

Soroptimist says thanks to Elegant Evening supporters

To the community,

The 2010 Elegant Evening at Harrah's was quite a success and that was due, in the most part, to the generosity of businesses and friends in our community.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra wishes to thank everyone who attended this fun and worthwhile event and also those who donated to make it so profitable for the programs and organizations that we as a group support. As always, every dollar raised goes back into our town, schools, and students that are recipients.

Our event was well-attended and beautifully decorated thanks to the generosity of Harrah's and their fabulous staff and the delicious food. A special kudo to Paul Ellbogen, Paul Voss, Robin Eissinger, Linda Hunt and banquet/catering staffs for their hard work and monetary assistance. The following businesses and supporters were patrons of our 2010 Elegant Evening:



Elegant
Evening 2010

A Massage at Tahoe, A Massage for all Seasons, A Frame of Mind, AC Stephan & Diane Johnson, Acacia Winery, Ace Hardware of SLT, Acqua Hair Design, Advanced Cosmetic Dermatology,

Allasia Creations, Alpen Sierra Coffee Co., Alpina Café, Alpine Realty & Rentals, Alpine Clothing Co., Altitude Salon, Amador Flower Farm, American Red Cross, Angel Touch, Angie's Signs, Anytime Fitness, Aquilina Hardwood Floors, Aspen Hollow, Balanced Fitness, Balancing Your Business, Barbara Gustafson, Barton Health, Bert's Cafe, Betsy & John Williams, Bike Habitat, Black Bear Inn, Bleu Wave, Blue Water Bistro, Body Essentials, Bonita Paulis Fine Art , Boy Scouts, Brian Shinault Architect, Brothers Burrito, Burger Lounge, Cafe' Fiore, Carol Taylor, Carson Valley Inn, Carson Oak Outlet, Cathy Huffman, Cedarville Winery, Celeste Eckerman, DDS, Chevy's, Cilantro's, Cindy Shinault, Cindy Cowen, City of SLT Rec Dept., Cookie & Paul Rork, Cork & More, Costco, Crossfit Lake Tahoe, Curves, Dancing Deer, David Wally's, Deerfield Lodge, Dennis Nelson, Deep Lake Design, Diane Ross, Dick's Fuller O'Brien Paints, Dirk Yuricich Photography, Dog Dog Cat, Dollar Signs and Graphics, Doris Groelz, Dorothy Davis, Dr. Seljesta, Eagle Valley Golf Course, Ed Cook Tree Service, El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, El Dorado Hotel & Casino, El Dorado Savings, Eloise Automotive, Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe, Emery Financial, Eric Linkugel, Ernie's Coffee Shop, Evelyn Yonker, Farah Richmond, Fat City Food Co., Flower Farm Inn, Forever Dance Ballroom, Freshies, Genasci and Stigers Dental, Genoa Lakes Golf Club, Getaway Café, Gold Store, Grassroots Natural Food, Grocery Outlet, H2O Sports, Hampton Inn & Suites, Harrah*s/Harveys, Heaven Scent, Home Depot, Hot Gossip, Hot Locks, Hot Cha Cha, House of Ski, Hunan Gardens, Inn by the Lake, Irene Radford, Jazzercise, Jeff Chamberlain, DDS, Joanne Wood, JoAnn Conner – Independent Associate Prepaid Legal, Joanne Shope, Joe Benigno's Tree Service, John & Roxie Upton, Julie Nelson, K9 Bliss Dog Behavioral, Kahle Community Center, Kalani's, Katharine Miller, Kathay Lovell, Kathy Angel-Forte, Kevin J. Cassidy, DDS, Keys Café, Kingsbury Automotive, KOWL/KRLT radio, Kragan Auto, KTHO radio, Lake Tahoe Golf Course, Lake Tahoe Master Framing, Lake Tahoe News, Lake Valley Fire Department, Lake Tahoe Chinese Buffet, Lake Tahoe Holidays, Lake Tahoe Cruises, Lakeland Village Resort,

Lakeside Inn & Casino, Laurie Brazil, Les Schwab Tire Center, Linda LaFavor-Coyle- Beauti-Control, Lisa Huard, Lucille Holmlund, Lydia Rogers, Lynn Corey, Maria Martinez, Marilyn Pawling, Mary Kay Consultant Laticia Hansen, Maren Taylor and Eric Linkugel, Maureen & Bradley Senn, Micshell Riley Sculpture, Midkiff & Associates, Mind/Body Fitness, Mirabelle French Cuisine, Mo's Place, Mountain News, Mountain Postal, Hair & Nail Studio, Nails by Lillian, Naked Fish, Nancy & Ken Rollston, Nancy Gayner-CMT, Napa Inn, Nel's Hardware, Nephele's, New York Pizza, New Day Nail & Hair, Off the Hook, Orchid's, Overland Meat, Pam Brekas Originals, Passeretti's, Pat Papp, Patagonia, Peter Darvas, Picchetti Winery, Pottery by Lynn, ProClean Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning, Red Hut Cafe, Redwood Printing, Riva Grill, Robert Mancinelli, Rojo's, Ross Groelz, DDS, RSN, Safeway Round Hill, Sage & Thymely Solutions, Inc., Savvy, Scott Mason, Scotty's Hardware, Scusa!, Sessions Salon, Shari Young, Sherna Kopple-Svensson, Sidestreet Boutique, Sierra Athletic Club, Sierra Nevada Backflow, Sierra Windows and Doors, Signs of Tahoe, Ski Run Boat Co., Skin & Hair Wellness Center, SLT Police Department, SLT Fire Department, Soaring NV, Sorenson's Resort, Soroptimist International of SLT, South Y Fireplace, Sprouts, Staples, Stateline Brewery, Steamers Bar & Grill, Steve Cress, Studio 6 Hair Design, Sugar Pine Bakery, Sunridge Golf Course, Susan Welsh, Sushi Pier, Svadhyaya Yoga, Svensson's Workshop, Tahoe Business Monitor, Tahoe Health Touch, Tahoe Daily Tribune, Tahoe Cakes by Grace, Tahoe Family Dentists, Tahoe Ridge Winery, Tahoe Grille, Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge & Spa, Tahoe Keys Deli, Tahoe Sports LTD, Tahoe Paradise Golf Course, Tahoe Season's Resort, Tahoe Valley Pharmacy, Tahoe One Hour Cleaners, Tahoe Carpet Care, Tahoe Fly Fishing Outfitters, Tahoe Tutor, Tahoe Donut, Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District, Tep's Villa Roma, Thai One On, The Sportsman, The Glass Doctor, The Adolescent Mind, Thran's Flowers, Thrifty Hippy Store, Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society, Tolman & Co. Jewelers, Weddings A-Go-Go, Wendy David, Western Highland Mortgage Co., Wildman Café, Wolfgang Puck, Zephyr Cove

Restaurant.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra

Grego adamant taxpayers should pay his legal bill

By Kathryn Reed

A \$937.50 check to South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Bruce Grego signed by the city manager and city treasurer is not sitting well with Grego's colleagues. How it got approved is unknown. Other council members have said it will be a topic of conversation at Tuesday's meeting even though it is not on the agenda.

(The council meeting starts an hour earlier than normal – 8am – at Lake Tahoe Airport with discussion about how to replace outgoing City Manager Dave Jinkens.)

The check to Grego is for expenses he incurred last year when he was seeking an opinion from the Fair Political Practices Commission as to whether he had a conflict of interest regarding the convention center project or what is generically called Redevelopment Area No. 3.



Bruce Grego

Normally the city attorney reviews potential conflicts. If an FPPC ruling is sought, it's the city attorney who writes the letter, not outside counsel. Grego enlisted Dennis Crabb of Rollston, Henderson, Crabb & Johnson, Ltd. in South Lake Tahoe to help in his quest. He, not the city, hired Crabb to work with the FPPC to determine if having Lakeside Park Association as a client would be a conflict.

The FPPC said there is no conflict, which has allowed Grego to vote on convention center issues.

Crabb on May 6, 2009, billed Grego \$937.50 for 3.75 hours of work. The city wrote a check dated March 11, 2010, as reimbursement to Grego for that amount.

Grego said he submitted the invoice at least six months ago. Why the delay in payment is not known. A copy of the invoice was not available Friday because city offices were on furlough.

However, Grego really tried to get paid last summer, according to an exchange of emails. At that time he was denied reimbursement. Why there is a reversal of opinion is not known.

A memo to Grego from then City Attorney, now Assistant City Attorney, Jacqueline Mittelstadt dated Aug. 20, 2009, says, "Given that the South Lake Tahoe City Code does not authorize a single council member to hire outside counsel, nor allows the City Manager or City Attorney to retroactively hire legal counsel, I replied with the attached memoranda dated July 27, 2009 to Mr. Jinkens. As you can see, I recommended that this invoice be discussed with the City Council Finance Committee so that, if there were an appetite for Council approval of the fees, the matter could plausibly be taken as a consent item. As you can see from the note on the Memo, Mr. Jinkens replied 'My question is would reimbursement be legal?' The response is unfortunately, no. The City Code and the purchasing

regulations do not appear to allow a retroactive payment for legal fees incurred by a single council member. It would require City Council consensus to return the item to the Council for approval in order to reimburse you for these fees. I did vet the issue with the finance committee and they did not feel they could approve the fees either. Full council consensus and subsequent action would be required. Please let myself or Mr. Jinkens know if you would like this matter to be placed on the Council agenda.”

The finance committee is Councilmen Hal Cole and Jerry Birdwell.

“When I was mayor, Bruce came to me with this bill. I told him that individual council members do not have the authority to spend city money without the consent of the City Council. The City Council did not approve this expenditure,” Birdwell said. “What makes this worse is that Bruce went behind the council’s back to get the city to pay it anyway.”

Birdwell believes Grego must pay the money back to the city.

“To vote is paramount to what we do on the council. I think it was appropriate. It was a moderate charge,” Grego said of the bill. “I think it should be addressed as a public expense and not a personal expense. Because this matter directly dealt with my ability to vote, that is a legitimate claim for reimbursement.”

When Grego spoke with *Lake Tahoe News* on Friday he said Cole’s letter to the FPPC was written by outside counsel, with expenses paid directly to the city.

“If I need legal advice, that’s what my city attorney is for. I would not seek outside counsel,” Cole told LTN. “If I did that, it would be my expense. If (the city) hired someone else, I didn’t know it.”

Jinkens is out of town. In an email he said, “I am having

checked some background information in response to your voice message and will respond when I receive it. I am out of town but will reply this weekend.”

He was advised a story would be published Saturday. No response was forthcoming. Therefore it is not known if outside legal counsel was ever really sought in Cole’s case, and if it were, what the fee was and to whom it was paid.

(The FPPC ruled Cole couldn’t vote on Project 2 because he owns property too close to the proposed project.)

A series of emails dated March 1, 2010, involving Jinkens, his assistant Tina Shannon, Redevelopment Director Gene Palazzo and City Attorney Patrick Enright ultimately authorize the March 2010 check to Grego to be written. Enright did not return a phone call Friday.

“Please have a check processed to reimburse Councilmember Grego in the above amount from the New Plan Area Account” is handwritten by Palazzo on a printed email to him from Shannon.

The email in part from Shannon says, “Dave (Jinkens) told me to process the payment and expense to RDA, as was done with Mr. Cole’s opinion.”

This would indicate the money being used is from Redevelopment Area No. 2, which the city will vote on Tuesday. With city offices being closed, it’s not known how or why the money is from that account.

“You raise a good question ‘Why wasn’t it billed to the City Attorney’s Office?’,” Mayor Kathay Lovell said. “The city attorney can seek another opinion. They often do that if they don’t have the expertise or it’s a time issue.”

Neither Lovell nor Cole was aware of the Grego reimbursement until *Lake Tahoe News* telephoned. Birdwell was not issued a copy of the warrants with his April 6 agenda packet.

Councilman Bill Crawford was the only council member besides Grego who knew about the issue.

"It looks to me that Mr. Grego and perhaps the city manager's behavior is ethically questionable," Crawford said. "Mr. Crabb sent the bill to Mr. Grego. That was his client, not the city, so I don't think it's correct to reimburse Mr. Grego under those circumstances."

Grego said Crabb did not want to bill the city. Grego didn't have an explanation for why the former South Lake Tahoe city attorney would make that decision. Crabb did not return a phone call Friday.

Grego started the whole process with now former City Attorney Cathy DiCamillo, who no longer lives in the city. He said he didn't like her draft letter to the FPPC. He said he didn't want to wait for her to return from vacation to craft a final version because the vote on the Mello-Roos bonds regarding the convention center was going to be up for a vote.

But the reality is the vote was June 4. This was after DiCamillo had retired. Mittelstadt and Enright occupied her office June 1.

"It's definitely money well spent. The benefit of my actions are the benefit of the public," Grego said. "I voted to stop the issuance of \$25 million of bonds. My vote did matter."

The vote was 5-0.

When Grego was asked how he could keep voting against funding most of the training/education requests from city staff to do their job, he said those moderate charges are different.

"This is something that went to the foundation of why I ran for office and the issues regarding the hole and trying to find a solution," Grego said as to why he believes taxpayers should pay for outside legal advice that is usually handled in

house.