

# Editorial: Stop the name calling or the comment section on Lake Tahoe News will go away

The world seems to be in a sad, angry and distrustful state of mind.



We live in a time when in 2012 more active U.S. troops took their lives than died fighting in Afghanistan, according to the Military Suicide Report.

In 2012, 70 journalists died. The record was 74 in 2009. That might not sound like much, but there was a time when journalists' notebooks were like a white flag of neutrality. Not so anymore. These unarmed chroniclers of truth are seen as having an even more dangerous weapon than a gun – that of a pen, a computer, a microphone, a cell phone.

While journalists have long been held in low-esteem right along with attorneys, the fourth estate has also had a special status of being a non-combatant. Not so much anymore.

We are hurting each other with weapons and words.

People say they hate all the negative news. We say there is no such thing as negative or positive news – there is just news.

However, *Lake Tahoe News* knows we are bringing a good deal of negativity to you via the comments.

Without counting the positive, negative and neutral comments on *Lake Tahoe News*, we know the negative run rampant and

overshadow and the other comments. The negativity isn't what is so grating and unnerving, it's the anger and venom that are spewed that are both disheartening and alarming.

No one is going to agree with everyone all of the time. But that doesn't make the other person's opinion less valid. Nor does it make that person an idiot or some other name for having that opinion.

Sure, it's easy to tell someone to not read the comments if they don't like what is being said. But isn't that in some way punishing the people who want to contribute in a meaningful way and rewarding the nasty commenters?

*Lake Tahoe News*, and any site for that matter, does not have to allow comments. We've done a lot of thinking about whether comments are good or bad for the news site. For now, the good outweighs the bad. We like when conversations are elevated, new information is brought forward and divergent opinions are presented in a thoughtful manner.

But as we go forward with a redesign of the news site, we are giving serious thought to not allowing comments in the future. It will be up to the commenters – basically how you behave between now and when we pull the trigger on the redesign – as to whether comments will be a component in the next incarnation.

The turning of a calendar for many is all about resolutions. For *Lake Tahoe News* we would like to not be able to write the first sentence of this editorial a year from now. We'll do our part to make that possible, if you will do yours.

Is it that hard to do unto others as you would want done to you? Is it that hard to voice your opinion about a topic without being critical of someone else? Why can't you just write: I disagree with *Lake Tahoe News* because ... and then leave it at that.

**Happy New Year from everyone at *Lake Tahoe News!***