

Editorial: Thanksgiving – a day to remember not everyone has a bounty to be thankful for

“The Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more impoverished than these who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving.”

– H.U. Westermayer

Most people will gather this Thanksgiving Day with family and friends to celebrate this iconic American holiday. We will do so with tables full of food that becomes refrigerators overflowing with leftovers.

And as we do so, plenty of our neighbors are struggling to find something to be thankful for – either because they are alone on this holiday that screams to be with others or because the bounty before them is anything but that.



With South Lake Tahoe’s unemployment rate of 12.3 percent being higher than California’s (10.1 percent), higher than Nevada’s (11.5 percent) and higher than the national average (7.9 percent), we are a community overflowing with have nots. And while South Tahoe once had an unemployment rate at nearly 18 percent, the decline of more than five percentage points does mean full employment. It means some have left the area, some have stopped looking for work, some are working multiple jobs, and so many are underemployed.

Many don’t know where the rent or mortgage payment will come

from in a week.

While we live in an extremely pretty place, the beauty of the mountains and the lake don't pay the bills. They are good for providing solace in times of struggle, but not much else.

Maybe there is something we can learn from the pilgrims who in 1621 celebrated what is considered the first Thanksgiving. They did so with the Wampanoag Indians. It was a time to be grateful for the fall harvest – for what the land had provided.

Perhaps locally, we should be thankful for our harvest this time of year – the snow. While the white stuff itself does not provide nourishment to be shared at a table, it provides work for so many who call Lake Tahoe home. And work provides the money to buy the fixings for every meal.

We don't all work in the field of tourism, but we all ride the roller coaster of economic good and bad times because tourism is the thread that binds us.

The fabric of this community is thread barren. Instead of picking at the loose ends and watching them unravel into an abyss, perhaps it's time we started to stitch the pieces back together.

The anger, the hate, the divisiveness in the world permeate our little town, our shores, the region. We need to stop beating each other up and start lifting each other up. It is time to be thankful that we have the ability to help and thankful for the help that is offered.

Thanksgiving – it's really two words – *thanks* and *giving*.