

Opinion: A final farewell as LTN goes dark

By Kathryn Reed

This is it. It's time to say goodbye.

These past nine years have been an incredible journey; one I would never trade. So many friends have been made. So many interesting people interviewed. So many exciting events to cover. So many stories – and not all of them saw the light of day.

I want to say thank you one last time to everyone who has been part of the *Lake Tahoe News* team – which includes all of you readers. After all, if no one is reading, what is the point of writing?

For the immediate future I will be paying to keep *LTN* up so it can be used as an archive. There will be a small fee to access the content. This is just a way to help offset the expense of hosting the site and for basic maintenance costs.

I believe all credible news sources become an area's history. To “pull the plug” on *Lake Tahoe News* felt wrong on so many levels, so that's why it will remain as an archive. There just won't be any new content after today; unless it sells or something.

What I worry about most going forward is the lack of news Lake Tahoe will be receiving. It's not that *LTN* is not replaceable. But the fact that no one in the basin is doing the kind of news *LTN* does – hard hitting, investigative, daily, in depth series – well, it will take some time to fill the void that *LTN* will leave.

This means it is going to be up to you, the residents and

others who care about the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee to become more involved. Start by signing up for the information that the various public agencies send out. This includes meeting alerts and recaps of meetings. Just know that the recap is their biased slant on what happened. There is no reason to say you didn't know about a meeting. It is easy to get advance notice about them. Read the agenda, become engaged.

Some meetings are online, others are covered via the public access station on cable TV. Seeing them in person is better; you get to witness how the electeds and others play with each other. A psychologist could have a field day watching these people interact.

The electeds who sit on other boards almost never give a recap of what happened so even their colleagues don't know what is going on. I can't remember the last time Councilman Austin Sass or Commissioner Nancy McDermid or Supervisor Sue Novasel reported back to the South Lake Tahoe City Council, Douglas County commissioners and El Dorado County supervisors about what happened on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board or Tahoe Transportation District? Yes, it would lengthen meetings if these recaps were provided, but don't the other electeds and the public deserve to know? It's been a pet-peeve of mine for years that these elected officials represent the city or county on another board but seem to do so in a vacuum, as an individual and not as a representative of the city or county. It's one of the procedures I wish I could have gotten changed because I believe it would have brought more accountability to more agencies.

Read the legals in the non-daily *Tribune*, *Record Courier*, *Sierra Sun*, and *Mountain Democrat*. Yes, really. That's all the small print in the back of those publications. (All are available online.) Public entities are required to post almost all of their meetings in the newspaper of record. Those four cover South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado, Douglas, and Placer

counties. There is a trove of information in the legals.

Read those publications as well as the *Tahoe Mountain News*, *Moonshine Ink*, *Reno Gazette-Journal* and *Sacramento Bee* for local and regional news. The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* and *Las Vegas Sun* do a better job of covering Nevada politics, gaming and other news. In California, take a look at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Orange County Register*. They all have real journalists who understand how to ask tough questions, have ethics and are not bought by advertisers. They are in print and online.

The number of pages a print publication has is based on a formula that starts with how many ads there are on a given day. The news hole is then derived by a ratio of ads to editorial content. So, the more advertising, the more potential for local news. The more advertising, the more reporters who can be hired.

If you want your news sources to stay, advertise. If you don't have a business, frequent the advertisers in the publications and tell them you saw their ad in X publication.

When you see the donate button – donate. When the number of free stories expires, actually pay to read the publication. In fact, just pay for it from the beginning.

If you don't somehow contribute financially to a news organization, it is not going to stay in business. It's your choice.

If you want something done, do it. Government is the people. Remember that.

There is also so much that can be done outside the constraints of government. Get involved. Look at all the good the Meyers Community Foundation has done, the arts groups are doing, the business districts on the North Shore keep doing.

Remember, requesting public records is something the public has a right to do. It's not just the media. And if you don't get them, make a stink.

Write letters to the editor so more voices get heard. Suggest stories to the publications. Hold the publications accountable as well as the decision-makers.

There are so many aspects of this job I will miss. But it really is time for something new.

Thank you again for everything.

Hasta luego,

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