

# Searching for candidates to move Lake Tahoe forward

Who and what to vote for?

Those are questions Californians who vote by mail are asking themselves now, Nevadans who vote early will soon answer and everyone else will decide Nov. 2.

On the South Shore, three seats are open on the South Lake Tahoe City Council and the two Douglas County Commission incumbents are being challenged. El Dorado County voters must decide on a sheriff – someone from within or an outsider. U.S. senators in both states will be voted in. California and Nevada will have a new governor. Propositions line the ballot.

*Lake Tahoe News* on Oct. 12 finished publishing profiles of 12 of the 14 candidates in the South Shore races. Two of the 10 City Council candidates did not return the questionnaire.

The answers are there to compare one to another. It's time for you to evaluate them. But first it's important to know what you want in a candidate.

*Lake Tahoe News* believes there are more important issues than legalized marijuana and the number of dispensaries in South Lake Tahoe. State and federal law can handle some of that. And if it's a legal way for the city and business owners to make money, what's the harm? People seem to forget 24-hour drinking is next door in Stateline, prostitution is a short drive away and the Stateline casinos practically promote sex at the nightclubs. Morality can't be the issue.

Pot has been a huge issue here long before people tried to sell it legally. Ask any police officer. Where was the outrage before it became legal?

The questions that need to be asked and answered are: What can be done to change how easy it is to get a prescription for medical marijuana? Is it better for the people who are going to smoke pot without a true medical need to get it at a collective where the goods are not laced with anything than on the street? Could the pot clubs reduce crime? With the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office not prosecuting people with a minimal possession of marijuana, is it better for law enforcement to know pot users are off the street so they can deal with more serious offenses? How much money can the city make off this enterprise?

It's time the discussion of local elections centers on real issues. What about the 25 percent of South Lake Tahoe's children living in poverty? Not a single official from the city of South Lake Tahoe was at the Oct. 8 Poverty to Prosperity forum. Shame on them. Let's hope whomever the new three electeds are for the city will want to be part of that discussion and part of the solution.

People talk about wanting recreation to be the focus of the future. Great. But has any one of them spoken to the U.S. Forest Service to know the fed's recreation sites are tapped? Have they been at a ski resort in Lake Tahoe on a Saturday?

Recreation – define it – all you candidates who mouth off about it. Be specific what you want and how you will achieve it. What are you going to do that others haven't done or aren't doing?

*Lake Tahoe News* is a huge supporter of recreation. It is fantastic Amgen is bringing the Tour of California cycling event to the basin in May 2011. Kudos to the visitors' authorities on both ends of the lake to make this a reality.

And hats off to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board for voting to revamp the football field so it will have lights and be able to attract outside entities to use the site.

Two thumbs up to Douglas County and others for the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail that is in the planning stages.

This election (or any other for that matter) is not about voting for friends. It's about voting for the person who can achieve the goals you deem important. It's looking at track records. Now is not the time to elect people who need a learning curve. The South Shore, California, Nevada and the United States need to right the listless ships of bureaucratic and political morass that have bogged each entity for years.

Locally, *Lake Tahoe News* is supportive of the candidates with vision, ones who have experience with finance, who can work together as a team, who aren't afraid to go against the status quo, who are about substance and not hot air.

We need people who call Lake Tahoe home, but who also have experience from elsewhere to bring depth and perspective to decisions. Living here for decades does not make someone more qualified than someone who has been here less than a decade. On the flip side, being here for years does not make someone a good ole boy.

It's easy to talk a good game, especially for people with a communications or marketing background. But talk is cheap. The South Shore deserves more. We deserve more than going to meetings and putting colored sticky dots on poster boards at endless meetings and to have nothing come of it. (Think TRPA Regional Plan.)

Government will never solve what ails society. But it can help or hinder the process. City councils, county commissions, Congress – they are there to set policy. What kind of policy do you want? Who running for office will help you get what you want and what is best for your town, your state, the country?

Then look in the mirror. What are you doing to help yourself, your town, your state, your country?

If you want Tahoe to look better, what does your home and business look like? If you want less poverty, are you able to hire more people? Or pay people more? Charge a fair price and not one to rape tourists and in turn send locals off the hill.

We are all in this together – at the local, regional, state and national levels. It's time to play nice and learn the definition of compromise to take off the tarnish that befalls the Lake Tahoe Basin in order to make it shine like the jewel it should and can be.

Your vote is that important.