



**FIELD REP BY DAY...
FIELD REP BY NIGHT!**

Go one-on-one with Alan Rasmussen: **Living A4**

Good morning,
longtime subscriber
Geraldine Ott



Hi-Desert Star



Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1957

50 cents (46 cents plus tax)

Yucca Valley, California • (760) 365-3315

Wednesday, September 2, 2009

Report: Fatal shooting justified

Landers man was firing at officers, investigator says

SAN BERNARDINO — A sheriff's detective was justified in shooting and killing an armed suspect last year in Landers, the district attorney's office announced Monday.

Timothy Nichols, working as a member of a Special Weapons and Tactics team, fatally shot Stan Musial, 59, in Landers April 29, 2008.

The district attorney's review of the events determined the suspect was holding two guns and shooting at other officers when he was killed.

The detective was in range, had a clear shot at Musial and was justified in fatally shooting the Landers

man, investigators concluded.

Musial and Karena Ann Akhavi, 58, had been involved in a three-hour armed stand-off with police.

Akhavi was arrested at the scene for attempted murder.

Superior court records indicate she later took a plea bargain and was convicted of discharge of a firearm with gross negligence. A related charge of obstructing or resisting an officer was dismissed.

Sheriff's deputies initially responded to a domestic disturbance call in the 1300 block of Old Woman Springs Road the day of the shooting.



REBECCA UNGER Hi-Desert Star

When deputies arrived, shots were fired in their direction from the property.

The officers established a perimeter around the property, closed the highway to traffic from Linn to Reche roads and evacuated nearby

California Highway Patrol Officer Eric Brewer and Sgt. Veda Fleeton redirect traffic during a stand-off in Landers in April 2008. The district attorney this week ruled the fatal shooting that ended the stand-off was justified.

began shooting at officers.

They returned fire and Musial was fatally struck.

Officers began securing the main home as well as other buildings on the property.

Inside the main residence, they found Akhavi, who was taken into custody after a brief struggle.

The supervising deputy district attorney at the time, Mary Ashley, informed the judge at Akhavi's arraignment that Akhavi told law enforcement she and Musial had spoken about committing "suicide by cop."

Musial's brother said he was a U.S. Navy veteran and former computer programmer. More recently, he apparently had taken care of properties for elderly neighbors.

Gun fans load hotels, TLC bags goods

Over 2,000 flock to show

By Rebecca Unger
Hi-Desert Star

YUCCA VALLEY — The weekend's Grizzly Gun Show at the Town Center Mall was a bonanza for firearms enthusiasts, a boon to local businesses and bounty for the Basin's favorite charity.

Ann Mistal, local gun shop proprietor and producer of the event, said it was a lot of work but was definitely worth it.

"We had 2,248 visitors," Mistal was happy to declare. "Admission was free with a canned good or a new toy for Tender Loving Christmas. Otherwise there was a cash contribution, and we donated the proceeds of the door to Tender Loving Christmas."

Folks from out of town stayed in local hotels, motels and RV parks. They ate at local restaurants and bought gasoline at local stations, she pointed out.

"Events like this help us out," said Yvette Flores, manager of the Oasis of Eden Motel. Business was up over the weekend in what Flores calls a traditionally slow time of year. She is looking forward to the upcoming, perennially



REBECCA UNGER Hi-Desert Star

Along with meat jerky, Kasha Herrington had several charming chapeaus for sale at the gun show.

popular Starry Nights Festival. "We're sold out for a couple of those nights."

The Super Eight also got a boost. "Three or four customers told me they were in town for the gun show," confirmed manager Sanjay Patel.

Over 100 professional vendors of firearms, gun racks, ammunition, high powered scopes and other accessories came from around the corner and around the country. There were also antique Samurai swords and tomahawks, vintage military uniforms,

See GUN Page A2



REBECCA UNGER Hi-Desert Star

The Grizzly Gun Show produced some collateral benefits, like the 20 new toys, 1,000 cans of food and \$1,900 donated to Mara Cantelo's Tender Loving Christmas.

Inside today

Volume 52, Number 44
20 pages
All contents © Hi-Desert Star 2009

- Classifieds **C1**
- Crossword **Basin**
- Wide Calendar **A4**
- Living **A4**
- Lottery **A2**
- Milestones **A8**
- Obituaries **A5**
- Opinion **A7**
- Religion **A6**
- Sheriff's Calls **A5**
- Sports **B1**
- Weather **A2**

Online

www.hidesertstar.com

Relive the summer's concerts and festivals in photo galleries

Join the community forum in Feedback

e-mail us at news@hidesertstar.com

Victory for mesa coalition



REBECCA UNGER Hi-Desert Star

"We took action, and here we are tonight!" A triumphant Elizabeth Karman of Yucca Mesa gets cheers from her supporters after months of opposition to Yucca Valley's attempts to annex it into their sphere of influence. The Town Council voted unanimously to halt proceedings through the Local Agency Formation Commission.

Council halts annexation bid

By Rebecca Unger
Hi-Desert Star

YUCCA VALLEY — The Yucca Valley Town Council voted 4-0-1, Mayor Frank Luckino recusing himself, to withdraw its application to include unincorporated Yucca Mesa in its sphere of influence Tuesday night.

For the past year, the Town has faced increasing criticism by Yucca Mesa residents for what they perceived as Yucca Valley's secrecy in filing the application with the San Bernardino County Local Agency Formation Commission.

Mesa resident Elizabeth Karman formed the Stop Yucca Mesa Annexation Coalition and peppered the countryside with red "Stop" signs. She urged the mesa and surrounding communities to fight the application process, winning hearts and minds with images of towering streetlights, cheek-to-jowl housing developments and lanes of 18 wheelers where the two-lane blacktop of Old Woman Springs Road fades into the horizon.

Karman said five years ago she and her husband moved to the mesa to avoid the "urbanization" of Yucca Valley.

"In 2008 we were startled to discover that an effort to extend a sphere of influence



REBECCA UNGER Hi-Desert Star

Jim Harvey, president of the Homestead Valley Community Council, speaks for the member associations: "We are hopeful that you will see this evening as we do, as a golden opportunity for this legislative body to heal the wounds, mend bridges and erase all the ill feelings...."

on the mesa was already under way," she told the Town Council. "We were offended that relatively few people knew about this."

The grassroots organizer told of collecting 2,400 signatures against the application and conducting a survey. Karman stated that per the survey, 99.5 percent of the mesa's residents do not want to be part of the Town of Yucca Valley.

"We don't want to share your problems by being forced to help solve them,"

Karman said.

"We will never want to be a part of you, and we will always reject you as our government. We love our mesa!" she declared.

Her sentiments were expressed by the next several speakers.

The Homestead Valley Community Council, the umbrella organization for citizens of Yucca Mesa, Flamingo Heights, Landers and Johnson Valley, took up the cause, and President Jim Harvey spoke on their behalf Tuesday.

"We believe that putting Yucca Mesa into the Town of Yucca Valley's designated sphere of influence would have a far-reaching detrimental effect on the collective interests of the four HVCC communities, and on the established effectiveness and cohesiveness of the council that represents them," said Harvey.

Local Agency Formation Commission Executive Officer Kathleen Rollings-McDonald gave a presentation explaining the effects of a sphere of influence before the meeting was opened for public comment. She stayed to answer technical questions from the council members when public comment closed.

She gave councilman Bill Neeb the details of the complicated voting process that would have to take place before a true annexation of borders would be possible.

"If Yucca Valley removes its application for sphere of influence, does that mean that LAFCO will stop working in that area?" asked Neeb.

"We have to complete the service review and we are mandated by law to do so. We will evaluate that sphere of influence," Rollings-McDonald replied.

See COUNCIL Page A2

"PROFESSIONAL TOWING AT AFFORDABLE RATES"

24 HOUR TOWING AND RECOVERY

• Off Road 4x4 Recovery • Lockouts • Jump Starts **CTTA**
• Tire Changes • Member CTTA

(760) 369-7054 • 56916 29 PALMS HWY, YUCCA VALLEY

Council halts annexation bid (page A2 continued)

The Town's involvement in the sphere of influence began when the county consolidated fire districts and county officials suggested Yucca Valley annex the mesa into its sphere of influence to follow other districts' boundaries.

The council followed the suggestion, much to some mesa residents' dismay.

"I believe that quality of life has to do with our relationships with our neighbors," said councilwoman Lori Herbel.

"I'm hopeful that whatever happens, we will all continue to be neighbors, because we don't know when we're going to need each other."

However, Herbel also understood the Yucca Mesa residents want to be left alone. "With that, I would support the withdrawal of the sphere of influence," she said.

Sympathizing with the public's general mistrust of government, Mayor Pro Tem Chad Mayes admitted the Town "didn't do a very good job" of meeting with Yucca Mesa residents to explain the sphere-of-influence process.

"I think it is appropriate at this time for the Town of Yucca Valley to withdraw its application," Mayes said in agreement with Herbel.

Luckino was absent from the proceedings, calling it a "perceived conflict of interest." He is the chief financial officer of the Hi-Desert Water District, and the Town's sphere of influence would have included the area currently serviced by the water district.

"It's not illegal; it's more how it's perceived," Luckino said.