

Opinion: Tahoe's mantra should be 'haste makes waste'

By Garry Bowen

Although this column could easily be my swan song, given the dearth of opportunity here for anyone beyond a South Shore job description, as a long-time local I am hardier than that, especially in a hometown which desperately needs to upgrade their entry into the 21st century, if they ever hope to flourish again.

First of all, thanks go out to all those who have noticed the continual contradictions between what our "powers-that-be" profess to do on our behalf, and what the rest of us observe as reality, starting with the idea that as Lahontan wants to use pesticides to solve the invasive species issue, a western Nevada entrepreneur has approval from another agency to harvest 220 million crayfish as a "cash crop".



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The gratitude rests with the idea that this exposes a perfect example of the continual expression that the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing with our institutional guidance. The idea that there might be a harvest of crayfish from a lake that uses pesticides to combat other biologic forms has already turned off those intuitive enough to notice the conflict, even absent any biologic knowledge, with this very ironic development.

The EPA considers any additive to our water supply, whether organic or chemical, to be pollution, so it will be interesting to see what happens to Lahontan's supposed July approval for such an idea.

The word "cumulative" is now in play, as too much of either cannot assimilate back into nature – that would be a fundamental for the EPA position, as by definition this is what toxicity is, and a foundation for the proposed TMDL.

As we already know, with Tahoe water columns recirculate only every 700 years (it averages 989 feet deep), this development needs serious scrutiny, and much deeper understanding than prevailing board approval would imply.

Conversely, anyone (from Yerington?) who thinks that they are to invest in equipment, facilities, marketing, and distribution with an approval-in-hand is just as off-balance as are agencies, as their entire product line is now in serious jeopardy, unless they indulge in one of those illegitimately spun PR campaigns extolling "succulent Tahoe shrimp".

The Swan Song theme doesn't stop there, as apparently other powers-that-be have announced a misdirection in wanting to change any South Shore reference to Tahoe South. In the alternative, they may be right, as toxic crayfish will perhaps be associated with Tahoe North by default, to mitigate any further damage to our current flat economy – but a divided Tahoe identity will easily counteract that idea.

This is a fertile period for naysayers when you also consider the latest city escapade, and add it to the situations above, upon realizing that any sincere attempt to offset a municipal loss by "outsourcing" its operation with a business proposal that pays the city less than a dime per square foot for a very sophisticated building of almost 40,000 square feet is unworkable. Note that a serious reworking of the original bond

takes \$75,000 worth of consultancies to effectuate, not to mention a lifespan that may result in several hundred thousand dollars of additional interest.

How long will it take to recoup \$75,000, or several hundred thousand, at less than 10 cents a square foot? I know, I know – the private proprietors were to pay a percentage of their profit, but above a certain amount – an amount that the city never reached themselves – what did they think the possibility of that actually was?

I submit that they will be losing way more than the previous \$100,000.

Does the idea of “haste makes waste” govern all conduct in the basin? Or, are we going to continue to “shoot ourselves in the foot” in “rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic” – sorry for the obvious clichés, but they are now very apt.

This is where the Swan Song theme bears fruit, as in the aggregate of the above initiatives; no leeway exists for anything new, as unfortunately there is only so much daylight to burn. This is the danger of being overly preoccupied with trying to prop up a status quo, especially a declining one, while not allowing any way for necessary sustained transformation to emerge. Time is of course the essence.

It is indeed a sad commentary for the natural beauty of Tahoe to be squandered by trying to maintain ideas that are not even understood by those trying so hard to protect them, while not trying very hard to engage those providing very real and understandable solutions.

You don't have to believe in the problems to believe in solutions – something apparently lost on those who continue to dwell on the avoidance of problems by creating more of them. None of the above is sustainable to any quality of life here.

Even a Swan Song can be off-key – Tahoe will simply have to do

better than this.

Garry Bowen has a 50-year connection to the South Shore, with an immediate past devoted to global sustainability, on most of its current fronts: green building, energy and water efficiencies, and public health. He may be reached at tahoefuture@gmail.com or (775) 690.6900.