



~ *Established in 1965* ~  
**FEBRUARY 2026**

# *The Elephant's Tale*

VOLUME 33 • ISSUE 2

- 2026 Executive Board**
- PRESIDENT  
Suzi Cornell
- 1st VICE PRESIDENT  
Joane Palmi
- 2nd VICE PRESIDENT  
Shirley Appel
- SECRETARY  
Cretia Eyster
- TREASURERS  
Susan Calfa and  
Trudi Adam



## **In This Issue**

- ◆ President's Message
- ◆ Commentary
- ◆ Membership Corner
- ◆ Achievement Awards
- ◆ Crime Ridden Minnesota
- ◆ The Somali Fraud Scandal
- ◆ Americanism
- ◆ Membership Application
- ◆ February Member Birthdays

*The Incline Village-Crystal Bay  
Republican Women's Club  
Presents...*



**CAPTAIN JOSEPH J. COLACURCIO**  
*Public Safety, Community and Law Enforcement*

---

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026**  
The Chateau | 955 Fairway Blvd | Incline Village  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm

---



Joseph J. Colacurcio is the Incline Village Patrol Captain for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. He oversees operations, strategic planning and community-based policing initiatives. With more than 16 years experience, Captain Colacurcio has served as a Patrol Lieutenant, Detention Lieutenant, Sergeant, Motor Officer, and Gerlach Resident Deputy. His career has included overseeing staffing and resource deployment, managing major grants, and implementing new technologies to improve public safety and operational efficiency. Capain Colacurcio is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute's Advanced Command School.

---

**RSVP/payment of \$40 must be received by  
Friday, February 6th, 12:00 noon**  
Email Shirley Appel at [mrsradar@aol.com](mailto:mrsradar@aol.com)  
or purchase tickets at: <https://ivcbrw.org/> and click "pay."

**RSVP to Shirley Appel at [mrsradar@aol.com](mailto:mrsradar@aol.com)  
or purchase tickets at: <https://ivcbrw.org/> and click on "pay."  
RSVP/PAYMENT of \$40 must be received by Friday, February 6th, 12 noon.**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I hope that every member will engage with the election process so we may all select our best leaders. *Let us "fight the good fight."*

Your Lady in Red,

Suzi Cornell

775-813-0622

[suzanncornell@cs.com](mailto:suzanncornell@cs.com)

As I write this the New Year is behind us, and we are at the cusp of another election. Let us not get complacent. This may only be a Congressional election year – but it will be an important one all the same.



Our Governor and Lieutenant Governor seats are up for grabs. As you know, Governor Lombardo provided dozens of

important vetoes to prevent the Democratic majority in the state legislature from enacting California-style progressive government here in Nevada. The legislature will be poised to try again in the next session of the legislature in 2027. There are vulnerable seats up for grabs in Congress and the state legislature. We could pick up a few seats, but we also need to protect a few seats to prevent a Democratic supermajority. Then there is what is shaping up to be a hotly-contested Washoe County District Attorney seat.

We also have ballot issues showing up again on Rank Choice Voting and the infamous Question Six. **We not only need to show up on election day, but we need to be advocates for our candidates.** They need our time, talent and, yes, financial support to win. We need to be a source of reasoned argument on the ballot questions. In short, we need to be **ENGAGED**.

While I say this, please remember the club will NOT endorse any candidate prior to the primaries. Candidates are welcome to attend our luncheons to meet and greet with our members, but they will not be speaking to our organization until after the primaries.

COMMENTARY

250 Years of Securing our Freedom

By Susan A. Schnetz

Our Founding Fathers understood something too many Americans have forgotten today: that liberty survives only when citizens keep up with how their country governs themselves. Liberty, freedom and justice depend on citizen involvement with their communities, representatives and each other.

Now more than ever we must be vigilant, pro-active and God-fearing citizens and not tempted into complacency. President Trump and his administration cannot right all the wrongs we are experiencing in our country without each and every one of us participating - - voting - - being engaged and up to date on what's happening in our country.

If we lose the midterms, we lose our country to the evils of the past four years. The Left's hatred will once again be energized to destroy our Republic. In November of 2025, Republicans won the Presidency, majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Now our country needs our vigorous participation to win the mid-terms, and in Nevada elect a Republican Governor and Lt Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Controller, State House and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



COMMENTARY

Senate seats, and many other positions. Let's unite in our efforts to win Republican victories in 2026.



Everywhere you look the principles that built America are being questioned — even rejected. Turning Point USA found the following troubling trends: Too many young Americans are being taught to distrust their country; socialists have been elected to lead cities; radical ideologies are present in too many schools. Lots of work needs to be done to win young people back to the principles our country was founded upon and expose the lies perpetrated by Marxist and anti-American educators in our schools.

Our first president George Washington knew that education was the key to good government, virtue, and happiness. He said. . .

“A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty is more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?”

Another patriot, Joseph Warren, who helped win our freedom 250 years ago said . . .

“Our country is in danger, but not to be despaired of. Our enemies are numerous and powerful; but we have many friends, determining to be free, and heaven and earth will aid the resolution. On you depend the fortunes of America. You are to decide the important question, on which rest the happiness and liberty of millions yet unborn. Act worthy of yourselves.”

Let's never stop being engaged in the battle to secure our country's freedom. *It's an ongoing battle that is worth the fight.*

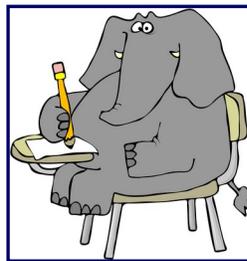
Membership Corner



**Time to Renew and Get Involved!**

Although a number of you have renewed your membership in the club (THANK YOU!), many have not. Some of our members renew after the holidays or when they return from their winter lodgings. Now that the holidays are over we would love to see you back!

This year is going to be an *extremely important* year for the Republicans in our State.



We will be electing (or re-electing) our Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, Controller, Senate seats and other local positions.

**TAKE NOTE!**

We will be busy inviting candidates for these offices to our monthly events. These activities will commence in April and go through October before the General Election in November.

We will have our Candidate Forum in May where we will hear from the candidates and what they will do for our State, just before the June Primary. **This month on February 10th, we will have our new Sheriff Captain Joseph Colacurcio our Speaker.** We cannot have any of the candidates as speakers until after the end of the “declaration” period, March 13th.

There will still be several events during the summer with candidates in attendance. We will also have our Fashion Show in September.

Attendance at our luncheon meetings this past year was disappointing. *We lose money* when members

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



### Membership Corner

don't attend our luncheons. We know many of you are out of town during the winter months, but when you are in town *please join us at our meetings*. We need you! **This is YOUR club! Let's make 2026 a success!**

#### *You have three options to renew:*

**Send a check for \$50** to our post office box and include an application if your contact information has changed. Our address is IVCB Republican Women, P.O. Box 3009, Incline Village, NV 89450.

#### **Renew online on our website**

[www.ivcbrw.org](http://www.ivcbrw.org), select the "Pay" tab, click on the "Register and Pay for Events." This includes fees for credit card payment.

**Come to our meetings** (*every second Tuesday at the Chateau, 11:30 am*) and pay cash to renew your membership or provide us a check.

*Shirley Appel*

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN 2026**

The first Republican I knew was my father and he is still the Republican I most admire. He joined our party because the Democrats in Jim Crow Alabama of 1952 would not register him to vote. The Republicans did. My father has never forgotten that day, and neither have I.

*— Condoleezza Rice*

### Achievement Awards

Let me introduce myself. I am Celine Nugent, the Achievement Awards Chair for our Republican Women's club. I have been doing this for some time now, since 2012.



Every two years we get several pages of standards from the National Federation of Republican Women as to what direction they would like all clubs to go in towards a national goal. We have been actively participating in this effort. I work closely with the President to guide her in the direction that the National Federation wants us to go. Since we began participating, we have been honored with awards. Our awards have been Silver, Gold, and most recently, Diamond. These awards are given to our Presidents at the National Convention every two years.

I am also the recorder of and for the political and campaign hours for our group. In this case, I record hours of all of our meetings, events, get-togethers and other happenings of a political nature. In addition, I schedule members and other interested Republicans in voter registration drives (at the post office) and poll watchers at the library during our elections.

Since this year is an election year, I am planning to make lots of phone calls to members and other interested Republicans in these efforts. Please feel free to email or call me if you are interested in participating in these exciting activities or if you have any questions. And remember, I WILL BE CALLING YOU!

*Celine Nugent*

[canuge@icloud.com](mailto:canuge@icloud.com)

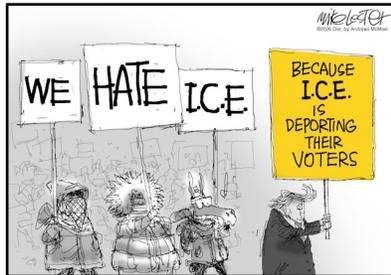
(775) 815-5587



## Crime-Ridden Minnesota

Minnesota has an incarceration rate of 323 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice

facilities), meaning that it locks up a higher percentage of its people than almost any democratic country on earth. The recent Somalian Fraud Scandal has put a spotlight on this northern state. Minnesota is home to 84,000 Somalis. As of 2024, the total population of Minnesota is about 5.7 million people. As of 2024, about 260,000 people of Somali descent were living in the United States, with Minnesota hosting the largest Somali American community.



## The Somali Fraud Scandal

The massive public programs fraud committed almost entirely by Somali perpetrators has recently exploded in the national news. The controversy is centered in Minnesota, where the amount of money bilked from American taxpayers could prove to be as high as \$9 billion. But the scandal is spreading to other states as well.

The massive fraud currently in the news was not the first controversy surrounding the Somali immigrant community. Around 2015, it proved to be a fertile source of ISIS recruits. A September 2015 report of the House Homeland Security Committee revealed that Minnesota led all other states in contributing foreign fighters to ISIS. During the trial of the three Somalis who contested the charges, it became clear, primarily from recordings introduced into evidence, that although they gave the outward appearance of American assimilation, they hated America. At one time, all three worked at a UPS facility in a leafy Saint Paul suburb, where they enjoyed watching ISIS videos of beheadings during their breaks.

**Child Care Fraud** – The defrauding of Minnesota's Child Care Assistance Program for day care services, although brought dramatically to national attention by Nick Shirley in late December, goes back more than ten years. Jeff Baillon, a Twin Cities TV reporter, reported on day care frauds in 2013 and 2015. A year ago this month Jay Kolls, another local reporter, went

to two of the ten sites Shirley visited and reported that one of them was guilty of 95 violations.

**Feeding Our Future Fraud** – A Star Tribune story summed up that the fraud scheme used in the state's child care programs *has been used frequently in other state human service programs*. A dramatic example of this is the case that has become known as the Feeding Our Future fraud. This nonprofit organization (served as a sponsor of sites like day care centers and restaurants that participated in two federal nutrition programs. During the peak COVID period, from April 2020 until January 2022, Feeding Our Future and its sites and vendors found it remarkably easy to bilk these programs by filing false claims for reimbursement supported by false meal counts, fake rosters, and bogus invoices. The free food programs were administered by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and funded by the federal Department of Agriculture. Operating under the law adopted by Congress on account of COVID, the MDE proved a remarkably easy mark. Feeding Our Future sites multiplied like rabbits, and funds kept rolling out the door. In 2021 alone, Feeding Our Future siphoned off nearly \$200 million of taxpayer money.

In February 2021 the FBI passed on allegations of fraud in the programs to the MDE. In April 2021, a frustrated MDE official tipped off the FBI regarding her own suspicions. An FBI forensic accountant followed up in the ensuing months by collecting relevant bank records to track the flow of funds. FBI Special Agents then followed up in the field. In the last six weeks of the investigation they posted surveillance cameras outside twelve Feeding Our Future sites that were supposedly feeding thousands of kids a day. The kids were nowhere to be seen.

On January 20, 2022, the investigation went public when federal agent's raided sites in the largest such operation ever conducted in Minnesota. The following September, United States Attorney Andrew Luger called a press conference to announce the charges brought against the first 47 defendants in the case. Charges have now been brought against a total of 78 defendants and charged this past November.

**Medicaid Fraud** – The Feeding Our Future fraud cases opened a new window on scams involving

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



## The Somali Fraud Scandal

several Minnesota Medicaid programs. After the FBI executed search warrants in one such case in July of last year, then-Acting United States Attorney Joe Thompson called a press conference in September of 2025 to announce criminal charges against the first eight Medicaid fraud defendants, all of whom are Somali.

Uncovering fraud in Minnesota is like playing with Russian nesting dolls. “Many of the owners of [the involved HSS] companies,” Thompson said, “had one or more other companies through which they billed other Medicaid programs such as the Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention program, the Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services program, the Integrated Community Support program, the Community Access for Disability Inclusion program, and other Medicaid-waivered services.” He added, “Minnesota is drowning in fraud – and the depth of fraud in Minnesota takes my breath away.”

The total amount of money disbursed through these programs since 2018 is \$18 billion. Based on his ongoing investigations, Thompson estimated that as much as half that amount—\$9 billion!—may have been paid out on fraudulent claims. “The magnitude cannot be overstated,” Thompson said.

“This fraud crisis didn’t come out of nowhere. It’s the result of widespread failure across nearly every level of leadership in Minnesota,” Thompson said. There are three in particular that he would focus on for this ongoing fraud; the first is Governor Tim Walz. In November 2020, Feeding Our Future sued the Minnesota Department of Education for suspending the processing of Feeding Our Future site applications — an action MDE officials had taken because they had good reason to suspect that Feeding Our Future was defrauding the state. The MDE was represented

in this lawsuit by the office of Minnesota Attorney General, which resolved the lawsuit, not under court order, but voluntarily, by backing down and agreeing to continue processing site applications. Two years later in 2022, when the Feeding Our Future scandal erupted and indictments were announced, Walz falsely blamed a state district court judge rather than his attorney general for compelling the state to continue payments. This was only the first of many of Walz’s dishonest deflections of responsibility that continue to the present day.

The second is Attorney General Ellison himself. Like Walz, Ellison continues to refuse to sit for an interview with a serious reporter to answer questions about what he knew about the fraud and when he knew it.

The third is U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar. Even if we leave aside the fact that she immigrated to the U.S. as a fraudulent member of the Omar family and later married her biological brother in her own Elmi family for further fraudulent purposes, we could still fairly describe her as Somali Fraud Exhibit A. She sponsored the MEALS Act that facilitated the Feeding Our Future fraud, and her congressional district served as its epicenter. Omar claims to have known nothing about any of the fraud in her community.

Public programs fraud on the scale we see today in Minnesota—and to a lesser degree (so far at least) in other states—indicates a leadership class that has either forgotten or no longer takes seriously the idea that public office is a public trust. What more fitting time could there be than the 250th anniversary year of the Declaration of Independence to restore the moral power of that idea in irresponsible state governments like that of Minnesota?

*This article by Scott W. Johnson, writing for The Epoch Times, was edited and shortened in order to include in The Elephant’s Tale.*





A 1907 illustration depicts George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette at Valley Forge.

## The Plot to Overthrow George Washington

By Andrew Benson Brown

**I**t was one of the lowest points for the Patriots in the Revolutionary War. The British had just defeated George Washington, again, at the Battle of Brandywine. The Commander-in-Chief was enduring a brutal winter at Valley Forge, where starvation and disease were causing thousands of deaths.

Horatio Gates wasn't sympathetic. His recent victory at Saratoga had struck a stunning blow to the British, capturing Gen. John Burgoyne's entire army. Yet, who commanded the Continental forces? It was a man who lost almost every battle. Perhaps it was time to change that—for the good of America, of course.

Thomas Conway voiced aloud what Gates thought. Conway, an Irishman who had served in the French Army, knew how to win. In a successful military career, he had been rapidly promoted. Now, he sought a new position in America: major general. Perhaps Gates was the man to make it happen, since Washington had denied his advancement. Conway began to openly criticize Washington as inexperienced, and some members of Congress were listening.

**A Plot Exposed** – Though Washington had enemies in high places some military leaders remained loyal. One such was Gen. William Alexander, known as “Lord Stirling” because of his unrecognized claim to a Scottish earldom. While an aide-de-camp to Gen. Gates, James Wilkinson, was on his way to deliver the news of Saratoga to Congress, he stopped to fraternize with Stirling's aide. During their conversation, Wilkinson revealed a letter to Gates from Conway. The two were colluding to overthrow Washington. When Stirling heard of the matter, he informed Washington immediately.

On November 5, 1777, Conway received an unexpected letter from Washington. It was brief but it revealed Washington's knowledge of the statement Conway had written to Gates: “Heaven has been determined to save your country; or a weak General and bad councilors would have ruined it.” Conway was confused. Washington's report was all of three sentences, ending courteously with, “I am Sir Yr Hble Servt.”

The Commander-in-Chief didn't seem angry. How much did he know? Conway and Gates both denied involvement, declaring the incriminating letter to be a forgery. Gates even accused Alexander Hamilton of stealing it. When Washington revealed that the information was leaked by Gates's own aide, the schemer was caught off-guard.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



## AMERICANISM



**Beware the Bureaucrats** – Enter another conspirator: Thomas Mifflin. One of Washington’s former aides, Mifflin had risen to the rank of general. Despite owing everything to Washington, or perhaps because of it, he resented the commander-in-chief. Mifflin was named to a reorganized war board, aptly name Board of War, which then appointed Gates as its president. Gates, in turn, created an inspection system to keep the Continental Army running efficiently. And the inspector general? None other than Conway.

In December, Conway arrived at Valley Forge to review the encampment’s state. As one can guess, he didn’t plan on awarding any high marks. In fact, e hoped to use a failed inspection as a pretext for declaring Washington unfit for command. But the Virginian remained unflappable. He greeted Conway with icy good manners and didn’t allow an inspection, citing a lack of clear directives from Congress.

Conway, outraged at being so coolly received, wrote Washington an angry letter on January 27, 1778. Echoing Gates, he declared his earlier discovered collusion to be a forgery, complaining that “I am a victim of calumny,” and “your mind has been embittered and prejudiced against me.” He ended on a positive note: “I can foretell that your virtues will acquire new luster and shine in a great light, if you guard against flattery and calumny,” not realizing the irony of dealing in these qualities himself.

**A Traitor’s Apology** – The Board of War never gained supervisory control over Washington, and the Conway destructive plot fizzled out. Over the coming months, Conway’s treachery was common table-talk among Washington’s loyal supporters. When Conway heard that Gen. John Cadwalader had said unkind words about him, Conway challenged the brigadier general to a duel. On the

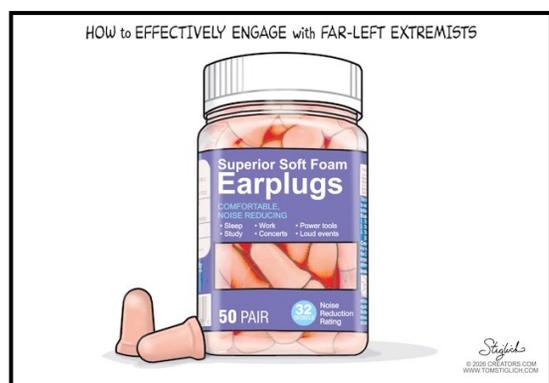
morning of July 4, 1778, the two men met on the Philadelphia Common. Cadwalader shot Conway through the side of the face, and Conway was carried off the field.

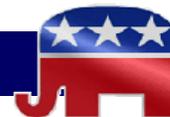
Believing that was about to die, Conway took up a shaky pen and apologized to Washington: “[I’m] expressing my sincere grief for having done, written, or said anything disagreeable to your excellency ... You are in my eyes the great and the good man. May you long enjoy the love, veneration, and esteem of these states whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues.”

One senses that this time, the flattery was heartfelt. Conway survived his wound and recovered, returning to France.

Despite a handful of traitors, why did most men remain loyal to Washington, despite his shortcomings as a military strategist? Unlike his rivals, who grumbled behind closed doors, Washington had a noble character. He struck everyone who met him as a man of patience, forthrightness, and dignity. Just as he outlasted continuous defeats and bitter winters to achieve ultimate victory, he outlasted the petty schemers who sought his command.

Source: *The Epoch Times*, “The Plot to Overthrow George Washington,” written January 14, 2026. Author Andrew Benson Brown is the Outreach Director for the Society of Classical Poets and the author of “Legends of Liberty,” an epic poem about the American Revolution.





### Membership Application

New Member     Renewing Membership

*If you receive this application/renewal form via email, please print a copy and mail with your check to the address below.*

NAME as it appears on VOTER REGISTRATION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME as it appears on your NAMETAG: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS(es): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone with Area Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday (Month, Day) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (for roster and newsletter):  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Please print*

#### MEMBERSHIP STATUS , PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- Active \$50, any woman registered as a Republican
- Associate \$20, any woman with a full membership in another Republican women's group,
- \_\_\_\_\_ OR any man registered as a Republican
- Primary Club Membership*

#### CHECK AREAS OF INTEREST:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art or Graphic Art Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising        | <input type="checkbox"/> Greeter at Meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budget/Finance          | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership         | <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bylaws                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity          | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Committee     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campaign Work           | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations   | <input type="checkbox"/> Email               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Service       | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter          |

**MAIL APPLICATION AND CHECK** to the following address:

Membership Chairman  
IV/CB Republican Women  
P. O. Box 3009, Incline Village, NV 89450

*Always more information for you at our website: [ivcbrw.org](http://ivcbrw.org)*



## Incline Village-Crystal Bay Republican Women Vision and Mission Statement

**Vision:** To support individual freedom and responsibility under the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence by making Nevada a Red state again and keeping it that way.

**Mission:** To promote the principles and philosophy of the Republican Party at the local, state, and federal levels by taking action to:

- Support the election of conservative Republican candidates.
- Educate club members and local voters.
- Communicate with local, state and federal legislative bodies to enact constitutional, conservative legislation.
- Collaborate with Nevada Republican Women's clubs to leverage best practices to improve club effectiveness.
- Promote Republican and conservative values through social media, print media, and community participation.
- Effect change in our schools to support conservative and constitutional values.
- Protect the integrity of local, state, and federal elections.



### FEBRUARY 2026 Member Birthdays

Patricia Moser Morris .....	1 Feb
Constance Skidmore .....	5 Feb
Bonnie Yachbes .....	7 Feb
Joyce Anderson Bock .....	9 Feb
Lorri Waldman .....	22 Feb

### Legislative Corner – Your Federal Representatives

White House Switchboard (202) 456-1414  
 Comment Line (202) 456-1111  
 Capital Switchboard, Senate and  
 & House (202) 224-3121

#### Senate

Jacky Rosen (D)  
 Washington DC (202) 224-6244  
 Las Vegas (702) 388-0205

Catherine Cortez-Masto (D)  
 Washington DC (202) 224-3542  
 Las Vegas (702) 388-5020

#### House of Representatives

CD:2 Mark Amodei  
 Washington DC (202) 225-6155  
 Reno (775) 686-5760



## *The Elephant's Tale*

is published monthly by Incline Village/Crystal Bay Republican Women

Post Office Box 3009, Incline Village, NV 89450

Newsletter Editor, Susan Schnetz | Newsletter Coordinator, Nancy Carlson

Email: [saschnetz@icloud.com](mailto:saschnetz@icloud.com) | Email: [nmcarlson01@yahoo.com](mailto:nmcarlson01@yahoo.com)

*The articles and opinions expressed within this newsletter were selected for their relevant content. The publishing of such articles and opinions do not necessarily reflect the official views, opinions and practices of the Incline Village-Crystal Bay Republican Women.*