheap, it's good to try.

Although international travel to the United States is down, it's getting less expensive to see the points of interests from one coast to another, according to TIA. Lake Tahoe is no exception.

Tahoe properties have lowered their rates by an average of 10 percent in contrast to previous years.

"People are extremely price sensitive," said Jerry Bindel of Lakeland Village.

However, there is a delicate balance. The condo property manager, who has served the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association for years, mentioned a noticeable online pricing error for Lakeland recently that made the phones ring off the hook.

"You can't bastardize your product. Once you've lowered your prices that much, it's hard for them to come back up," he said.

He contends hotel properties that fail to offer more than what the visitor received years ago will feel the pain more than others. Little touches and extras go a long way.

Special events bring people

Bindel believes special events that draw people to the area are the name of the game.

The North Shore is all about events. The North Lake Tahoe Resort Association extended its attraction schedule "strike zone" to autumn. One needs simply to turn to Northstar-at-

Tahoe – the resort boasted an increase this summer in visitation spawned by recreation with its golf and mountain venues, along with a slew of events.

“Special events are driving the show,” Bindel said. “We need to rethink everything. We used to be able to rest on our laurels. We can’t do that anymore.”

His advice is not limited to private enterprise. Bindel urges the city of South Lake Tahoe to get on the special events bandwagon and either promote itself in these struggling times or make infrastructure improvements that make a difference to visitors scoping out the South Shore.

“Street improvements, lights and sidewalks – they make a physical first impression with the strongest immediate impact,” he said.

The general plan, Tahoe Valley, convention center, Lakeview Commons, Highway 50 – the city has projects in the works to improve the town functionally and aesthetically but most have price tags that could delay them indefinitely. It’s patching the roads, installing streetlights and staging events that Bindel would like to see more of.

“It would behoove the city to encourage it,” he said.

One such example is the return of the Bijou Bash Sept. 12. The party presents a reason for locals to gather with visitors to celebrate South Lake Tahoe.

Some retailers and casinos have also touted the success of investing in the product.

MontBleu Resort & Casino Marketing Manager Mike Donovan noted the property putting money behind renovating its rooms. With Stateline gaming wins down 28 percent this year, casinos are trying to offer more to position themselves.

Phone calls to Harveys-Harrah’s Lake Tahoe spokesman John

Packer were unreturned.

Retail centers are in the same boat at the lake. The Ski Run Marina reported shops experiencing a 10 to 15 percent drop in revenue. Marina owner Mansoor Alyeshmerni has installed a mix of retailers with the intention of adding life to a center undergoing its own renovations and improvements. To attract the bargain conscious, Wildman Coffee moved in with an offering of food from 11 countries under \$10.

The Village Center near Stateline has worked to hold its own as well. Shopping center manager Terry Hackett said his retailers have noticed shoppers and diners spending but spending less while looking for less expensive items.

“Retail is down, depending on where you are and who you are. Consumers are still being cautious. The economy won’t come back until we stabilize the housing market and job growth. Families are more likely to go out for pizza than have a sit down dinner,” he said.

Still, signs of life show better cash receipts now than six months ago, Hackett added. And he’s convinced the tenant mix has helped keep the shoppers interested.

On the other side of town, Pearl Izumi in the Factory Stores at the â€œYâ€ may represent an island of progress amid a terrain of boarded-up storefronts and dwindling shoppers on crumbling sidewalks.

Manager Lauren Lindley said the shop this summer has been “holding steady” since it opened five years ago. She thinks the specialty store, with its own recreation garments, would be dead if it “relied on mall walkers.”

She’s got her eye on what the future brings in winter, which presented more of a concern last year.

“It was so bad, but I feel there’s nowhere to go but up,” she

said.

The National Retail Federation, the world's largest retail trade association, reported July sales had decreased 5 percent compared to last year.

As for the collective business outlook for the South Shore, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce B Gorman was unavailable for comment.

Animal Control worried about sick dogs in Meyers

By El Dorado County Health Services Department

El Dorado County Animal Services is advising pet owners in the Cornelian Drive area of Meyers in South Lake Tahoe to be watchful of their dogs, after receiving several reports of dogs from that neighborhood that were exhibiting unusual illnesses, including seizures.

"We know of at least four or five dogs that have become sick over the past several weeks," said Lt. Robert Gerat. "We aren't sure what is causing the dogs to become sick, but we wanted to let the neighbors know so that they can take precautions and alert us if they see anything out of the ordinary in that community."

All of the dogs that became sick are believed to be outdoor dogs that were allowed to roam free. Two of the dogs have died. Animal Services is investigating the situation to try to determine the cause.

"The dogs may have ingested something as they were roaming in

the neighborhood, but we haven't found anything specific yet," Gerat said. The area where the illness has been observed is a small Meyers neighborhood just off Highway 89 that is bordered by the following streets: Cornelian Drive, Lindenwood Drive, Pinewood Drive and Mulberry Drive.

Animal Services is advising the neighbors in the affected area do the following:

To keep your pets safe, don't allow them to roam free off of your property. When walking your dog, keep him/her on a leash.

If your dog exhibits unusual illness, particularly symptoms of seizure, consult with your veterinarian, and report the situation to Animal Services.

If you see anything unusual in that area, including any suspicious activity, report this to Animal Services.

"If this is a case of someone intentionally trying to harm animals, we are definitely concerned," Gerat said. "We will investigate any leads we receive."

Anyone with information should contact Animal Services at (530) 573.7925.

Dugard kidnapping's ripple effect

By Kathryn Reed

"Carl (Probyn) showed up at my door that morning. He came running up the steps, busting through the door, not even knocking. He was in a flipping state of panic. He said,

“Someone grabbed my daughter.’”

Soon thereafter law enforcement questioned Peggy Lynn about that fateful day that changed the lives of so many on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe.

Lynn was running a small day care out of her home at the time. Shayna, Carl and Terry Probyn’s 18-month-old daughter, was one of her charges.

“The FBI came and interviewed me because (Carl) was apparently a suspect. I said you don’t have that look upon your face when you are a suspect. It was indescribable how much he was upset,” Lynn said.

For one interview with FBI agents the Meyers resident was hypnotized. She helped create a composite sketch of the suspects. She could do this because she had seen them days before Jaycee Lee Dugard, then 11, was kidnapped on June 10, 1991.

Lynn says the people she remembers look like Phillip and Nancy Garrido – the couple charged in the Dugard kidnapping.

She said the vehicle was out of place for her quiet neighborhood because only cars that belong there or people who are lost come down the street.

“They swung over to my side and slowed way down. This creepy guy in the driver’s seat stared at me and my (18-month-old) daughter. It was very unnerving to me,” Lynn said. “The person in the passenger side I didn’t get a look at the face, but (she) had long straight black hair.”

Lynn watched Shayna for just a little while longer before the Probyns wanted their daughter with them at all times – especially since they were not working.

Leave of absence

Terry Probyn interviewed for a job at the South Lake Tahoe office of the El Dorado County Public Health Department on one week, her daughter was kidnapped the next.

“We didn’t see Terry for six months. I just held the position open,” said Valerie Rudd, who was running the office at the time.

Probyn had been hired to be a medical office assistant. When she did begin work, a bit of awkwardness ensued as colleagues didn’t know quite what to say or how to act.

“Everyone learned to respect her and be supportive in their own way,” Rudd said.

Rudd describes Probyn as smart, composed and able to handle stress.

“I wasn’t surprised to hear Jaycee was running (Garrido’s printing) business because her mom was like that – if someone needed something, Terry would do it,” Rudd said.

Working in captivity

Mary Schwaab never met Allissa, as Jaycee Lee Dugard was called by the people she lived with for the last 18 years, but she did have interactions with the Garridos.

“He was always a wacko. We just thought he was a religious freak. He talked about starting his own church,” Schwaab said.

Schwaab, who lives in the East Bay of San Francisco, said for six years Garrido printed business cards and flyers for her office.

Sometimes Garrido delivered the paper products to the office, other times Schwaab went to his house. She never went inside.

“From the outside of the house it was hard to know what was going on,” Schwaab said.

She said she was shocked like everyone else to find out about the reported horrors that had been going on in the backyard of the Antioch house for nearly two decades.

Flyers posted in Bay Area

Kirsten Rankins had just moved to Lake Tahoe from Concord when the Dugard kidnapping occurred. She was making regular trips between the two cities because of her son.

She took flyers all over the area – which is right next to Antioch, the town where the Garridos reportedly held Dugard captive for 18 years.

“I had flyers of her in the back of my Bronco in my windows as I drove around Concord,” Rankins said. “People up here said if you are leaving the basin, please take flyers with you and take them wherever you go.”

The flyers had sketches of the suspects.

“I can’t believe she was found right there. There were pictures of her in that area,” Rankins said.

Questions about Carl

Carl Probyn has been the loudest, most prolific speaker on the media circuit since his stepdaughter’s release from captivity on Aug. 26.

“I don’t think he is the best spokesperson because (the Probyns) have been separated so long,” said Anna Richter, development director with the South Lake Tahoe Women’s Center. “I think there may be a little bit of capitalization on this.”

The Probyns live in Southern California, but have not done so as a couple for years even though they are not formally divorced.

Carl Probyn on Sept. 5 returned to the street where Jaycee Lee

was last seen so a foreign television crew could interview him. He's made the rounds to the New York studios. He showed up at the end of the Sept. 6 ceremony at South Tahoe Middle School that was for the South Shore community to come together to celebrate the release of Jaycee Lee.

Probyn was initially a suspect, which is common in cases like this. Plus, he witnessed the abduction and was the one to dial 911.

Even though no one is pointing fingers his way anymore, some say his actions indicate he has lost the focus – which they say is Jaycee Lee is alive, not that he has been vindicated.

Others are just as adamant that his behavior is normal for a man who has figuratively lived with a scarlet letter upon his lapel. They say he was wronged.

Tina Dugard, Terry Probyn's sister, started speaking out on behalf of the family so another voice would be heard.

"We spent time sharing memories and stories and getting to know each other again. Jaycee remembers all of us," Tina Dugard said during a televised press conference at the FBI office in Los Angeles on Sept. 3.

Time to heal

Richter, with the Women's Center, said the family has a long road to recovery.

Trust is likely to be a big issue for Jaycee Lee, who is now 29, and her daughters. Reports are that the 11- and 15-year-old didn't know Jaycee Lee was their mother. This means both parents have not been truthful with them.

"I think Jaycee's daughters have the most challenges. They have limited experience to the real world," Richter said. "They essentially have been lied to by the person who held them captive and Jaycee had to go along with it for survival."

Anxiety, guilt, self-blame and depression are emotions the entire Probyn-Dugard clan is likely to experience now and for years to come.

“I do think it’s natural and normal for any parent to wonder what they could have done differently,” Richter said.

The family has been getting professional help to aid in coping with the last 18 years, and with what the future may hold. Jaycee Lee and her daughters did not go to school nor did they see a doctor while being stashed away in squalor.

“We need to look at (Jaycee Lee) as a hero of strength and courage. She will make the transition from victim to survivor,” Richter said.

Thousands rejoice in Jaycee’s release from captivity

By Kathryn Reed and Susan Wood

The community needed this.

That was the overwhelming sentiment expressed during and after the pink ribbon parade through South Lake Tahoe on Sept. 6

The late morning walk from the county library to South Tahoe Middle School was the reverse route of the 10-year anniversary walk marking Jaycee Lee Dugard’s disappearance. Sunday’s walk, which brought out more than 2,500 people, was a time to celebrate her Aug. 26 release from captivity.

She left her Meyers bus stop June 10, 1991, an innocent 11-year-old. She came back to the world a 29-year-old woman with

daughters ages 11 and 15. Her story is one that will reveal itself in the coming months and years as she begins to peel back the layers of abuse that have been inflicted upon her for the last 18 years, and as she and her family add new chapters to their lives.

Chris and Kathy Champion said they weren't surprised to see the community pull together for the parade. Champion, the Tahoe FBI agent who has been involved in the case since the beginning, is convinced Jaycee Lee will eventually return to South Lake Tahoe for a visit.

That is also the hope of Melody Ulman, who was walking with husband Eric and their two dogs adorned with pink ribbons.

"I would hope she'd come back so we could let her know we love her. I hope she feels this. We never stopped looking," Ulman said.

Brooke Laine would also like the now 29-year-old woman to return to Tahoe.

"It's not important she come back now. She'll come back when she's ready. And maybe we'll have another parade," Laine said.

Laine is one of the many people instrumental in coordinating the parade. Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe gets the bulk of the credit. They put up the pink ribbons that dotted the side of the highway.

Carl Probyn, Jaycee Lee's stepfather, showed up at the end of the ceremony. Her mom, Terry Probyn, was not in town. (The Probyns have been separated for years.)

It was a sea of pink up and down Highway 50 before the throng turned on Al Tahoe Boulevard and ended the trek at the track. Honking motorists blared their support. It was a festive event – something so many commented on – adding they were so glad to not be at a memorial for Jaycee Lee.

During the procession Laurel Manzola carried a sign saying "Nevada Loves Jaycee".

"I have a daughter the same age. I'm a mom. That's all it takes to be here," the Sparks woman said. She was living in Auburn when the abduction occurred. "We don't get to celebrate too many of these."

Sergio Rodriguez, 9, stayed up the night before making a sign that said, "Hope never left our hearts." He walked with his family and neighbors.

Robert Karkheck's pink hat and shirt seemed a little out of place with his black leather vest – but he was more than comfortable to walk through town in that attire to remember Jaycee Lee. Pink was her favorite color.

Pink parasols, dogs in pinks, pink on bicycles – pink was everywhere. A fire truck drove by and the driver was holding a pink balloon.

Ray and Sandi Dudonis of Folsom sat on the edge of the highway near El Dorado Beach as the crowd passed.

"I'm impressed by the number of people," Ray Dudonis said. The couple heard about the parade when they came into town the Thursday before. They delayed their plans to go cycling to show their support.

When Jaycee Lee was taken, Loreen Norberg was teaching at Al Tahoe. (She's at Bijou now). A student of hers was good friends with Jaycee Lee.

"After this happened she was terrified. She wouldn't go to the bathroom by herself. She was terrified to go in public," Norberg said as she walked on the highway.

Emotions ran the gamut. Many are still in shock she was found alive.

Roberta Mason and Karen Houser agreed that children being snatched or in danger may happen more often than what is reported.

“If anything, it’s taught our kids to be more aware,” said Houser, the Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club executive director.

El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Les Lovell echoed that sentiment from the podium at the track. He said complacency is the enemy.

“Fight, kick, scream. I don’t care what you do. Fight your way out it,” Lovell said to a chorus of cheers.

As the four speakers wrapped up their short remarks, the song “Celebration” boomed from the speakers, people cheered and many of the pink balloons they had been carrying were lifted into the blue sky that was streaked with white clouds.

One could only wonder what Jaycee Lee was thinking, if she was watching the television coverage, if some joy is returning to her life.

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