

## OUR VIEW

# Gibbons, help!

The signs point to economic doldrums, the likes of which we haven't faced since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. And aside from 9/11, the only other time in recent memory that the local economy has been in such turmoil was in 1991, when a recession and air travel skittishness caused the Persian Gulf War conspired to deliver a one-two punch to our financial health.

Today, Nevada leads the nation in home foreclosures. State unemployment figures are higher than normal. People are either being laid off or can't find decent-wage jobs. Focus Property Group, one of the Valley's most successful homebuilders in recent years, is working to restructure its debt after defaulting on \$765 million in loans for two communities it's building. On the Strip, projects like the Cosmopolitan have gone into foreclosure, while financing questions loom for the multibillion-dollar property fronted by the owners of the famed Plaza in New York City. To top it off, state lawmakers estimate an \$800 million revenue shortfall through mid-2009, nearly four times more than expected. Thus, it's possible we could see cuts deeper than the 4.5 percent cuts made in January.

At a time like this, when leadership is needed to calm fears and make the necessary moves to steady the ship, we get nothing of the sort from Gov. Jim Gibbons. So far, Gibbons hasn't indicated a willingness to call a special session to discuss the budget and, according to his press secretary, will not raise taxes, preferring instead to make further cuts to the state budget. No one will begrudge the governor his right to take tariffs off the table, but his track record in matters in state finance doesn't exactly inspire confidence. This is a man who initially refused to tap the \$300 million rainy day fund to offset revenue shortfalls.

As devastating as the first cuts were, a second round of cuts could be much, much worse. "With the first go-around, we pretty much exhausted all the easy-type cuts," state public schools chief Keith Rheault told the *Associated Press*'s Brendan Riley, noting in his article that more cuts could lead to reductions in staffing for athletics or other non-teaching programs.

In the same article, Nevada System of Higher Education Chancellor Jim Rogers decried any additional cuts. "At this point, we're standing on the ledge of absolute destruction and permanent injury. You can't close peoples' learning down. The issue is much more fundamental than the amount of money. When are we going to stand up and do what's right?" The January cuts sheared \$151 million from secondary and higher education programs.

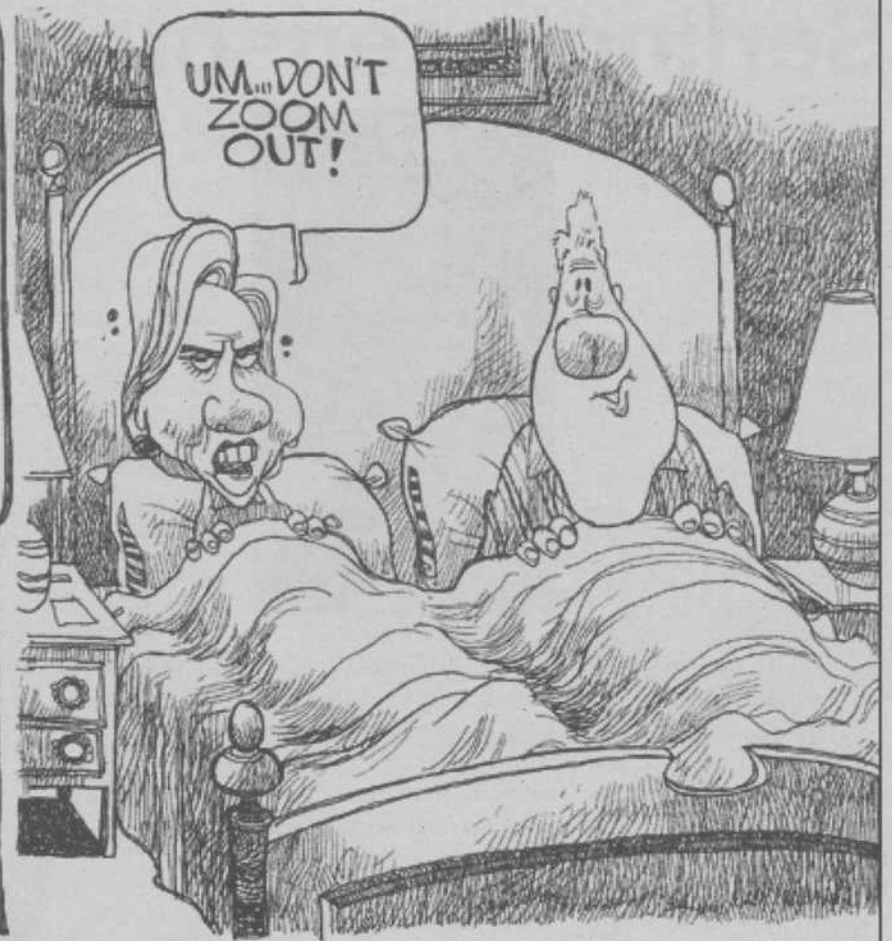
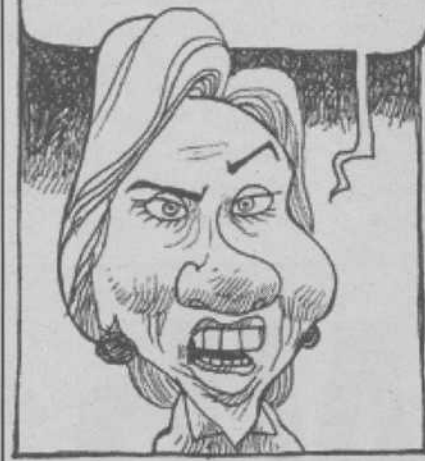
Gibbons supports across-the-board cuts, as opposed to deeper cuts in programs that aren't as vital to public health and safety. The danger in sharing the pain is that we may eventually end up getting bit in the butt. The Nevada prison system cut spending by \$25 million. More cuts could mean shuttering a facility or reducing staff, which could make correctional institutions even more dangerous. The \$82 million sheared from the state Department of Health and Human Services' budget has not only meant a reduction in client services but a reduction in the amount of people getting help. Mental healthcare already lagged in Nevada.

Gov. Gibbons, are you paying close attention to what's going on? What's it going to take to get you to seriously address our economic problems? Conservatives are fond of saying that you can't tax your way out of tough economic times. If that's true, then it's also true that you can't budget cut your way to fiscal health either. More than a cop to his political base, throwing the imposition of new taxes off the discussion table is dangerously myopic. Incremental increases in taxes can raise tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions of dollars. We've seen this with tariffs used to generate funds to hire police and to build roads and highways. No one wants to be taxed. But at the same time, no state agency wants its budget cut even more.

Where budgets are bloated, cuts are warranted. But if Gibbons continues to press cuts, he could jeopardize the ability of agencies to provide services mandated by law.

Gov. Gibbons, Nevada needs your help. We need it now. We need reasoned dialogue (that requires listening to opposing viewpoints). If we don't get what we need from you, maybe voters will help you out of office in 2010.

THE QUESTION IS NOT ABOUT REVEREND WRIGHT... BUT ABOUT OBAMA'S DECISION TO STICK WITH A MAN FOR OVER 20 YEARS WHOSE BEHAVIOR IS REPREHENSIBLE!



## 4,000 slain; and you want McCain?

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

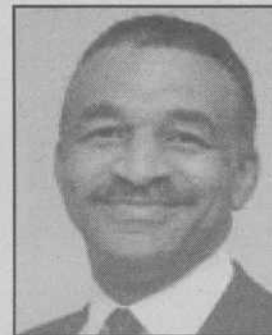
To take a quote from the brother on the Miller High Life commercials, "Y'all must be crazy!"

Now that we have lost more soldiers than the number of persons we lost on September 11, 2001, and now that we are "celebrating" five years of war in Iraq, and now that we have tens of thousands of American wounded and hundreds of thousands Iraqis dead, we have a presidential candidate who wants to continue what the current leader calls a "noble, necessary, and just" war. Again, to quote that brother in the commercial, "Are you for real?"

How could anyone, other than the sycophants and the wealthy war barons vote for McCain?

The opposite of the High Life is the low life, and this country has been mired in the low life for nearly eight years now; and some people say, "Give us more." It's amazing, simply amazing.

Let's see now: we have \$4 gasoline and diesel fuel — and \$5 in some places, a recession, whether they want to admit it or not; a housing/mortgage crisis; a healthcare catastrophe; an unfathomable national debt; a huge deficit; a dollar that's worth about a quarter; a rising euro; oil at \$110 per barrel; Venezuela now doing what Saddam Hussein did back in 2000, selling its oil for euros instead of petrodollars; cash



JAMES CLINGMAN

payoffs going to our enemies in Iraq to keep them from fighting us; plans to invade Iran; Osama sending another message to us from the mountains of Pakistan or Afghanistan or wherever they say he is right now; the bailout of Bear Stearns with tax dollars; and we have the Bushites bragging about how many new schools, hospitals, roads and highways, and all the infrastructure they have rebuilt in Iraq, while New Orleans still languishes in despair and disrepair.

Despite all of this, President-in-waiting, John McCain walks around Israel with a Yamika on his head and with Joe Lieberman at his side, coaching him and correcting McCain's errors regarding Iran and other international issues.

I thought his strength was in international issues.

He admitted he knows very little about economic issues. What's left? How about healthcare, education, energy, and employment?

The first thing this guy does is traipse off to Israel, instead of New Orleans, to assure folks halfway around

the world that we are there for them. Hey, John, what about us? Man, I can't wait for the presidential debates to start.

Finally, a few Black Republicans came out to support McCain. Michael Steele, Larry Elder, and Ken Blackwell have all made positive statements about old John and why we should elect him as our next president.

I refer them to the Miller High Life brother. What is it about political party loyalty that would make intelligent men and women support, at least in rhetoric, some of the characters placed before us today? Is it the prospect of a job in the administration? Is it insider deals?

George Bush says the war is "noble" and they go long with his stupidity. What's noble about lying to get into a war? What's noble about 4,000 lives lost because of the lies? What's noble about commandeering a country's

resources? What's noble about spending a trillion dollars on this war for five years, with no end in sight?

Tricky Dick Cheney, responding to recent polls that show two-thirds of Americans say the Iraq war is not worth it, simply says, "So?"

This draft-dodging, deferment grabbing, egomaniacal, jingoistic, contradiction of the man who gives new meaning to the title of "vice" president, should have been kicked out of office years ago. But, we have folks in "the party" who support him to the end.

Dems are obviously afraid to confront his arrogant, flip-pant, disregard for what 66 percent of Americans think about his war, as well as what 80 percent negatively think about him.

He thumbs his nose at us, flips us the bird, and takes a cruise in the Gulf of Oman with some oil baron.

What a joke all of this is.  
(See Alford Page 9)

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