Resuscitating Trona, One House at a Time

In Trona, a community service organization known as Trona Care is making an effort, alley by alley, street block by street block and house by house, to return the town to the state it was in before the Kerr McGee Corporation left town more than 19 years ago.

Founded by Margaret Grams with the assistance of Lit Brush, Connie Courtou, Marsha Courtou, Bonnie Fairchild, Jackie Leonard and Tim Parnell, the group was dedicated to improving Trona and reestablishing pride in the community.

The group has taken on scores of small and large projects over the years. More recently, the torch was passed to Doris Van Horn, who headed the

Dial-a-ride service for elderly and disabled citizens in the Trona area on a nominal cost is but a phone call away.

By calling the Trona senior citizens center at 760-372-5889, anyone in need of transportation can arrange to be picked up at his or her residence and delivered to any location in the greater Trona area. The bus will then return the passenger home.

At its last meeting in April, the San Bernardino County board of supervisors extended its previous agreement with the Trona Community Senior Center Operations Inc., to provide the transit services in the Trona/Searles Valley area from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012.

According to county assistant director of public works for transportation Mazin Kasey, “The county provides support and financing for dial-a-ride services to elderly and disabled citizens in the community of Trona. The dispatchers and drivers trust, as well. Melodie Scott applied for this license in August of 2008 it was denied on grounds that she had made misrepresentations on her application. Blacks law dictionary defines a conservator as a ‘protector or guardian.’ A conservatorship is generally initiated through a court proceeding, when there are allegations that a person is becoming forgetful or is otherwise unable to handle his or her affairs. A conservatorship of person may be launched for another party to make personal decisions for the alleged incapacitated person. Upon initiation of a conservatorship see P 4.

Colton Used Consultant to Infiltrate Activist Group

Former Colton city manager Daryl Parrish spent $25,000 in taxpayer money to hire a public relations company to investigate and attempt to infiltrate the local grassroots activists citizen group Colton First, the Sentinel has learned.

Parrish used his personal discretionary fund to hire Indian Wells-based CV Strategies to do public relations and political work for selected members of the city council and staff without the consent and knowledge of the city council as a whole. Subsequently, CV Strategies’ role was expanded to engage in political espionage and skulduggery, city councilwoman Deirdre Bennett said.

Parrish attempted to limit knowledge about his retaining of the firm to a small circle within City Hall, including mayor Kelly Chaist and, but the clandestine move came to light when council

Sludge Compost Plant Proposal Riling Hinkley Residents

HINKLEY—Some four years after it was forced to relocate and expand its plant in Adelanto, Nursery Products, headed by Or-field, is seeking a facility permit for its proposed facility, to be located near the Boron Sanitary Station over the next three years.

For handling the trash over the term of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012, San Bernardino County will pay Kern County $89,583.48.

San Bernardino County officials have worked out an amicable arrangement with their counterparts in Kern County for the dispensation of trash generated by residents and businesses at the northwestern end of San Bernardino County in the arid Mojave Desert.

Kern County has agreed to accept residential and commercial solid waste from the communities of Four Corners, Red Mountain, and Windy Acres in San Bernardino County for disposal at the Boron Sanitary Landfill, Ridgecrest Sanitary Landfill and Randsburg Transfer Station over the next three years.

For handling the trash over the term of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012, San Bernardino County will pay Kern County $89,583.48.

According to Peter H. Wulfman, the manager of the county’s solid waste management division, “San Bernardino County does not operate a solid waste disposal facility within 15 miles of the unincorporated communities of Four See P 2.

Dial-a-ride Service Available for Trona Seniors

Redlands Conservator’s Actions Raise Questions

By Janet Phean

A prominent and well-connected Redlands conservator is under investigation by the San Bernardino County grand jury and has had her fiduciary license denied by the California State Professional Fiduciary Bureau.

Melodie Z. Scott, President of Conserva-
The San Bernardino County Sentinel
Published in San Bernardino County in the tradition of Dr. Henrietta Sweet, Clifford Moon, and John E. Berry
A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with Countywide News Service
Call (909) 904-3896 for locations to obtain a copy of the Sentinel or to provide news tips
10808 Foothill Blvd., Suite 160-446 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 SBCSentinel@yahoo.com
909-904-3896

Sludge Compost from front page
1,100 tons of human and green waste per day for processing, putting out roughly 400,000 tons of composting material per year. The final product will be marketed to farmers throughout Southern California.

Several desert residents, including Barstow mayor Lawrence Dale, went on record as being opposed to the project by means of a real time teleconference from the Barstow City Council chambers on August 14 that was incorporated into the California Integrated Waste Management Board hearing. Those residents said they opposed the project, mainly over their concern that odors and wind-borne contaminants from disease-and-chemical-bearing volatile organic compounds would emanate from the plant.

The Mojave Water Agency, which had previously raised the issue that discharges from the proposed plant could potentially pollute the Mojave River, did not reiterate that issue at the hearing. The river is located 12 miles to the south and after the Mojave Water Agency alerted the San Bernardino County land use services department, the danger that byproducts from the plant could reach the river by means of two flood flow routes near the site were, according to county planners, redressed.

Jeff Meberg, one of the managing partners of Nursery Products, and Geoff Sweet, a Nursery Products consultant, insisted the plant is a safe and suitable use at its intended location.

Nursery Products operated a composting facility in Adelanto until 2005, when that facility was hounded out of existence by the complaints of residents. The decision to close the plant grew out of residential opposition rather than regulatory activity, Sweet said. He noted that complaints from nearby residents generated 54 inspections during the last 36 months that the plant was open but that the company was never cited for any order of environmental violation.

One advantage the Haws facility has over the old Adelanto site is that it is far more remote from its neighbors. Meberg and Sweet emphasized that the new plant will be both cleaner and more remote than its predecessor.

According to the county, roughly 45 trucks per day will unload sludge at the new plant, which will take in up to 401,500 tons of human and green waste annually. Nursery Product's Adelanto facility received and processed no more than 96,000 tons of waste yearly.

A local resident, Norm Diaz, has refused to accept the plant as currently designed as inevitable and is leading opposition to the project. Diaz dismissed as inaccurate Meberg's assertion that the plant had received environmental muster.

“Judge Vanderspeer ruled that they could not sever the parts of the environmental impact report and that the entire EIR [environmental impact report] was unacceptable,” said Diaz.

Diaz complained that while the appeal of the project was pending Meberg “was attempting to work around the process by using [county supervisor] Brad Mitzelfelt’s influence to fix the problems that were not severable. “This was done in defiance of the judge, who stated the EIR needs to be redone completely,” Diaz said. “What Brad Mitzelfelt is doing is not correct. It is a waste of taxpayer money and time. It is a travesty of government. He is doing this as a favor to someone who gave him and his pal [former supervisor] Bill Postmus a lot of campaign money. We are citizens who are going to be hurt by this and we are getting no help from the county or the department of health. Mr. Mitzelfelt says that he will do this but we will be to hinder industry. The industry he is talking about will employ eight employees.”

The human waste in the form of sludge that will be trucked to the project site from greater the Los Angeles area, Orange and lower San Bernardino counties represent potential health hazards. There are trace heavy metals in it. It contains volatile organic compounds.

“These will create health problems, breathing problems, reproductive problems, developmental and learning problems,” he continued. “These will have long term effects. My kids school is downwind from the plant site. As the sludge evaporates those volatile organic compounds will blow off. You can’t tell me there is not a potential for problems.”

Diaz scoffed at the suggestion that the compost derived from human and ground up construction debris would be used for agricultural food production.

“The only type of this [former sludge compost] can be used for is a crop such as cotton,” Diaz said. “It cannot be used on food crops. There is already enough cow manure available locally to provide fertilizer in this area.”

In this way, Diaz said, it is clear that the compost plant is not there to deliver a product but to serve as a dumping ground for waste. Accordingly, Diaz said, Nursery Products should be required to incorporate into the plant’s design the same safeguards that would be required if it were located in Los Angeles, Orange or lower San Bernardino counties.

Diaz said he would still not be comfortable with the plant’s presence in his community but that he could live with it if the plant were to incorporate concrete slabs upon which the sludge was to be deposited that would prevent contaminants from leaching down into the water table; an enclosure to prevent the wind from scattering the volatile organic compounds; a filtering system that further eliminated the possibility that the volatile organics would spread; and a requirement that after the trucks deposited their loads of sludge at the plant that they would be hosed out to prevent sludge residue from dripping onto local roads and fertilizing properties as they drove back toward the Inland Empire and Los Angeles.

Such requirements would increase the cost of the plant to around $180 million. Diaz said, a figure he claimed would not be unreasonable given the profit Nursery Products would reap from its operation, which he pegged at slightly over $30 million per year.

“This is toxic waste and it’s not environmentally friendly,” Diaz said. “There should be as much regard for the health of the people who live in our neighborhood as there is for the people who live in the area where this sludge originates.”

Meberg said Diaz and others were being unduly alarmist.

“We will welcome the California Integrated Waste Management Board at our site any time and we will show them how we will operate,” he said. “We want them to carry out as many inspections as possible. The more inspections we have, the more people will understand that we are operating a very safe and responsible facility.”

Meberg added, “We are not just going to dump this sludge at our site. We are going to treat it. People will then be able to use it as a harmless fertilizer. They will be able to use it in their own yards, on their grass, their gardens or in potted plants. It will be completely safe.”
Love’s Truck Stop Opens Near Barstow

BARSTOW—Love’s Travel Stops and Country Stores, Inc., opened its fourth truck stop in Lenwood on June 2.

Love’s, which now operates 220 truck stops or roadside commercial ventures in over 20 states, chose the outskirts of Barstow as its location for its fourth California operation.

That corporate decision was made based upon the Lenwood site’s positioning at the nexus of interstates 15 and 40 and proximity to other routes.

Love’s is aggressively expanding, having established 20 new locations in 2008. Its Barstow truck stop has parking for 90 trucks, a shower facility, a game room, a general store and three restaurants.

To have Colton First researched just before an election shows that they were just looking for dirt to help their political agenda. It’s not just being unethical, but is a misuse of public funds.

Bennett questioned the need for some of the consultant’s services. She said, “After paying thousands of dollars for ethics training, Colton city manager Daryl Parrish and mayor Kelly Chastain used city funds to pay a consulting firm to write personal opinion pieces and infiltrate private citizens’ groups. For what city purpose?”

Chastain was not available for comment at City Hall this week. Parrish, who has left Colton and now works as city manager with the city of Covina, was in several meetings this week and did not return calls.

Nuami had not responded to a request for comment by press time.

Coast-to-Coast Metal Finishing Corporation
Specializing in metal finishing, powder coating and custom designed lighting fixtures for both indoor and outdoor use.

Proprietor Gil Bernal has 25 years experience in all phases of metal finishing and decorating and personally manages his own factory.

All Products made entirely in the USA

(626) 282-2122

ASN Depot, Inc.
“Technology Made Easy”

- Custom Notebooks
- Custom Desktops
- Wesite Development
- Virus & Spyware Removal
- Laptop Repairs
- Desktop Repairs
- Wireless Network Set-up
- DSL Set-up
- Digital Surveillance Systems
- Spy Cameras
- Night Vision Cameras
- Media Center PCs
- Kitchen Entertainment Systems
- Digital Picture Frames

3580 Grand Avenue, Suite N
Chino Hills, CA 91709
(866) 477-3225 (toll free) (909) 548-0545 (office) (909) 910 6717 (mobile)
www.asndepot.com salman.nasir@asndepot.com (email)

Love’s Truck Stop Opens Near Barstow

Dial-a-ride

from front page

operations, maintenance, telephone, insurance and the cost of administrative services performed by the transit coordinator,” Kasey said. “Revenue to support the services comes from Measure I funds, Transportation Development Act Local Transportation funds (LTF) and at least ten percent of operating costs from passenger fares. Measure I and LTF funds are allocated by SANBAG, the San Bernardino Associated Governments, which serves as the county’s transportation agency, for transit purposes.”

Kasey told the board of supervisors, since the service center is a grant-funded organization and the agreement to provide the services does not provide a profit incentive to attract another service provider it was his recommendation that the county enter into the agreement to continue the services for a further three year period begin-

of the entire city council represented a potential misappropriation of public funds. After Bennett’s concerns were relayed to Parrish, the op-ed piece ran shortly thereafter in the Sun under the title “Tough Decisions For A Brighter Future Tomorrow” attributed not to Chastain but Parrish.

A previous report that Chastain had a personal opinion piece ghost written for her with taxpayer money surfaced in August 2007 after a point of view op-ed piece credited to her ran on August 5th, 2007 in the San Bernardino Sun. In that case, the author, in writing about the proposal to move Colton’s referenced trains passing Roosevelt Junior High, a school which closed in the mid-1950s, more than 50 years previously. This led to widespread speculation that Chastain had not, in fact, written the opinion piece.

Based upon the information she had stumbled across, Bennett more than two months ago made a request for any documents pertaining to CV Strategies’ work for the city. Several weeks later she was provided with some of the documents she had requested. They showed the scope of work between October 2008 and April 2009, which included a string of op-eds written by CV Strategies for certain elected officials and staff members promoting positions personally held by the mayor and promoted by the city manager’s office in that time frame without the knowledge and consent of the entire city council.

According to Bennett, the documents she reviewed and her inquiries led her to the conclusion that “that almost everyone was kept out of the loop regarding the tasks of CV Strategies with the execution of mayor Chastain, city manager Parrish and assistant city manager Mark Nuaimi.”

Bennett said she found “troubling” information to indicate that “that just prior to last November’s city election, CV Strategies was tasked to investigate and possibly attempt to infiltrate a local grass roots group, Citizens for Colton First, which has been looking into potential corruption in the Colton city government and conflict of interest issues involving Fontana mayor and Colton assistant city manager Mark Nuaimi.”

The scope of work documents obtained by Bennett, show that in October 2008 under an entry for Oct 15 and 16, three weeks before the election, CV Strategies was detailed to work on “Colton First.” Under the heading “Action” was “Research Colton First group.” Under the heading “Status,” the document states “Obtain membership form and submit,” indicating, Bennett surmised, an attempt to infiltrate the group for political purposes.

Citizens for Colton First is in the process of submitting a formal complaint to the San Bernardino County District Attorney’s public integrity unit concerning the matter.

Ron Lawrence, a member of Colton First, said, “I have spoken to a number of members and they all don’t like their privacy violated just because they belong to a grass roots committee. To have Colton First researched just before an election shows that they were just looking for dirt to help their political agenda. It’s not just being unethical, but is a misuse of public funds.”

Bennett questioned the need for some of the consultant’s services. She said, “After paying thousands of dollars for ethics training, Colton city manager Daryl Parrish and mayor Kelly Chastain used city funds to pay a consulting firm to write personal opinion pieces and infiltrate private citizens’ groups. For what city purpose?”

Chastain was not available for comment at City Hall this week. Parrish, who has left Colton and now works as city manager with the city of Covina, was in several meetings this week and did not return calls.

Nuami had not responded to a request for comment by press time.

Love’s, which now operates 220 truck stops or roadside commercial ventures in over 20 states, chose the outskirts of Barstow as its location for its fourth California operation.

That corporate decision was made based upon the Lenwood site’s positioning at the nexus of interstates 15 and 40 and proximity to other routes.

Love’s is aggressively expanding, having established 20 new locations in 2008. Its Barstow truck stop has parking for 90 trucks, a shower facility, a game room, a general store and three restaurants.

ASN Depot, Inc.
“Technology Made Easy”

- Custom Notebooks
- Custom Desktops
- Wesite Development
- Virus & Spyware Removal
- Laptop Repairs
- Desktop Repairs
- Wireless Network Set-up
- DSL Set-up
- Digital Surveillance Systems
- Spy Cameras
- Night Vision Cameras
- Media Center PCs
- Kitchen Entertainment Systems
- Digital Picture Frames

3580 Grand Avenue, Suite N
Chino Hills, CA 91709
(866) 477-3225 (toll free) (909) 548-0545 (office) (909) 910 6717 (mobile)
www.asndepot.com salman.nasir@asndepot.com (email)
Redlands Conservator from front page

The professional conservatorgrily transferred to the county and serves as counsel for the LPS (mental health) conservatorships. Hartnell recently received some national press, as one of the survivors of the infamous Zodiac killer, when the “Zodiac” movie hit the big screen. Hartnell had a bit part in the movie. While some detailed crime analysis has indicated that the attack on Hartnell and Cecelia Shepard was a copy-cat and not a bonafide Zodi- ac attack, this was not brought to light on the silver screen. Hartnell escaped with non-life threatening injuries, but Shepard died as a result of the attack.

A smattering of “independent” attorneys also serve the “C.A.R.E. Group,” such as president of the High Desert Bar Association, Sherryl Kastilahn. Some of the court-appointed counsel for potential conserva- tories are known to regu- larly lob their clients in the direction of Scott and Dean. These include attorneys Donnassce Or- tz and Lenita Skoretz, among others. By some estimates, the “C.A.R.E. Group” now has connections to 60-70% of the conservatorship and estate administration cases in San Bernardino County.

One attorney, speaking on condition of anonymity, voiced her opinion that all San Ber- nardino probate cases were moved to Redlands recently to accommodate “C.A.R.E. Group,” most of whom maintain their offices in Redlands, within walking distance of the courthouse.

At the apex of this group is Melodie Z. Scott, who has been referred to as the richest and most powerful conservor in Southern California. A tall, well-dressed woman with a college education and a private investiga- tor’s license, Scott has a reputation as a bon vivant and frequently socializes with elected officials and other members of San Bernardino’s upper crust. Her resume reads like a poster-girl for an accomplished and respected conservor, and includes expert wit- ness status, college level teaching experience (at California State University at Fullerton) a stint as president of the Pro- fessional Conservators of Southern California, as well as serving as a board member for Redlands Family Service. Like her attorney, Hor- spool, she has also run for public office.

However, behind the tasteful, expensive exterior at 25 E. State Street, an entirely different picture has emerged, revealing a reality both shocking and disturbing to those who have placed blind confidence in the court and conserv- orship systems. The “C.A.R.E. Group” is, in fact, preying on the life-
savings of its helpless and vulnerable clients, many of whom have died much too quickly. A C.A.R.E. Group member has moved to Redlands, within walking distance of the courthouse.

According to Jerry Villanueva, an investi- gator with the San Ber- nardino County district attorney’s office, five separate counties have received complaints al- leging criminal activity by Melodie Scott and her crew. Villanueva recently revealed that all incom- ing reports concerning Scott are being referred to the California At- torney General’s office, which has so far not filed criminal charges against Scott’s group. According to Ron Smetana, acting senior assistant attor- ney general for the state of California, a lack of resources to investigate issues such as conserva- tory fraud and malfeasance has hampered the potential prosecution of individuals such as Melodie Scott. Smetana refused to discuss spe- cifics with regard to certain embezzlement allegations or to which other departments or di- visions in the attorney general’s office those al- legations may have been referred. Smetana grew particu- larly tight lipped in response to several inquiries about felony murder al- legations touching upon Scott and her actions.

Inappropriate End-of-Life Decisions

“I don’t ‘do’ families,” Melodie Scott brusquely stated, in response to a query about the services offered by C.A.R.E. A review of the court files in Redlands Superior Court largely substanti- ates this. On numerous occasions, C.A.R.E. has filed for conservatorships of elderly women. In some cases, the family members present to wit- ness the actions taken by Melodie Scott, in con- cert with other members of the C.A.R.E. Group, they generally end up quite upset.

Case in point is the Elizabeth Fairbanks case, on file in the Red- lands Court. Mary Beth Fairbanks, the daughter of Melodie Z. Scott, and Elizabeth Fairbanks, first contacted a reporter for the Sentinel in the Fall of 2006. Following what Mary Beth repeatedly referred to as the murder of her mother at the direction of Melodie Z. Scott, the younger Fair- banks organized a demo- stration in front of the San Bernardino County Courthouse. During that demonstration, Mary Beth had her appearance in court on October 13, 2006, to lodge her protest with Superior Court Judge Frank Gafkowski.

A review of the medi- cal records prior to Fairbanks’ death sub- stantiates Mary Beth’s allegation that directives by Melodie Scott and her conservor and estate for Elizabeth Fair- banks were instrumental in the elderly woman’s death. Unbeknownst to the family, Melodie Scott had signed a “do not re- suscitate” order (DNR) shortly after achieving conservatorship over Fairbanks. This DNR is on file with the court and Fairbanks’ signature does not appear on this document.

In 2006, Fairbanks fell ill with pneumonia, and at the apparent direction of Scott, received only two doses of antibiotics during the entire course of the illness, accord- ing to medical records. At a critical moment in her increasing respira- tory distress, she was administered two doses of the opiate, Roxanol, which put Fairbanks into respiratory arrest. Two hours following the ad- ministration of the sec- ond dose of Roxanol, Fairbanks died. Roxanol is con-traindicated for patients with respiratory prob- lems. Dr. Victoria Rains supervised her care.

It was later revealed in the accountings that Continued on Page 5
Elizabeth Fairbanks had from page 4 of substantial men- had a medical diagno- her lack of capacity. She conservatorship, which did so. Moreover, Fair- servants, that Fairbanks statement by her con- had requested the DNR decision....The children capacity to make such a request. Scott's notes reflect that the conservatee had re- tions of possible crimi- wers a decision in the stand what Ms. Scott did think if my mother. He wrote: “Apparently, He wrote: “Just Do It!” After gaining con- servatorship over an elderly or disabled indi- vidual, Scott, as a matter of course, applied to the court for a “Power of Health Care,” Armed with this legal sanction to make life and death decisions, Scott routinely signs a DNR order, thus cementing her power to withhold medical care at the point when her client is no longer of financial use to her. In the case of Stevie Price, Scott used this “Power of Health Care” both to limit medical care and to issue directives for medical procedures which proved unneces- sary and life-threatening for her disabled client. At age nine, Stevie Price was critically in- jured in an emergency room foul-up, which left him with a permanent brain injury. His par- ents, Steve and Fae, sued Loma Linda University Medical Center and pre- vailed. A couple of years after the incident, Steve and Fae separated. It was during a custody hearing in 1997, in San Bernardi- no, when the elder Steve Price noticed an attorney sitting in the back of the courtroom, taking notes. The attorney, he later discovered, was Walter Moore (now a partner in Hartnell, Lister and Moore), one of the at- torneys who regularly appears as counsel for Melodie Scott. Before the Prices knew it, the court had determined that an “im- partial” third party was needed to represent Stevie. Judge Kathleen Bryant appointed Wal- ter Moore as Stevie’s at- torney, who immediately nominated Melodie Z. Scott as guardian of Stevie’s person. Scott soon gained control over Stevie’s trust, as well. After be- ing appointed temporary guardian, Ms. Scott used $300,000 of Stevie’s trust, in attorney’s fees, expert witness fees, etc., to achieve the status of permanent guardian in a trial inexplicably held in a different city, before a traffic court judge, Judge Frank Heene of Chino Municipal court. It should be noted that Heene was subse- quently brought up on nine counts of miscon- duct, and retired from the bench. According to Steve Price, the “C.A.R.E. Team” manipulated Fae in order to gain control of the trust, promising her standing in the case, which never material- ized. Steve Price ended up in a protracted legal battle with Scott, in an attempt to protect his son’s life and the funds so necessary to care for the child. On the very same day that Melodie Scott was finally removed from the case, Stevie Price died. The elder Price was then to discover, to his further horror, that Scott had run through the entire multi- million trust. “The trust should have been banking, not losing money,” states Steve Price. Prior to Melodie Scott’s appoint- ment, Price has careful- ly researched his son’s options, and had made decisions which would guarantee excellent medical care, while pro- testing the trust, which was anticipated to last Stevie’s lifetime. Price saw no reason that his son should not live to a ripe old age, if given appropria- te care. He had enrolled Stevie in a medical insurance plan which was funded by state tobacco taxes - MR/MIP (Major Risk Medical Insurance Pro- gram) with Medi-Cal as a secondary insurance. A chunk of Stevie’s malpractice settlement had gone to settle his Medi-Cal bill, and to en- sure his enrollment with MR/MIP as his primary. With less than $100 as a monthly premium and no pay-back requirement on death, MR/MIP also provided a far higher standard of care than the bare bones, minimal coverage provided by Medi-Cal. Upon achiev- ing guardianship, Melo- die Scott voluntarily re- moved Stevie from this program, thus severely restricting his medical care to what the lim- ited Medi-Cal program would cover. This also unnecessarily incurred a Medi-Cal claim of $532,607.39 at Stevie’s death. What remained in Scott’s trust that was not adequate to cover this claim. Steve Price claims that this action by Melodie Scott “seem(s) to have intentionally defrauded Medi-Cal into paying Stevie’s medical expenses and exposed both him and his estate to harm.” In a report to the Califor- nia Attorney General’s office, Price also states that “we believe that this was a major factor in his death.” In another aggress- ive move, which Price believes was an effort to remove Stevie from his father’s watchful eye and to place him further under Scott’s control, she ordered that Stevie undergo a tracheotomy in 2000. Most institu- tional facilities which would be appropriate for someone with Stevie’s injuries generally only accept patients with tracheotomies. Scott failed to provide any diagno- stic proof of the necessity of this procedure, and in defiance of the opin- ion of Stevie’s long term pulmonary specialist and home-health nurses, applied for and received court permission to have the tracheotomy per- formed. Perched on the cor- ner of a pleasant Yuci- pa street, Steve Price’s sprawling cardboard home is a virtual shrine to personal tragedy. The walls are bedecked with photographs of his young...
from page 5
son, surrounded by fam-
ily and friends. A framed
poem, by Stevie’s former
nurse and now Price’s fi-
ancee, Tammy Hull, urg-
es those on either side of
the grave to remain strong
and loving, even in the
face of such wrenching
loss. But for Steve Price,
justice has become elu-
sive.

The California At-
torney General’s office
expressed disinterest in
his meticulously docu-
mented complaint, which
included evidence of
Scott’s attempt to further
pad her pocket by tak-
ing out two burial plots
for a price.

Further, Geiger said
that the alleged criminal
activity that had been
brought to his atten-
zione, “... the statute of
limits has run on many of
the alleged of-
fenses.” This was in
 direct contradiction to the
evidence and time lines
supplied in the March
reports that the alleged
crimes were reported
well within the statutory
time limits to local law
enforcement agencies,
which had also failed to
act. Most tellingly, Gei-
ger also neglected to as-
sign a complaint number
for the March reports.

As a matter of course,
and for tracking pur-
poses, an incoming com-
plaint to the Department
of Justice is always as-
signed a complaint num-
ber. By first omitting and
then refusing to assign a
number, Geiger tacitly
revealed that he buried the
reports.

Scott’s influence ap-
pears to go all the way up
to the federal level. The
head of the Civil Rights
Division for the River-
side F.B.I. told one com-
plainant that there were
“massive civil rights viola-
tions” substanti-
ated by the complainant,
but that agency “took no
action.” An agent in the
Los Angeles office of the
F.B.I. stated, with brazen
inaccuracy, that conserva-
torships were a “civil”
matter and that the F.B.I.
did not investigate civil
matters. When that com-
plainant provided evi-
dence that crimes were
being committed under
the mantle of “civil”
court procedures, she
was funneled into a tele-
phonic “black hole,” and
was refused any more
d access to a duty agent.

Keep It in the Family

Melodie Scott’s busi-
ness dealings have regu-
larly benefitted members
of her family. Her moth-
 er, Jo Williams, also
known as Anna Wil-
 liams, works out of the
25 E. State Street offices
as a “client care” special-
 ist. Williams’ name also
appeared on the property
at 26735 Redlands Blvd,
which was formerly the
place of Orange Blossom,
an unlicensed assisted
living center, previously
owned by Melodie Scott.
The property, which
burned to the ground re-
cently, was subsequently
sold to Loma Linda Hos-
ter for a cool seven
figures. Scott’s sister,
Donna Zinck, has ap-
peared on accountings
as being reimbursed for
grocery shopping ser-
dices. Another family
member, Alvin Zinck,
has been the recipient
of at least one property
transfer, which he ap-
parently received free
of charge. In 1994, Al-
v in and Lois Zinck were
the recipients of a 1958
Terry Trailer, which had
previously belonged to
one Lois B. Nightingale,
who was under conser-
vatorship with Melodie
Scott. The bill of sale,
signed by Melodie Scott
as conservator for Lois
Nightingale, notes that
“This trailer traded for
yard clean-up services.”

The Family Home

Under the laws gov-
erning conservatorships
of estate, Scott has total
access to all the conser-
vatee’s bank accounts
and may, with the court’s
approval, sell the con-
servative’s property, in
order to further pay for
her services. An unusu-
al pattern has emerged
concerning the sale of
real property, which is
always approved by
Scott’s judges. Probate
property, as it is called,
be under a conserva-
torship case or under the
estate administration of
the “C.A.R.E. Group,” is
generally substantially
under-appraised and sold
at a still deeper discount
from the initially low
appraisal.

Here is a short list
of such transactions,
garnished from the Red-
lands probate files and
matched up with the San
Bernardino’s tax assess-
cor’s office:

- Elmer Archie Heath
 235 S. Court St, San Ben-
ardo
Appraised at $60,000
Sold at $26,800

- Heath’s vacant lot on
 Joshua Road, Palm Des-
ert
Appraised at $8,000
Sold at $1,000

- Mary Titus 4988 Se-
nilis Ave, Morongo Val-
ley
Appraised at $35,000
Half interest sold at
$3000

- Evelyn Townsend
1244 Ramona Drive,
Redlands
Appraised at $14,000
Sold at $11,000

- Mattie Kirby 1028 W.
9th, San Bernardo
Appraised at $65,000
Sold at $43,000

After being sold off at
bargain basement prices,
many of these properties
suddenly and without
explanation dramati-
cally increase in assessed
value. For example, the
“C.A.R.E. Group” han-
dled the estate adminis-
tration for Rachel Nor-
ris, whose single family
home in Victorville, Cali-
ifornia, was appraised at
$2,788 - that is, $212 less
than $3,000. The home
was then sold to a Gary
Salonsin quickly sold it
in a “flip” to Iona Win-
garden, who it was re-
asessed at $96,900. Con-
servative Arthur Gurley’s
vacant Victorville lot jumped in assessed value from $7,273 to $44,880, which he then sold into the
hands of Eagle Assets &
Management LLC in 2005,
and his Victorville
 cabin also skyrocketed in
value from $8,312 to
over $57,000 when Eagle
acquired this property,
also in 2005.

Las Vegas is on and
out. Lena Peden’s retail
business, appraised at
$15,392, jumped in ap-
praisal to over $81,000
as soon as it was acquired
in 2006. The jumps and
flips are too numerous to
list here; however, it should be noted that former San
Bernardino County as-
sessor Bill Postmus is
also being investigated
by the San Bernardino
County grand jury. He
was arrested on drug
charges this past January
and resigned his office.

As the sole heir of
the estate of conserva-
tee Una Haley, Sheryl
Morgan received abso-
lutely nothing. Morgan,
who was Haley’s grand-
dughter, had applied to
be her conservator,
only to have his strong
armed away from her by
the “C.A.R.E. Group.”

Morgan has stated that
this group outright stole
the proceeds from the
sale of Haley’s home.
The court file reveals
that conservator Law-
rence Dean and his at-
torney Craig Parker (of
Harrell, Hoppin and Fox)
did an even divvy of the
remains of Haley’s
estate. In the final distri-
bution, Dean and Parker
decided to the court on
Trona from front page

The city of Grand Terrace, in the wake of the city’s $124,000 per year assistant city manager position during the upcoming fiscal cycle, of the city council this week to be elevated to that rank.

The move comes in the wake of a not-yet-officially resolved controversy over the city council’s choice of who will serve as the city manager in the city of 12,000, one of the county’s smallest incorporated municipalities. The $124,000 savings the existing of the post represents will still assist the city in balancing the 2009-2010 budget, which had become something

Funke said she signed on as the manager of Trona Care and decided closed down that “be incorpo-
rated so we can start ap-
plying for grants. It was originally founded by a senior group, who wanted to do something with our town. That tradition had been passed along by several different people. They started by clean-
ing up alley ways, and then started refurbish-
ing burnt down houses and just cleaning up all around, instill pride in our city.”

Trona is a wonderful place to live and raise a family, Funke said, but it has suffered some devas-
tating setbacks that have nothing to do with the quality of people who call it home.

A big thing was the Kerr McGee closure, she said. “Once that town went down hill. There used to be a movie thea-
ter, a bowling alley, restaurants and stores. Everything but one store and two gas stations have closed down.

“There’s nothing here for kids now,” she con-
tinued. “The parks are gone. My son and daughter are growing up and that’s why I jumped on the handwagon, I want to get parks and other stuff for the kids. My husband works two jobs but he still has time to be the president of the youth baseball league. I don’t think that statistic has gone up from that.”

At the same time, she said, the basics of a nice community remain.

“Trona is a wonderful city to live and raise a family. Funke said, but has not suc-
cumbed. “In the 1990s there was a mass exit of resi-
dents out of Trona, she said.

“My mother, Melodie Scott, did a good job of keeping our school and going and got a $28 an hour work job work-
ing at the plant. You can have a good life here.”

Unfortunately, she said, “all these aban-
doned houses” are a blight on the community.

“We’re starting to bring Trona back.”

At present, the proj-
ture projects and can be buy materials for fur-
ther projects and can be mailed or dropped off at: Trona Community Senior Center Operations, Inc.

Trona Care
P.O. Box 443
Trona, Ca. 93592

Friday, June 12, 2009

San Bernardino County Sentinel

GT Jettisoning Assistant Manager Post

The city of Grand Terrace in the wake of the city’s $124,000 per year assistant city manager position during the upcoming fiscal cycle, of the city council this week re-
solved. The move comes in the wake of a not-yet-officially resolved controversy over the city council’s choice of who will serve as the city manager in the city of 12,000, one of the county’s smallest incorporated municipalities. The $124,000 savings the existing of the post represents will still assist the city in balancing the 2009-2010 budget, which had become something
Richman Resigns from Steel’s Office

Mike Richman, a political consultant who had traded upon his relationship with former assessor Bill Postmus to wangle a $49,000 contract to do political work before that misadventure ended in scandal and resulted in his being sued by the county, has now resigned his position as a senior aide to board of equalization member Michelle Steel.

The board of equalization is the state’s primary taxing authority, overseeing sales taxes, property taxes, special taxes and tax appeals. Steel’s district includes Riverside County and a major portion of San Bernardino County.

Neither Steel nor Richman acknowledged that the adverse publicity attending the revelations of widespread time card fraud and misappropriation of public funds in the assessor’s office had anything to do with Richman’s departure from Steel’s staff. Instead, Richman’s decision to return to college to obtain a bachelor’s degree was given as the rationale for his leaving. Nevertheless, it was widely understood that the delineation of detail with regard to the circumstance that existed in the assessor’s office under Postmus had much to do with the decision to have Richman quietly leave Steel’s employ May 31.

On May 12, the county made public an investigation carried out by attorney John Hueston and filed a lawsuit that named Postmus, former assistant assessors Adam Aleman and Jim Erwin, former assessor’s intergovernmental liaison officer Rex Gutierrez, former assessor’s office taxpayer advocate Greg Eyler and Richman as defendants.

The lawsuit alleged fraud and misappropriation of public funds and Hueston’s report provided, a catalog of actions or inactions by those named in the suit. According to Hueston, Richman engaged in no activity even vaguely relevant to the function of the assessor’s office and instead distracted other employees while carrying out political activities, including discussions with regard to Steel and her campaign.

Richman managed Steel’s Republican primary campaign in 2006 and was named her chief of staff on November 1, at a salary of $122,424 per year. Richman, 25, was unavailable for comment.

USGS Installing Seismic Sensors along San Andreas Fault

The US Geologic Survey is seeking to augment its ability to monitor and intensify its monitoring of the region’s faults, the San Andreas, which runs along a south-north axis through the middle western portion of San Bernardino County.

The USGS is expending $608,000 to install 11 sensors and upgrade six existing seismic measuring devices along a 160-mile long stretch between the Salton Sea just north of the Mexican border and up into the lower tip of the Mojave Desert near Wrightwood. Placed at staggered intervals in borings that trace the fault line, the devices consist of ultra-sensitive motion detectors, which give very precise readings of the energy released in any sort of seismic event as well as a broadband instrument capable of analyzing the frequency of ground vibrations. The devices incorporate on site processors as well as a tie-in to an above-ground solar powered global positioning unit that registers and measures even the subtlest shift of the ground surface. These are in turn integrated with the USGS’s overarching computer network that monitors the data from all of the service’s testing sites.

Each sensor is encased in a buffering, filtering and insulation packet that prevents, or at least minimizes, interference from nearby ground disturbances, such as vehicles passing by or loud sounds, that could be misread by the sensory device as emanating through the ground.

While the system is now being used to generate empirical data with regard to earthquakes and lesser seismic movements, eventually the network of sensors could be used as part of a comprehensive regional earthquake warning system.

Once a wide range of pre-earthquake intensity seismic phenomena is profiled, the system could eventually provide, scientists say, a 30-second-to-90-second notice of an impending temblor.

Such a system, in coordination with utility companies and Caltrans, could allow electricity and gas purveyors to shut down those lines which cross the earthquake fault and provide for the implementation of warnings to travelers on the highway system.

Try Anti-oxidant Rich Vemma!
The All-natural Caffeine and Processed Sugar Free Energy Drink.

Vemma blends the most recent science and nature’s finest ingredients to form a complete and delicious once-a-day liquid supplement that provides you with everything you need and more to kick your health and energy levels into overdrive. Developed by a physician with a background in both Eastern and Western medicine, Vemma unites the antioxidant-rich power of mangosteen — a fruit used for centuries by Asian health practitioners for its nutritional benefits — with rich plant-source minerals, organic glyconutrient-rich aloe vera and decaffeinated organic green tea along with a full spectrum of antioxidant vitamins to create the most powerful liquid antioxidant nutrition program anywhere! The Vemma Nutrition Program™ consists of Essential Minerals® and Mangosteen Plus™. We believe so strongly in this combination that existed in the assessor’s office under Postmus had much to do with the decision to have Richman quietly leave Steel’s employ May 31.

Rather than the decision to return to college to obtain a bachelor’s degree was given as the rationale for his leaving. Nevertheless, it was widely understood that the delineation of detail with regard to the circumstance that existed in the assessor’s office under Postmus had much to do with the decision to have Richman quietly leave Steel’s employ May 31.

The Sentinel
10808 Foothill Blvd., Suite 160-446
San Bernardino, CA 91730
(909) 944-5662 (951) 712-9173
Se Habla Espanol

Are you interested in purchasing Advertising? or a Subscription?

24 Hour Dispatch Service
All Major Credit Cards Accepted