

Opinion: A few ideas for Lake Tahoe in 2014

By Kathryn Reed

While it's not possible to wipe the slate clean, it is possible to approach things from a different perspective. That is in a lot of ways what New Year's resolutions are about.

Here, in no particular order, are some resolutions, ideas, and thoughts I have for 2014 for the greater Lake Tahoe area:

- Let's not artificially start the ski season before Thanksgiving. Mother Nature seldom has. I remember growing up in the Bay Area and many a year the skiing was not good at Lake Tahoe at Christmas. This was long before climate change and global warming were in our vocabulary. Let's promote fall in Tahoe; then ramp up the snowmaking – if need be – so there is a white Christmas on the slopes.
- Let's have elected officials set the example for how to behave properly. This means no screaming at people getting signatures for petitions, no accosting reporters at meetings, no disrespect to people whose opinion you disagree with, no bullying. You are elected to lead and to represent everyone, even those who did not vote for you and those you don't like.
- Let's put locals first. I've long advocated that if we create an area where people want to live and work, then tourists will follow. Most tourists want an authentic experience, not some make believe village or Disneyland-esque venue. Tourist traps, jacked up prices, crappy service – no one wants any of that.
- Let's take pride in what we have. How hard would it be to at a minimum once a month do something to improve your business and your residence? This includes people who don't own, own

but don't live here, and part-timers. It could be cleaning the windows, raking, shoveling, taking out fire-prone juniper, a fresh coat of paint, building morale with a company event, closing for a half day and letting employees use that time to volunteer in the community, getting neighbors together to help each other with a project – the possibilities are endless.

- Let's broaden our horizons by getting out more. Visit a store you haven't been to before. Take a walk, a hike, a bike ride some place new. Eat at a different restaurant, have a beer someplace new. Go to an event you've never been to. Tahoe might have more to offer than you realized.

- Let's help our local businesses by writing reviews on Yelp, Trip Advisor, Open Table and the like. Have family and friends do the same. And if you have had a bad experience, talk to the manager or owner and tell that person what happened so the same negative thing doesn't happen to someone else. That's more helpful than complaining to friends or writing a bad review.

- Let's take a hard look at how much we really need. We claim to want to build things because we need more tourists – aka more money. Bigger isn't necessarily better; just as change is not necessarily bad. Let's make decisions based on the merits of the project. Not all development is bad; just as not all redevelopment is good just because it looks pretty. And just because something has been on the books for X number of years is not a reason to go forward with that idea.

- Let's learn the arts of listening and compromise. Everyone has a right to his or her opinion. Instead of challenging it, just hear what that person has to say. That does not mean you have to agree with it. It's good to know what you want, even better to give a little so even more people get what they want. That is compromise. Listening and compromising can be hard, but both are rewarding.

- Let's remember that Lake Tahoe means different things to everyone. Each section of the basin has something special to offer locals and visitors. It belongs to all of us. No one person, no one business, no one agency is more important than another. Yes, there are different visions and even more ways to create those visions. But we're all here only briefly. Let's make the best of it instead of being so divisive.

Happy New Year, Lake Tahoe!