

## A quite unlikely Incline resident

*The following article is strictly the opinion of the Bonanza News Editor and not the opinion of the Village League to Save Incline Assets.*

---

Andrew Pridgen  
Bonanza News Editor,  
apridgen@tahoebonanza.com  
April 14, 2006

You've seen him in the produce aisle at Raley's, or maybe picking out a choice leg of lamb at the Village Market deli counter. You've sat next to him in the Incline Village Cinema and maybe enjoyed a cocktail a few tables away from him at Billy's bar.

And even if you don't recognize his face, you've certainly heard his name or at least read it here in a headline or 20 - it's Washoe County Assessor and Incline resident Bob McGowan.

McGowan, has, in his own words "had his feet held to the fire - real close" for the last six months as the Village League to Save Incline Assets demanded his dismissal after 24 years as the county's head assessor. He breathed a big sigh of relief this week as those charges were indeed dismissed.

McGowan, while affable and willing to provide a carefully worded quote during his time under the microscope, stopped in the Bonanza Thursday to chat more candidly about all that has transpired with the league.

Surprisingly - in spite of the tense moments calling for his job - he was conciliatory to the group's concerns.

"Look, if I was paying \$75,000 in (property) taxes, I'd want things to change too," he said. "The fact is, I'm there to follow rules and keep communication lines clear.

"It's easy to do the first, but, as I found out you can never be too transparent."

McGowan, perhaps reaching out an olive branch to the Incline group that has spent more than \$400,000 and countless hours trying to roll back property taxes to 2002 and ask for his removal from office, said that the only difference between he and the group is "interpretation of the rules."

"Unfortunately, that's a big difference," he said.

McGowan will retire in December and has even admitted that a "fresh voice" combined with a few new ideas for the legislature to mull (like new property tax rules for those over 65 who've been at their house a set number of years along with the retention of the three-percent cap) could all contribute to "solving the overall problem."

"Nevada is unique in its valuation," McGowan said. "This group has spent so many hours and so much money trying to understand it all. I don't think it's personal - but sometimes it was hard not to take it personally."

A weight visibly lifted off his shoulders, McGowan joked he could "now stand to lose a little of it this summer."

The tax revolters are some of Incline's most ardent activists and this paper has many times lauded their efforts. It has been a long, drawn-out battle, and by the end of the summer the state supreme court may, in fact, make all their efforts literally pay off.

McGowan, after 34 years with the county, also deserves a little bit of recognition. To continue to live and be a part of the community where controversy meets him at every newsrack, at the least, says something about his own character and perseverance.

And while it's a stretch to think come January 1, 2007, the two sides will join for a toast at the Lone Eagle Grille, maybe by then they will share something even more binding - mutual respect.

News editor Andrew Pridgen can be reached at apridgen@tahoebonanza.com.

###