

Camp Rich beach is for all ages – despite what some say

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Sipping Rum Runners, listening to live music, ogling all the flesh and maybe dipping into Lake Tahoe. It's what I did on a regular basis when I first moved to Lake Tahoe right out of college in the late 1980s.

It's what I did when I would come back to visit.



All ages enjoy
Lake Tahoe
near South
Shore's Beacon
restaurant.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

It's what I like to do on occasion now that I live here again in my mid-40s.

Who cares, you ask? Well, a 36-year-old married woman with two children trashed this scene in a July article for The Mommy Files on sfgate.com. She ripped Lake Tahoe, primarily the South Shore, to pieces.

I decided last Sunday to visit the Beacon – home of the slushy rum concoction – sit on the beach and take in the scene. I

even dunked into the chilly water. It was just as it was 20-plus years ago. That's a good thing. The only thing that seemed different is it wasn't just 20-something-year-olds and hard bodies. The rest of us fit in, too.

The San Francisco writer bemoaned the scantily clad beachgoers. I'm not sure what she expected. It's a beach. Worldwide beaches are going to show-off more flesh than clothing – some places it's all skin.

Plenty of children were running around the beach. Some were in the water. Some were at the restaurant with their parents listening to the Steve Walker band belt out what might be favorites of their grandparents.

Yes, the Beacon is a party scene in the summer. It's lively, it's fun, it's happening.

I didn't see trash on the beach like this woman talked about. I was annoyed by cigarette smoke – but I am anywhere I smell it, especially when I'm outside. It wasn't constant, though.

All ages were enjoying the roped off area of the water where they could safely kayak or enjoy other rental toys in an area where motorboats can't get to.

Just a little farther out are an array of boats hooked to buoys bobbing up and down in the gentle breeze. The marina is doing a fair amount of business. People saunter along the dock that jets into the lake.

From the beach, no snow is visible on the mountaintops. Still, they loom all around in a spectacular display of natural beauty.

The sfgate.com article goes on to gripe about parking at Emerald Bay.

I could easily gripe how when I go to her city for a Giants game the parking garages change their prices depending on the

hour of day (cheaper if you arrive early), who the opponent is and how many tickets have been sold. At least in Tahoe where there is a parking fee, it's the same price the whole season.

Yes, touristy spots are crowded. They are everywhere in the world. The sfgate.com writer might want to drive into The City for a Giants game and see what those of us coming from Tahoe have to deal with in her hometown.

The sfgate writer talks about Alpine County being quieter, easier to manage. It is. So are Marin and Sonoma counties in her neck of the woods.

Instead of storming off in a huff from the Beacon, she should have strolled down farther on the beach where it is quieter. Maybe she should have taken her children to the neighboring Tallac Site and shown them a bit of Tahoe history – something about how those rich San Franciscans developed the pristine property along Lake Tahoe's shore so many years ago.

Maybe if she were a more responsible mom, she would have done better research.

The Beacon, that beach and Camp Rich are just fine the way they have been for the 20-plus years I've been going there. Don't change a thing – accept for maybe lowering the price of the Rum Runners and allowing them on the beach.

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