

Fundraiser planned for Stateline burn victim

There will be a fundraiser May 17 for the South Lake Tahoe man who sustained third-degree burns to more than 30 percent of his body in a car shop fire last month at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency building.

Ron Svetlik, 57, has been at UC Davis Medical Center since the **April 25 accident** at Ron's Auto & Small Engine Repair on the bottom floor of the Stateline office complex. He is recovering, but it will be a long road.

Casey's in Round Hill is hosting Thursday's fundraiser. All proceeds from chili sales will go toward Svetlik's medical bills. A **GoFundMe account** has also been established. Updates on Svetlik's progress will be posted there.

Calif. voters might send \$127 million to Tahoe

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

California voters could approve spending \$127 million for projects at Lake Tahoe in a series of ballot measures this year.

The Tahoe money would be just a small part of two bond measures that would total \$13 billion, including \$492 million in spending on projects in the Sierra Nevada.

"This is an unprecedented amount of potential funding for

projects in the Sierra Nevada,” said Chris Mertens, government affairs director for the Sierra Business Council in Truckee.

Read the whole story

SLT council OKs controversial consultant contract

By Kathryn Reed

On a 4-1 vote Tuesday the South Lake Tahoe City Council agreed to pay the consultant who was hired to evaluate the city, study the culture and look into the succession plan.

The MRG contract has been an issue for months. It started with not being approved in open session last fall when it was entered into. It wasn't until **earlier this month** that the council even brought it out into the open.

At that meeting it was agreed Wendy David and Tom Davis would be the council's subcommittee to decide whether a written report should be provided by the firm as was stated would be done in the original agreement, with legal counsel providing the pros and cons to do so.

There was no public discussion May 15 about the written report, nor was it even agendaized for a closed session discussion. In other words, at least some members of the council made the decision not to have a written document be provided without the full council's consent. Nor was the issue mentioned in the staff report.

It is the mayor – David – who decides what is on the agenda.

Egan provided a verbal accounting of her findings to the council in closed session. What she had to say has never been disclosed.

Clearly, a succession plan was not part of the report because the council went on to let the city manager go without a plan to replace her based on open session conversations and that it won't be until June that an interim city manager who isn't staff will be on the city payroll.

The council's interim appointment of the fire chief didn't last long, as he told the council early on he wanted out.

Jeff Meston was not at Tuesday's meeting because he's on a business trip. Sitting in as acting city manager was Police Chief Brian Uhler. However, that decision was never discussed by the council. It was the fire chief who made the appointment. (The next council meeting should be overseen by Dirk Brazil, who was hired to be acting city manager.)

On May 15 the MRG contract was on the consent agenda, but was pulled by a member of the public for discussion.

Councilmember Brooke Laine, who was the lone dissenter on Tuesday's vote, said the scope of work in the agreement was not completed. She further stated, "The scope was changed and approved by somebody. It was not the council. Maybe that person needs to be responsible for the additional costs."

David said Mary Egan, principal with MRG, did complete the work she was hired to do.

Councilmember Jason Collin said, "I appreciate the work she did for us. It was consistent with the scope."

Councilman Austin Sass was of the belief the contract from MRG that requested even more money should be paid.

While Davis agreed to pay the lower, original amount, he sided with Laine in questioning how the scope of the agreement got

changed.

This contract is part of the basis for Laine's allegations that the council has violated the Brown Act. The El Dorado County District Attorney's Office is investigating those allegations.

EDC makes it easier to do business online

El Dorado County residents can now access more historical and current land management data online, reducing the need to visit county offices in person. In the coming weeks, users will also have online access to an increased level of information and functionality related to the permits to make the process even easier.

The TRAKiT system, when fully functional, will allow residents to take the steps needed to get permits and provide documentation without going to the county. It will allow users to apply for permits, pay fees, schedule inspections and track the progress of their projects online.

Four specific types of permits will be available in June. They include:

- Residential electrical
- Residential mechanical
- Residential plumbing
- Residential re-roof.

Click here to access the site.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The book launch of Bona Fide Books' "Permanent Vacation, Volume 2" will be June 13 at 7pm in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College. The first volume was **highly acclaimed**.
 - Vintage Tahoe Clothing is now open on Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.
 - Nevada's minimum wage for employees with health benefits is staying at \$7.25, and at \$8.25 for those without health benefits, per the Nevada Labor Commissioner. The last increase was in 2013.
 - El Dorado Arts Council's curated exhibition of photography of sky, space, and planets opens May 25 and runs through Aug. 12 at the organization's Fausel House Gallery, 772 Pacific St., Placerville.
 - Nevada Humanities is seeking members to serve on its board of trustees. Applications and nominations are due June 11 for three-year terms beginning Nov. 1. An application/nomination form is available **online**.
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Calif. considers charge to create safe water fund

By Tess Townsend, Water Deeply

Gaps in funding for water treatment are a major problem in California. Water providers operate independently, relying virtually entirely on customer fees to cover costs. For agencies with scale, money and access to quality water sources, this model works well. But absent those resources, contamination persists for years without resolution.

About half a million people in the state receive water from a system that is out of compliance with safe drinking water standards, according to a November analysis by PPIC Water Center. Most of those failing systems are small – serving just a few thousand or even a few hundred residents. While state bonds and grants can help systems build treatment facilities, there's no state source of funding to subsidize ongoing operation costs for water providers that can't afford them.

A piece of legislation, introduced last year as Senate Bill 623 and later included as a trailer bill in the governor's proposed budget, seeks to solve this structural problem by raising a \$140 million annual Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, from a combination of charges on agriculture and residential water users. Money would go toward ongoing operation and maintenance costs for treatment in under-resourced districts. The charge on residential users would amount to about \$1 a month for most households served by the 1,000 or so agencies collecting fund revenue.

Read the whole story

3 1-act plays to be staged at LTCC

"It's All An Act: Three One-Act Plays" will be at Lake Tahoe Community College's Duke Theatre this June. Each performance will include three one-act plays, with different directors and actors.

In "Boise Idaho," a comedy written by Sean Michael Welch and directed by Kelly Cassidy, the narrator of a story dutifully chronicles the meeting of a couple in a small café in Paris, only to start losing control of his characters once they realize he exists. Blending the lines between fiction and truth, this play examines what should triumph: reality, or a good story. The cast for "Boise Idaho" is Gary Edwards, Brandon McCarthy, Frank Riley, and Marianne Rosenfeld.

In "Compromising Positions," a comedy written by Michelle Benson and directed by Jeff Witt, an aging couple named Harold and Alice decide to get frisky one evening in the living room and end up stuck on the recliner. Teenage son Jake and grown daughter Alice must come to the rescue. This play received the 2015 prize for best one-act play at the WordWave storytelling festival in South Lake Tahoe. The cast for "Compromising Positions" is Chase Kalik, Thea Newhouse, Chris Taylor, and Pam Taylor.

In "Squirrels," a comedy written by Peter J. Stavros and directed by Brandon McCarthy, the focus is on Jim, who has been working for the same company for so long he's actually lost track of the years. With the threat of layoffs coming, Jim's safe job just might be coming to an end. The cast for "Squirrels" is Robin Gershbein, Kalayna Miller, Janel Morales,

Brett Robinson, and David Wright.

All performances of "It's All An Act" will take place June 14-16 and June 21-23 at 7:30pm, and June 24 at 2pm.

Tickets are \$10/general admission, \$7/seniors and groups of eight or more, and \$5/students with a valid school I.D. Due to language and adult themes, this show is not recommended for children under 13. Tickets can be purchased at the LTCC bookstore, or at the Duke Theatre Box Office one hour prior to all performances.

Ellen Cullen – 1920-2018



Ellen Cullen

Ellen Francis Laughlin Cullen passed away peacefully in her sleep on May 2, 2018.

Born Nov. 29, 1920, in San Francisco, she was forever grateful

to the Sisters of St. Paul's elementary and high school for guiding and educating her. She raised her family in South San Francisco and lived the last 40-plus years in South Lake Tahoe.

Ellen recognized and acknowledged the good in all she met. She lived the Golden Rule every day of her life. Ellen truly believed God loved her and that she had a wonderful life. Truly no finer person ever walked this earth.

Mom, grandma, great-grandma, we love you now and will love you forever.

She was predeceased by her husband, James Cullen, siblings Mortimer Laughlin, Anne Osterloh, Mary McClelland and Jack Laughlin (KIA WWII).

She is survived by her children, Gayle (Jim) Carpenter, Jack (Deanna) Cullen, Marilyn (Dan) Quinlan and "Cuz" (Shawn) Cullen; 10 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of life Mass will be said in her honor on May 23 at 2pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church, 1041 Lyons Ave., South Lake Tahoe. Reception immediately following in Father Grace Hall located right next to the church.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations be made to her parish, St. Theresa Catholic Church.

**EDC auditor candidates
distinguish themselves**



Joe Harn and Mike Owen are running for El Dorado County auditor.

By Kathryn Reed

Even though Joe Harn and Mike Owen went to El Dorado High School, with four years separating them, friends they are not. Owen wants Harn's job.

June marks the second consecutive election that Owen has tried to unseat Harn as auditor-controller of El Dorado County.

Harn is endorsed by District Attorney Vern Pierson. Owen is endorsed by Sheriff John D'Agostini.

Harn has been auditor since 1994. Owen once worked for the county and is now owner of a winery on the West Slope.

A requirement to be a county auditor in California is to be an active certified public accountant in good standing with the California Board of Accountancy. Last fall when Owen started actively campaigning for the June election he **falsely claimed** he had kept his CPA license active.

One of Owen's allegations in his campaign material is that Harn doesn't pay bills on time. Legally a county auditor couldn't do that even if he wanted to.

While Harn's campaign material says El Dorado has zero debt, the truth is the county has a sizable unfunded liability for CalPERS and it has loans to repay such as for the new sheriff's facilities – both things the average person would consider debt.

Owen questions Harn's demeanor, citing **past grand juries** that said the entire county was dysfunctional. Those reports led to Harn being investigated by the California Attorney General. That **case was dropped** and Harn was never asked to testify.

Owen has his own baggage. Campaign financial reports submitted to the El Dorado County Elections Department indicate he was penalized at least \$600 for violating the California Political Reform Act. Owen's campaign financial report for the period ending April 21 indicates he paid prior year campaign committee fees to the secretary of state in 2018. The Political Reform Act requires candidates pay a \$50 annual fee to the state if they have an active local campaign committee. In 2018 Owen paid \$450 to the secretary of state for "prior years' annual fees."

Of the \$450 paid, \$300 was a penalty for failing to pay on time. In 2017, Owen paid \$400 to the secretary of state, again \$300 was a penalty for failing to pay on time.

His campaign financial reports call the payments filing fees when actually the majority of the payments are for state imposed late payment penalties.

On top of all of that, Owen's winery in Camino, Crystal Basin Cellars, has had various tax liens recorded for failure to pay property taxes on time. Owen has also had to pay penalties to the county for not paying his business taxes on time.

The election is June 5, with several county offices on the ballot.

Opinion: SLT uses Craigslist for city attorney listing

By Kathryn Reed

Government agencies pay thousands of dollars for recruiting firms to find top level executives. Part of their job is to place the ads in select locations where those types of professionals look for jobs, part is to do the background checks, part is knowing many in this small pool of applicants and knowing the jurisdiction with the opening in order to find that perfect match.

Their expertise is such that the contract usually comes with a warranty of sorts if the new hire doesn't stay a certain length of time.

The South Lake Tahoe City Council last month hired Prothman Executive Recruitment to find city manager and city attorney candidates.

Minutes from the April 17 meeting say, "It was the consensus of council to prioritize the hire of an interim and permanent city manager but to recruit for both city manager and city attorney at the same time."

On Prothman's website only the city attorney position is listed. Prothman has listed the city attorney job on **Craigslist** as well.

Apparently Prothman finds Craigslist a viable platform because the firm put up the city manager listing for Emeryville there as well.

However, those in the know have told *Lake Tahoe News* that

using Craigslist is highly unusual, even a bit unprofessional.

Lake Tahoe News asked all five council members what they thought of using Craigslist for the city attorney position. No one had an opinion they chose to share.

As for why the city manager position isn't at least on Prothman's website, that too remains a mystery.

Lake Tahoe News asked the five where Prothman was listing both of South Lake Tahoe's jobs. No answer.

It really is scary to think of the power and incompetence these electeds exhibit as a whole, and the majority do individually.

Three seats are up in November – Wendy David, Austin Sass and Tom Davis. Candidates may file papers with the El Dorado County Elections Department starting July 16 and will have until Aug. 10 to turn them in. If an incumbent doesn't file, that date is extended to Aug. 15.

One can only hope some professionalism and leadership returns to the city in early June with the hire of **Dirk Brazil** as interim city manager. Well, that is assuming the council hires him at today's meeting and that he is good as he looks on paper.