

# Opinion: LTN owner says goodbye

By Kathryn Reed

Saying goodbye is never easy, but that's exactly what I'm doing.

After nine years of owning/operating *Lake Tahoe News*, it is time to move on. This will be the last month of the news site (unless it sells – **here is the listing**).

The coverage will be sporadic until the end of the month.

*LTN* started on Labor Day 2009 with the Jaycee Lee Dugard parade. What an introduction.

Every day since then we have been providing a variety of news. We have broken a slew of stories, often being the only publication to write about a topic. We weren't afraid to upset people, even advertisers. We were never bought by anyone. For our travel pieces we won multiple awards.

I'm proud to say we never charged for an obituary. We were innovative in how we eliminated the trolls by creating a policy to charge for comments – something I wish we'd done sooner. The nights when we picked who to endorse in the various political races were some of the best political discussions I've been involved in. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to be part of that important endeavor. The various series we did from the five-year anniversary of the 2007 Angora Fire, to South Lake Tahoe turning 50, to mental health, to looking at affordable housing in 2017 were accomplishments that everyone who was involved in them can look back on with pride. That is what true journalism is about.

So many of the stories we wrote were ideas provided by

readers. You were wonderful sources. Some sent in tips, photos, asked about something that led to a story. It really was a group effort in so many ways.

It hasn't just been hard news. We published incredible feature stories on people, places and organizations – with more to come this month. We tried to provide a mix of stories, to be a community newspaper – just online. I believe we achieved that goal.

I started *Lake Tahoe News* because I was frustrated with all the news I knew was not getting published and couldn't imagine what I didn't know that should see the light of day. This is an incredibly rich area for news. I was never at a loss for something to cover; just disappointed not to be able to get to everything. Before *LTN* I had been freelancing for publications like the *Tahoe Mountain News*, *New York Times*, *Reuters* and *Sacramento Business Journal*. This was after being fired as managing editor of the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* because I wouldn't blur the lines between advertising and editorial. I came to Tahoe from San Francisco where I had been an editor at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The *Trib* was where I started my journalism career as a reporter out of college.

There are so many people who have made *Lake Tahoe News* what it is. If it weren't for you readers, it wouldn't matter what we do every day. You have kept me going on days when I was ready to chuck the computer out the window. You made me realize what we were doing was worth it, that it was important, that we were making a difference.

And while all of that is still true, it is time for me to move on, to explore new challenges, pursue new dreams. I've been in the news business since graduating from college 30 years ago; even before that if you count high school and college papers as well as summer internships. The grind, especially these last nine years of working every day, has me wanting and needing to take a break.

I know it's always dangerous to start naming people because inevitably someone will be left out, but here goes. Sue Wood – thank you for being with *LTN* from the first story and to the end with more coming this month. Your words, counsel and support have been invaluable. Lisa Tolda was also there on Day 1, shooting the parade, and has been a stalwart supporter of true journalism; Kim Wyatt for endless conversations, being my go-to sounding board who talked me off the ledge so many times; Carolyn Wright for making me understand copyright law and upping the level of photography to a professionalism that is off the charts; Dave Gill for being my IT guru who saved me when the site had some serious technical troubles and who will be there until the end and beyond; Joann Eisenbrandt puts more time and research into a story compared to anyone I know; Jessie Marchesseau, Linda Conaboy and Terra Breeden who are still writing for *LTN* – covering a diverse lineup of stories that shows their range; Karen Kuentz who unfailingly provides the weekly pet of the week even when out of town; Anne Knowles was there early on, covering mostly Douglas County issues before getting a full-time job elsewhere; Kat Hill who covered the North Shore before buying her own publication; Pat Banner who from Washington state reads *LTN* after the fact for typos and other corrections; Lisa Huard for your stint at selling ads; Denise Haerr for taking photos when I couldn't and providing so much cultural content; and the writing and photo interns who also taught me, with one being responsible for getting *LTN* on Instagram. I could go on and on about each person; they all deserve their own story about what they mean to me and the impact they've had on *Lake Tahoe News*.

I am so grateful to *LTN's* advertisers. South Tahoe Refuse, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe Community College, Barton Health and the city of South Lake Tahoe took a chance on *Lake Tahoe News* in 2009 when none of us was really sure what the news site was going to be. They have continued to support *LTN* to this day. There were plenty of other advertisers through the years – thank you.

And thank you to the many individuals who donated to *LTN*, especially to those who did so with commenting not being the reason to do so. Your support of community journalism is admirable.

While I move on, I hope the void created by *Lake Tahoe News*' absence won't last long. There needs to be a watch dog. Without an informed citizenry, we all lose. Public agencies need to be held accountable. The public should demand accurate, unbiased new coverage – not merely settling for press releases being regurgitated or stories that favor chamber-backed businesses. It takes time, work and money to put out a publication. Support the media you read by buying an ad or telling an advertiser you saw their ad. When you see that donate button, don't ignore it; subscribe to publications, don't just read the allotted number of free articles and move on until the next month.

I leave being proud of what I created with *Lake Tahoe News*. We made a difference. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

*Kae*