

Opinion: LTN making changes in 2016

By Kathryn Reed

Looking back on some of the headlines from 2015 I'm extremely proud and grateful to live here: Amgen women cyclists and other sporting events, local athletes excelling, businesses reinvesting in the area, environmental improvements, the artists and authors who share their world with us.

Looking back on others I'm embarrassed, saddened and just shake my head: the ones about political recalls, censure of an elected official, crime, deaths, lawsuits, companies treating employees shabbily.

Together, though, they represent our life in the Lake Tahoe Basin and beyond. The frivolity and the complexity of topics will never change; which is probably good, otherwise life might be boring.

People often ask why *Lake Tahoe News* doesn't write more positive stories, why it's always negative. My reply – there is no good or bad news, there is just news. We merely seek the truth of whatever the topic.

There are times as a publication we have plotted out special series like we did in 2015 with stories about the city of South Lake Tahoe turning 50. In 2016 we have a couple other special topics in the works. The first will commence at the end of the month. While it is not Tahoe-centric, it is a topic that is bound to resonate with many *Lake Tahoe News* readers.

Not all stories on *LTN* generate comments, but most do. We welcome the dialogue. For the most part we like the conversation. We understand there are plenty of reasons to remain anonymous while commenting.

However, starting today we are going to be more rigid with what is allowed to be posted. One of my favorite phrases is: "You can disagree without being disagreeable." It's time for the commenters to embrace that sentiment as well. Attack the idea, not the person. Then try to come up with a solution. Elevate the discussion; don't let it devolve into childish rhetoric. If you can't play nice, you will be banned from commenting. It's that simple. If you aren't using a valid email address, your comments won't get posted. For all the people who claim we will be limiting your rights in regards to the First Amendment, you're wrong – study the Constitution a bit more.

The goal is to make *Lake Tahoe News* more inviting, a place that welcomes diverse points of view without the threat of being demeaned and ridiculed. Disagree all you want among yourselves, just do it without the name calling. Be constructive, be passionate, pick apart flaws in reasoning, express why you agree or disagree – just don't make it personal.

The biggest change is it is now going to cost people to comment. For \$100 a year people may make as many comments as they like. Or you may choose to pay \$10 for unlimited comments for that one month. A number of people already subscribe to *Lake Tahoe News*. Whatever the amount you've paid will continue to get you unlimited comments on an annual basis as long as you renew your subscription each year.

The pay-for-comment policy will take effect Feb. 1. This gives you time to subscribe. You may do so **online**. If cash or check is more to your liking, send them to: Lake Tahoe News, PO Box 13406, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151. Please make checks payable to Lake Tahoe News. This **paid subscriber form** must also be filled out.

Becoming a paid subscriber, though, will not give you license to be abusive with your comments. Bullies will be banned – no

matter the amount you've paid.

And with that, I wish you all a wonderful 2016.

Kathryn Reed is publisher of Lake Tahoe News.