Ensign apologizes to colleagues in farewell address

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – When John Ensign came to Congress in 1994, he did so in a rowdy season of Republican renaissance so fraught with bombast that it came to be known as a revolution. Two years ago, when he announced that he'd been having an affair with his campaign staffer and best friend's wife, the shock waves reverberated so violently that they eventually caused his political career to collapse.

But Monday afternoon, when Ensign took to the Senate floor to say his official farewell, suggest his legacy and offer an apology, his words caused no commotion. Ensign was addressing an almost-empty room.

"The more power and prestige a person achieves, the more arrogant a person can become," Ensign said from the back row of desks to a few security guards and Delaware Sen. Chris Coons, the Senate's presiding officer. "I was blind to how arrogant and self-centered that I had become … unfortunately, the urge to believe in it was stronger than the power to fight it."

Read the whole story

Clint Holmes at Harrah's Lake Tahoe

Incomparable showroom performer and multi-year Las Vegas Entertainer of the Year Clint Holmes returns to the South Shore Room at Harrah's Lake Tahoe for one night, June 4.

Show time is 7:30pm.

Tickets are $27.50. For more information, call 800.786.8208.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• No mural is going to be erected in front of the would-be convention center in South Tahoe. Caltrans wanted a separate encroachment permit.

• There will be an artist reception for photographer Patty Gilbertson on May 7 from 6:30-8:30pm at Bona Fide Books, 1069 Magua St., No. 4, Meyers.

• South Tahoe Middle School's Symphonic Band was awarded a gold medal at the Forum Music Festival in Anaheim.

• With the reorg at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Jerry Wells and Lyn Barnett are taking their two decades of knowledge to open a consulting firm focusing on planning and landscaping in the basin.

• South Tahoe High School's class of 2011 will graduate at the

football field. Construction was looking like that wouldn't be possible. As student board rep Nick Pillsbury told the board April 26, academics should be placed before athletic needs.

• Ted Long, a member of the South Lake Tahoe Latino Affairs Commission, spoke to the Lake Tahoe Community College board April 26 asking officials to contribute to the Spanish-language paper his group is putting together.

• About a dozen people from Mongolia were on the South Shore on May 2 to learn how Tahoe handles environmental issues and tourism. They met for an hour with South Lake Tahoe officials, then the head of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, and then went to the California Tahoe Conservancy.

Don't forget to vote today

It's the day to decide if Beth Gaines or Dennis Campanale will be representing Lake Tahoe in the California Assembly.



The 4th Assembly District seat is open because f Ted Gaines was elected to the state Senate.

Gaines is the Republican – and wife of the state senator. Campanale is the Democrat.

Grego, Lovell try to discredit Mittelstadt with State Bar

By Kathryn Reed

Nearly a year to the day after Jacqueline Mittelstadt turned in her resignation notice as assistant city attorney of South Lake Tahoe she received a letter in the mail from the State Bar of California.

The letter dated March 14, 2011, says, “The State Bar is in receipt of a complaint filed against you by Bruce Grego and Kathy (sic) Lovell. … Mr. Grego and Ms. Lovell filed the complaint in their official capacities as council member and mayor of the city of South Lake Tahoe, respectively.”



Jacqueline Mittelstadt

Their issue, according to the letter, was Mittelstadt used information from her job with the city to help clients she now has in private practice.

One of those people is police Officer Johnny Poland who in June 2010 filed a complaint against the city. Mittelstadt is his attorney. Poland won a contentious lawsuit against the city in October 2009 that allowed him to stay on the force.

Grego and Lovell’s other issue with Mittelstadt was she had

been on staff as the city began working on the medicinal marijuana laws. She is now representing someone who wants to open a dispensary.

Mittelstadt was never asked to sign a no-compete agreement upon her departure.

In her 14-page response to the State Bar, Mittelstadt states, “This is a matter of ‘sour grapes’ and nothing more. Since the day that I refused to submit to Mr. Grego’s and Ms. Lovell’s demands that I engage in illegal and blatantly unethical conduct, both have been on a mission to ruin my good name and reputation, as well as to run me out of South Lake Tahoe.”

On April 6, 2011, the Bar wrote another letter to Mittelstadt. This one says, “The determination has been made that there are insufficient grounds for disciplinary action. Therefore, we are closing our file at this time, without prejudice.”

Grego and Lovell did not return phone calls to *Lake Tahoe News*. Grego is still on the council.

Mittelstadt said, “The fact that the State Bar closed the file the day they received my papers speaks for itself.”

The other three on the council at the time – Jerry Birdwell, Hal Cole and Bill Crawford – said they did not know their colleagues had filed the grievance nor do they support their actions. Cole is the only one of the those three still on the council.

Birdwell said, “The complaints were without merit. I think that filing the complaint was vindictive, and that using their titles as councilmember and mayor in filing the complaint suggested that they were speaking for the entire council. They could have filed the complaint using their names as private citizens.”

Cole said, “As long as they are doing it on it their own and

not as whole council."

Crawford said, "Somehow they had to punish her and going to the Bar is what they elected to do. And it did not work. I'm very happy it did not work."

Comedian Seth Meyers coming to Stateline

MontBleu goes comedic when "Saturday Night Live" funny man Seth Meyers takes the stage May 28 in Stateline.

A member of the "SNL" staff for the past nine years, Meyers is the show's head writer, but is probably best known as the co-anchor of the "Weekend Update" segment and the other half of Tina Fey's parodies of Sara Palin, with Meyers composing some of the sketches' most memorable lines.

Meyers is also well-known for his impressions of Russell Crowe, Richard Dawson, Hugh Grant, Tobey Maquire and Ewan McGregor.

Tickets are $30/$40, plus fees.

Doors open at 8pm; show at 9pm.

Opinion: City clerks descend

on South Tahoe

By Susan Alessi

This past week, I was honored and pleased to have hosted the 2011 Annual State City Clerks Association of California in our beautiful city.

The conference was well attended and all of the attendees appeared to have enjoyed the conference and all the great sites and activities that South Lake Tahoe has to offer. Many city clerks and their families stayed through the weekend to sight see and also experience the shopping, dining and night life.

A big thanks to Mayor Hal Cole for his welcoming remarks and historical information during the opening ceremony, to former Mayor and Councilmember Margo Osti who beautifully sang the national anthem, local Calvary Chapel Pastor Jerry Foster who provided a meaningful invocation and to the South Tahoe High School NJROTC who perfectly executed the color guard ceremony.

Kudos to Embassy Suites who did a fantastic job as the hotel and conference venue.

Also noteworthy to mention as the 2011 CCAC conference host city, through an IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks) Green Project Grant, a Mountain Ash tree was planted at the linear park Wildwood site and a bronze plaque entitled “The City Clerks Association of California, Exhibiting a Leadership Role in the Community through its ‘Green Team’ Efforts, Dedicates this tree to the City of South Lake Tahoe, our 2011 Conference Host.” It is an honor South Lake Tahoe was selected as the first city of this grant project which will now become an annual tradition for annual state conference host cities.

The following is some background information on the CCAC and the city clerk profession:

City Clerks Association of California

Our Mission

The CCAC was founded in 1977 with the objective of promoting the city clerk profession throughout the state of California.

Objectives

The Objectives of the CCAC are to:

* Provide Leadership and Management Training Opportunities in Concert with Our Diverse Society.

* Enhance Levels of Service Responsive to the Growing Demands Within our Organizations.

* Foster Pro-Active Programs to Promote Effective Legislation.

* Promote Networking System Among Members.

What does a city clerk do?

The city clerk is the local official for elections, local legislation, the Public Records Act, the Political Reform Act, and the Brown Act (open meeting laws). Before and after the city council takes action, the city clerk ensures that actions are in compliance with all federal, state and local statutes and regulations and that all actions are properly executed, recorded, and archived. The statutes of the state of California prescribe the basic functions and duties of the city clerk, and the Government Code and Election Code provide precise and specific responsibilities and procedures to follow. The office of the city clerk is a service department within the municipal government upon which the city council, all city departments, and the general public rely for information regarding the operations and legislative history

of the city. The city clerk serves as the liaison between the public and city council and provides related municipal services.

Susan Alessi is city clerk for South Lake Tahoe.

Mining unexpectedly infuses millions into Nev. budget

By Anne Knowles

CARSON CITY – Nevada's next biennium budget just got $217 million bigger thanks to mining, the Ruby Pipeline project in Northern Nevada and a stabilizing economy.

The Economic Forum, a panel of five businesspeople appointed by the governor and Legislature, met Monday to review its forecast of state revenue for the current fiscal year and the next biennium. By law, the state is required to use the forum's forecast to build its budget.

After hearing presentations from the state's taxation department, budget office and the Legislative Counsel Bureau's fiscal analysis division, as well as from an economist from Moody's Analytics, the forum voted to increase the forecast for fiscal year 2011 by about $97 million, fiscal year 2012 by approximately $59 million and fiscal year 2013 by almost $61 million.

Fiscal year 2011 ends in June, but the additional revenue forecasted for it can be used in 2012, said Russell Guindon, principal deputy fiscal analyst with LCB's fiscal analysis division, bumping the 2012 budget by a total of about $156 million.

"People have asked of it matters since 2011 is almost over, but it does matter in that those revenues will go into a fund balance and can go forward into 2012," Guindon said.

The bulk of the additional money is expected to come from the state's sales tax, which is benefiting from sales of mining equipment and taxes paid by workers on the Ruby Pipeline, a gas pipeline being laid across all of Northern Nevada in Elko, Humboldt and Washoe counties.

Also, visitor numbers were higher than expected, pushing up revenue from the live entertainment tax paid on tickets to events like Celine Dion concerts and other shows, as well as adding to retail sales tax coffers. The forecast on revenue from the room tax paid on lodging was also increased, from an earlier estimate of $104.1 million to $108.5 million in fiscal year 2011. The tax is set to expire – or "sunset" – at the end of this fiscal year, not generating any more income for the next biennium unless it is extended by the Legislature.

Visitors, however, aren't gambling like they once did. Percentage fees on gaming wins were actually forecasted downward by the forum, from an earlier forecast of $658.6 million to $647.9 million in fiscal year 2011, from $679.5 million to $665.4 million in fiscal year 2012 and $702.2 million to $683.4 million in fiscal year 2013.

And although the state's modified business tax is being lowered, and bringing in lower revenue than before, the forecast for it was upped by more than $30 million over the next three fiscal years.

There was also some positive news on the jobs front for Nevada, which still has the nation's highest unemployment rate. In March, the state recorded positive job growth and the unemployment rate dropped to 13.2 percent, the lowest rate since late-2009, according to Bill Anderson, chief economist with the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.

Most of the job growth, said Anderson and others, has come from the leisure/hospitality industry, which added 5,400 jobs in the last 12 months, and healthcare and professional services. The labor pool is also shrinking, either because people are leaving the state to find a job or because they're still here but have given up looking for work, said Anderson.

"For a decade we were the fastest growing state in the nation and now we're doing a 180 off that," Anderson said May 2.

All the economists warned, however, that any number of factors could adversely affect the state's stabilizing but fragile economy, especially the price of gas, which, if it continues to rise, could deter visitors and sap discretionary income.

Unity at the Lake yard sale

June 4 – Unity at the Lake Yard & Bake Sale at the Star Tahoe Building parking lot, 2489 Lake Tahoe Blvd. from 9am-1pm.

For more info, call (530) 544.2266 or visit www.unityatthelake.org.

Winston McCullough at Unity at the Lake

May 29 – Unity at the Lake guest speaker is Winston McCullough at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd. at 10am.

McCullough shares “Jesus, Buddhism, Psychology and Happiness”. Winston has been teaching internationally for the past 12 years, combining a lifelong study and commitment to the life and teachings of Jesus with his study and practice of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism in the tradition of the Dalai Lama.

Love offering.

For office hours and a current schedule of events, call (530) 544.2266.