

LTN tidbit 7: Anonymous comments add flavor



May is 31 tidbits about Lake Tahoe News month.

LTN tidbit No. 7:

Anonymous comments are the one topic we get the most grief about. It's also a service we receive many compliments about.

We could ask everyone to put his/her full name. But how do we know that is really Kathryn Reed writing a comment? The point of comments is real-time conversations. Verification, like what we do for letter writers and guest columnists, takes time. Time that we don't have.

People have suggested going to a Facebook format so people have to use their real identity. Well, we are not that naïve. Most people have more than one email account. You can use any name on those accounts. Then you can create a Facebook account. So, really, there is no way to know someone is who she is via Facebook either.

We have in recent weeks taken a stronger stance regarding what comments are published. And even when something gets in, we can take it down. We – like many of you – are tired of the personal attacks. It's fine to disagree with ideas. But to call someone names because they have a different belief is not

necessary and won't be tolerated. People are starting to be banned because they don't know how to play nice.

To those who want to attack, we'd like you think twice before posting – Would you say that same thing to the person if she were standing next to you? Would you want your mother to know you wrote that? Why aren't you using your full name?

People have said they like the comments because it gives them a quick way to say something, ask a question, offer advice, add to the story. People also like reading all of that. We like when the comments add to the story. So, thank you for doing so.

And for those who don't like the comments. We don't understand why you read them. Read the story and skip the comments. It's pretty easy.

While *Lake Tahoe News* is the only news site in the basin to allow these types of anonymous comments, it is common practice in the industry. We like that it allows our readers to participate in news that is going on in Lake Tahoe. But that doesn't mean if we keep being distracted from writing stories because of having to referee the comments section that one day it won't exist. That will be up to you.

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