

Opinion: Consider the arts when voting

By Robert Schimmel

I'll bet you've heard how you must vote and why, right? Well, I hope you listened, because when you vote it really makes a difference.

I'd like to offer you another criteria to consider: the arts and what they mean to our community as a point of pride, a vehicle for healing, a source of inspiration and creative development, the nurturing agent for educational abilities and success, a real engine for our economy and growth, and an identity that will bring recognition and pride like no other. And what does this have to do with voting? Everything.



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Schimmel

Who are the candidates that support art as part of our curriculum and will fight for it? Oh, by the way, art is a legally mandated part of our schools' studies but has been cleverly left out for budgetary reasons for many years by the powers that be. The sad part is that it is a primary stimulant to all learning processes, and our kids aren't benefiting from its influence on their performance in other subjects.

Who recognizes that the arts as an economic engine have no equal for what they generate in employment, contribute to

projects, bring to festivals, galleries, stage shows, etc., attract and turn into heads in beds dollars we desperately need? The point here is that most artists and art related businesses can only thrive and fuel our economy if the governing bodies regulating business have freedom and success of private enterprise at the core of their beliefs. This has been steadily eroding here and even more so nationally.

Do you know candidates who will be proactive and support the arts at the city, school, community and business levels? Or do you fall prey to the lip service with no teeth that is so easy when they are not held accountable or even understand what's at stake?

Don't misunderstand me, I am not scolding you (as promises and truth are hard to discern and make stick), but I am encouraging you to take another criteria with you into the booth that may make voting easier. After all, we live and thrive on art every day and have become oblivious to it and its benefits. The new creative economy we have entered is fairly obvious but has crept up via the Information Age and been camouflaged in the process to the extent that we haven't adapted or understood what's happened.

Bottom line is that I want (and will assume you do) Tahoe to prosper and grow. This doesn't have to be ugly with thoughtless, carpet-bagging policies, favoritism and environmental devastation. Instead it can be accomplished by opening the gates to creativity by including more arts integration in every city project and arts education funding of organizations that provide it (including our schools), by passing new or supporting existing legislation that empowers and permits artists to do more in public venues, etc., and by actually promoting Tahoe as an arts destination.

Novel idea, right, especially when most of us are here because of just that, whether we knew it at the time or not. Yes, the appeal of all our seasonal recreational activities is largely

based on the aesthetic of beauty before, during and after we've caressed each experience, don't you think?

Be sure to vote, and, if uncertain as to why or for whom, then make the arts a priority.

Robert Schimmel is a professional artist in South Lake Tahoe.