

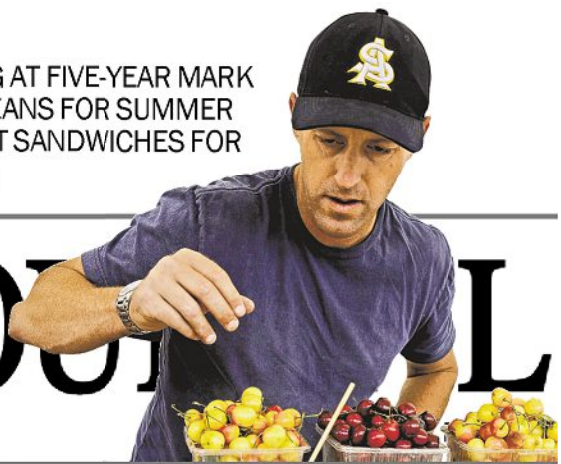
# FARMERS MARKETS RETURN

ANOTHER SIGN OF SUMMER IS UPON US ... YOUR GUIDE TO LOCAL MARKETS  
INSIDE FOOD AND DRINK, 3E

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WEEKNIGHT MEALS

# RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

A GANNETT COMPANY WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2013



# School-tax bill gets OK

County commission would approve taxes to pay for building projects

By Ray Hagar  
rhagar@rgj.com

A bill to allow a tax increase so Washoe County school district can refurbish schools passed the Assembly on Tuesday with an amend-

ment that gives the ultimate decision on any tax increase to the Washoe County Commission.

An amendment to Assembly Bill 46 — suggested by Reno Republican Assembly Minority Leader Pat Hickey and Assemblyman Randy

Kirner — to enable the Washoe County Commission to decide the tax increase was adopted the night before Tuesday's vote. The bill proposes to raise sales taxes in Washoe County by 0.25 percent and property taxes by 5 cents per \$100 of value. It is expected to give the district \$20 million annually to refurbish schools.

Kirner and Hickey had urged lawmakers to support the amendment because they said there were

not enough votes in the Legislature to meet the two-thirds approval requirement that would be needed in both houses to raise taxes or override any possible veto by the governor. They were concerned about a possible veto from Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval, who said he would not support new taxes on businesses during his State of the State speech in January.



See **SCHOOL TAX**, Page 4A

## WHITEMORE TRIAL

# Jurors continue review of testimony

Closing arguments cap 9 days of trial

By Martha Bellisle  
mbellisle@rgj.com

Jurors will continue deliberating today in Harvey Whittemore's federal campaign finance trial after a half-day of discussion Tuesday failed to reach a verdict.

Both sides made their final arguments Tuesday in the ninth day of the former power broker's trial and passed the case on to the six-woman, six-man jury about 1:15 p.m. They discussed the case for a little less than five hours.

Whittemore, who made a name in Nevada as a successful lobbyist and political power broker, is charged with four felony counts: excessive contributions; donations in the name of another; causing U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., to file a false donation report and lying to the FBI.

Whittemore, 59, pleaded not guilty and could face five years in prison on each count if convicted.

The prosecution called Whittemore the "king of the Hill" and said he was an

See **WHITEMORE**, Page 3A

# Fundraiser hosts former 49ers star

Staff report

Running back Roger Craig, who helped the San Francisco 49ers win three Super Bowls in the 1980s, will be the keynote speaker at the 45th annual Governor's Dinner, one of the Nevada athletic department's primary fundraising events, on July 12.

See full story on 1D.



Roger Craig



## LYNDSLEY LANGSDALE

AGE: 30

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Nevada, Reno, and master's degree in anthropology from Northern Arizona University

**EMPLOYMENT:** Works at the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, Reno Bike Project and Tour de Nez

## TONI ORTEGA

AGE: 30

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in art and geology from the University of Nevada, Reno

**EMPLOYMENT:** Works at the Great Basin Community Food Co-op and for the city of Reno's public art program

Lyndsey Langsdale, left, and Toni Ortega, owners of the Lost City Farm at Center and Moran streets, show some of the seedlings they are going to plant. MARILYN NEWTON/RGJ

# Young farmers plow vacant lot near downtown Reno, hope to sell crops at stand this summer

By Laura Longero  
llongero@rgj.com

It all began over cocktails. Lost City Farm founders and owners Lyndsey Langsdale and Toni Ortega, both 30, met at the University of Nevada, Reno and have known each other for 10 years. They moved away from Reno to work, but would reunite during visits home and would compare experiences and discuss what they would do differently if they had their own urban farm. Ortega said the idea was a slow and steady one that happened through the lens of summer barbecues and bike rides. Their first work meeting happened over glasses of cider at a bar, with notes written out on cocktail napkins.

The farm's first crop should be ready in late June or early July, depending on Mother Nature.

It is a labor of love for both women, who work other jobs — Langsdale at the Food Bank of Northern Nevada and Reno Bike Project and Ortega at the Great Basin Community Food Co-



Seedlings begin to grow at the Lost City Farm.

RGJ.COM/VIDEO

Click on "Our Video Picks" to see a video on Lost City Farm.

## AT A GLANCE

**WHAT:** Urban farm that will be producing kale, chard, greens, lettuces, root vegetables, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, beans, cut flowers, sunflowers, herbs and perennials.

**WHERE:** Lost City Farm, at the corner of Moran and Center streets

**WHO:** Owners/urban farmers Lyndsey Langsdale and Toni Ortega

**WHEN:** The farm broke ground April 11 and expects to have produce available for sale in late June or early July, depending on Mother Nature.

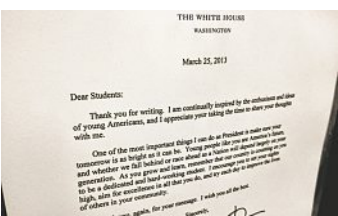
**DETAILS:** www.facebook.com/LostCityFarm

## TODAY'S QUICK READ

### EXPERT: HIGHER PRICES NOT JUST BUBBLE

The chairman of University of Nevada, Reno's economic department writes that home prices in Las Vegas, Reno and the rest of the state are rising, raising minibubble concerns. He argues that there's more than one factor driving it.

Business, 7A



### 5TH-GRADERS RECEIVE LETTER FROM OBAMA

The art of letter-writing is alive and thriving in Bradley Davis' fifth-grade English language learning class in Esther Bennett Elementary School in Sun Valley.

Northern Nevada, 1B

## After 51 years, Manogue science teacher retiring

Even after 51 years, Jim Bryn finds it's hard to retire. A science teacher at Bishop Manogue for the past 13 years and at Sparks for 28 years before that, Bryn is stepping down this year.

The secret to his success? "You have to really like teenagers and treat them fairly," said Bryn, 75. "And if you treat them well, they will bend over backwards for you. High school students have a great sense of fairness."

See full story on page 3B.



Jim Bryn

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# Farm

Continued from Page 1A

op and for the city of Reno. They spend every spare moment planting at the farm or working in the office, ordering supplies and the like.

“We’ve definitely got full plates,” Ortega said.

Each has experience in different kinds of farming — Langsdale worked on starting community garden programs turning vacant lots into farms in Arizona and Ortega has worked on production farms in California.

Langsdale and Ortega found the property for the Lost City Farm, an urban farm at the corner of Center and Moran streets, in March 2012. They met with the landowners, a family with three grown sons. The property was zoned for multi-use, which meant nothing could be grown on the lot.

The two contacted the city planning department and City Council on an urban farming ordinance that would change the zoning laws. They also wanted to write the ordinance in a way that it would benefit the neighborhood as well and studied ordinances written for other cities. Langsdale said the planning department simplified the ordinance, took it to the planning commission and then to the City Council, where it was voted on twice and passed on Sept. 12, 2012.

At-large Reno City Council member Hillary Schieve said Lost City is a great addition to Midtown Reno and said it will be exciting to see how it turns out.

“People are just so much more aware of organic food,” she said. “(They) want to know what they’re eating.”

The ordinance applies to any property in a multiuse zone.

“We were happy to do it in a way that other people can benefit, too,” she said.

Langsdale and Ortega drove around Reno looking for possible sites — they wanted one that was a half-acre or bigger. Langsdale said the farm site was the first place they saw and liked, and it was the only property that contacted them. They signed a lease in October.

“It was our dream spot,” she said.

## From lot to farm

Langsdale and Ortega plan to

grow produce and then sell it at a farm stand on the farm property, a “from seed to table” philosophy, Ortega said. Buyers can meet the farmers at the farm stand in this hyper-local model.

She and Ortega spent the winter preparing the soil for planting and had it tested to make sure it was safe for growing food. Ortega said when they got their soil test results, they talked to a soil scientist at the University of Nevada, Reno, and at the Nevada Small Farmer Conference. They found low levels of lead in the soil (which is often unlikely in urban areas) and that the soil, for the most part, was pretty good.

Ortega said the biggest challenge was that the soil was super compacted. The other challenge they faced, and will continue to face, is that there is a ton of rocks in the soil. They amended the soil because Northern Nevada’s soil doesn’t start out with much organic matter and will continue to amend the soil with nutrients and compost.

They broke ground on the farm April 11 and are planting crops and devoting every spare hour they have to the farm.

The farm is one acre. The goal is to plant three-quarters of the acre this year and leave the rest to cover crop. Ortega said they will rotate crops and always have part of the farm in cover crop so the soil has time to rest and renew. They amended the soil with natural elements, and though they aren’t certified organic, they are using sustainable farming methods.

Chickens will be employed and housed in a coop. Ortega said chickens provide manure that’s great for the soil; they scratch, which tills the soil; and eat bugs and eat weeds and vegetable scraps. There will be 12 hens housed at the farms but no roosters. Although there are chickens on the farm, Lost City will not be selling eggs.

“Chickens are great partners in farming,” Ortega said.

## An urban farm

There are other local farms, like the River School Farm, Earth Alchemy Farm and Avanzino Farms, but Ortega said Lost City is the first row-crop production farm in downtown Reno. Langsdale said the farming community in Reno has been very supportive. Tom



Toni Oretaga stretches out a hose at the Lost City Farm at Center and Moran streets on Wednesday. PHOTOS BY MARILYN NEWTON/RGJ



Lost City Farm owners Lyndsey Langsdale, left, and Toni Oretaga work the soil.

Stille from River School Farm lent them a rototiller and Todd Rissone from Avanzino Farms helped them plant their greenhouse and gave them seeds. The list goes on, she said.

“We would not be where we are today without them,” she said.

Langsdale said those in residential zones can grow whatever they want, but can’t neces-

sarily have a farm stand. Ortega hopes the farm becomes a household name in Reno and a Reno landmark. They currently only have plans to do a farm stand and said they have no plan to sell to restaurants, especially not in the first year because they want to take their time and give back to the land before they take from it, Ortega said.

“Bringing farming to the heart of Midtown brings new life and a really unique element you don’t see in a lot of urban communities. And we haven’t ever seen on this level in Reno,” said Kasey Christiansen, who owns Sup Restaurant with her husband, Christian. “Besides bringing our food even closer to us, it also bring more green space to a not so green area.”

As a working farm, it is designed to be efficient and grow the maximum amount of produce in a limited space. She said that during this first season, there will be a lot of experimenting, and the farm will just be growing produce for its farm stand. There are seedlings for kale, chard, greens, lettuces, root vegetables, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, beans, cut flowers, sunflowers, herbs and perennials. They also will plant shrubs and flowers along the perimeter of the farm’s fence as a buffer from the streets and sidewalks.

The Lost City Farm owners will be running the farm stand, and they hope to have the first wave of produce ready in late June or early July. This is a rough time frame, however — the vegetables determine the harvest, Langsdale and Ortega said.

The farm stand will start out being open for about four hours one day a week. But Langsdale said it will be a trial-and-error process.

“I think it’s also important to have a face for the farm,” Ortega said.

## Like a good neighbor

Part of the pair’s motivation is to make Reno the kind of place you want to live and create community, and said the city could always use another green space.

“I’m really excited to get to eat well and feed other people,” Ortega said. “It’s pleasing to the eyes, senses and soul.”

Ortega said she and Langsdale, as farmers, are stewards of the land.

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