

Specter Of Evidence Tampering Settles Over Halstenberg Arson Prosecution

The compelling circumstantial case against Justin Halstenberg which prosecutors over the previous two weeks had so assiduously constructed in their effort to convince an eight-man four-woman jury that he had deliberately touched off the fourth largest fire in San Bernardino County History this week suffered a shattering setback with the convergence of three equally compelling indications that key items

of evidence being presented against him had been planted, altered or substituted.

Ironically, the revelation of the problematic issues undermining the prosecution came during the testimony of Shira Johnson, a crime scene specialist and evidence technician with the San Bernardino county Sheriff's Department whose testimony was to a considerable degree intended to assure the jury that

the sheriff's department and the other agencies it works with in carrying out investigations abide by strict forensic and preservation standards to ensure the integrity of evidence and the manner in which it is collected and cataloged during the investigative process, utilizing proven and time-tested means of establishing an unbreakable and fully documented chain of custody to prevent evidence from

being tampered with, altered or compromised.

During her testimony, Johnson inadvertently illustrated that no matter how conscientious she was in facilitating the straightforward and unbiased processing of evidence entrusted to her, including its preservation and scientific evaluation, she was at the mercy of others, whose conscientiousness, competence and integrity might not match

her own.

In the first two weeks of the trial, San Bernardino County deputy district attorney's Justin Crocker and Andrew Peppler using multiple witnesses and the presentation of more than 90 exhibits sought and essentially succeeded to establish that the Line Fire was touched off in a field of dry vegetation just a few feet of the roadway along a stretch of Baseline See P 2

"Phantom" City Employees Signed Off On Redlands Granny Flat Construction Projects

The City of Redlands' permissive land use policy has once again drawn controversy to itself, most recently involving instances in which city officials have signed off on approving applications to build accessory dwelling units, the plans for those projects and the occupancy permits for those quarters despite violations of city and state construction

and development standards and/or failures to abide by the regulations imposed by overlapping governmental or utility jurisdictions or contracts associated with the tract.

In some of those cases, documents needed in the approval review process were apparently forged by city employees, using the names of their former colleagues who no longer work for

the city.

Traditionally in California as in virtually all other states, local jurisdictions hold sway over and have the first and last say with regard to land use within their confines.

Zoning, which controls what kind of development - residential, commercial, industrial or recreational - is to take place, along with the ten-

or of that development. In this way the types of residential development allowed to occur, meaning single family homes, duplexes, condominiums, apartments as well as the density or the number of units per acre are specified in municipal zoning codes. Zoning categories also include industrial and commercial uses, and the gradations applicable

to the purposes to which that land is to be put, controlling the intensity of activity to take place on such properties, including the type of stores or enterprises in commercial zones and the nature of logistics or manufacturing operations in industrial areas. The State of California has standards that impose minimal requirements with regard to con-See P 2

Over Calls For An Open Bid Process, County Stays With Current Operator Of The Prado Golf Course

Defying spirited calls that it carry out a competitive bid in which the prevailing company would get the privilege of running the El Prado Golf Course going forward, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, April 29 voted to perpetuate the county's sublease of the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers with the golf course's current operator for the next 22 years.

In 1975, the county entered into a sublease of roughly 314.21 acres with a consortium of medical and dental professionals, El Prado Golf Course Management, LLC, led by Leo Kenneth Heuler, DDS, who

undertook to develop the property as two 18-hole golf courses, situated around the intersection of Euclid and Pine Avenue. In 1976, Prado Regional Park opened, a major component of which was the first of the 18-hole golf courses that had been completed by the consortium of doctors who had See P 3

Recurrent Reports Re: 29 Palms Tribe's Huge YV & JT Projects

Residents in the Highway 62 communities are becoming increasingly concerned that the Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians, which already operates two casinos and one of the largest truck stops/gas stations in California, has aggressive designs to construct two more casinos and two further

mega-size truckstops in Yucca Valley and Joshua Tree.

Indeed, in recent weeks, the intensification in concern over the tribe's disclosed plans and what some people, at least, say are the tribe's future plans which have not been fully articulated in any known public forum has See P 3

Ontario International Airport Loses Avelo Airlines Flights To Sonoma County

Ontario International Airport has lost an airline to the vicissitudes of the aviation marketplace.

Avelo Airlines on March 31 made the last of its twice weekly flights between Ontario International Airport and Sonoma County's Charles M. Schulz Airport, roughly five-and-two-thirds months after that service began.

Houston-based Avelo

referenced "lower-than-expected demand" in making the announcement, with one of its corporate officers stating that the company had been unable to turn a corner in establishing the route as a profitable one and could no longer sustain the financial burden of continuing with that particular route-expansion strategy.

According to a state-

ment, while the airline is discontinuing the flights between Ontario and Santa Rosa, the airline



will continue flying to Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport from other smaller regional airports in Southern California, includ-

ing Burbank and Palm Springs, as well as Las Vegas.

Avelo had initiated what were exclusive non-stop flights from Ontario to Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport on October 10, 2024.

Initially, one-way fares on those flights started at \$41, with adequate pre-booking. An escalation in prices re-

cently, taken together with the consideration that the service between Ontario International Airport and Sonoma County took place only twice weekly - on Thursday and Sunday - resulted in extremely low ridership.

Avelo utilizes Boeing Next-Generation 737 aircraft.

Arrowhead Lake Village Management Company Fells 17 Century-Old Native Trees

The property management company at Lake Arrowhead Village bypassed a key part of the regulation process for what it said would be the makeover of a key portion of its visually prominent span from the village's Center Stage to the end of the peninsula, and uprooted nearly a dozen century old trees without first obtaining a permit to do so.

The San Bernardino County Land Use Services Department, which includes the county's code enforcement division, confirmed that JLL, which manages Lake Arrowhead Village, nor JLL's corporate parents, Jay Kerner and US Realty Partners, Inc., did not obtain nor apply for tree removal permits before several trees were removed preparatory to grading of the property.

While there had been some degree of publicity with regard to the renovations that JLL, Jay Kerner and US Realty Partners, Inc. are pursuing along Lake Arrowhead Village's lakefront peninsula, that trees and other vegetation would be substituted out for concrete, steel and other inanimate objects was not made clear prior to the work beginning this week, angering some local residents who said they would have brought their protests to bear in timely manner if they had been informed ahead of time.

Lake Arrowhead Village is a separate from the Arrowhead Lake Association, which manages and maintains Lake Arrowhead and its See P 7