

Editorial: It's getting harder to be thankful

We seem to have forgotten how to give thanks. It's not about what's on the table or even who is around it. And it's certainly not about what is on sale today.

Thanks and giving are two things we should embrace every day – not just the fourth Thursday in November.

We seem to have become a society more of takers than givers. We keep what's ours and don't share. And we begrudge those who can't provide for themselves.

Sometimes it's a struggle to be thankful when you don't know where the rent or the mortgage payment is going to come from, or if any meal, let alone a well-balanced one, will be on the table, or if that threadbare jacket will survive one more winter. Thanksgiving can seem like an afterthought.

It's hard to be thankful when the basic necessities of life – food, shelter, clothing – are hard to come by.

Sometimes it's a struggle to be thankful when we get used to abundance – the full table, the overflowing shopping bags – we expect it – having forgotten to be thankful for what we have.

Ironically, some of the biggest givers are those without abundance.

While economists say we are out of the recession, ask your neighbor if that's true. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent this year in the greater Lake Tahoe area on public and private infrastructure improvements. Ask around how many locals were working those jobs. So many in the basin work for the government – steady employment with outstanding benefits. The other spectrum is minimum wage jobs filled with

uncertainty and decreasing benefits.

Ours is not a robust economy. The chasm between the haves and have nots is growing. Middle class – it hardly exists in the basin and is diminishing elsewhere as well. This group is on the fringe, barely hanging on – one step from qualifying for aid, one step from losing their home, one step from being a have not.

But perhaps for today we can find some common ground to be thankful for. Take a look outside. Something brought you to Lake Tahoe or keeps you here. Those mountains, that lake. We are lucky and should be thankful to live in such an incredibly beautiful place.

While nature's beauty will not solve our problems, it can lead us to a place of happiness. From there, perhaps we begin to look at things with less despair. Perhaps we reach out to our neighbors and break bread together, or just say hello or wave for a change. It won't get the bills paid or put food in our stomachs, but social scientists say attitude is a huge contributor to how things can affect us.

There is no better day than Thanksgiving to take a look around and be grateful for what you do have. Don't think about what you don't have. And take another moment to share with someone why you are thankful they are in your life. It might require picking up the phone, sending an email or text, or even writing a note to that person.

It's time we all give a little more thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving from *Lake Tahoe News*!