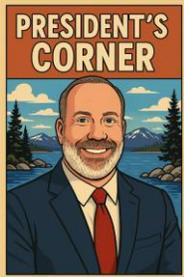




Winter 2025/2026 Newsletter

December 2025

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Winter is rolling in, which means it's officially the season of snow shovels, mysterious footprints, and warm blankets and fires. Tahoe is especially magical this time of year, and I hope you're all getting a chance to enjoy those clear nights, cozy mornings, and the stillness of the lake with the mountains covered in snow.

We've packed this newsletter with updates, reminders, and some truly excellent opportunities to stand outside in the cold together with warm or frosty beverages.

(You will also see that I've taken the opportunity to play around with ChatGPT for the images). From the inaugural Snow Bar Social to the third annual Polar Bear Plunge, I'm convinced we will be the most fun neighborhood on the West Shore this winter—and possibly the only one where building a bar out of compacted snow counts as responsible community engagement.

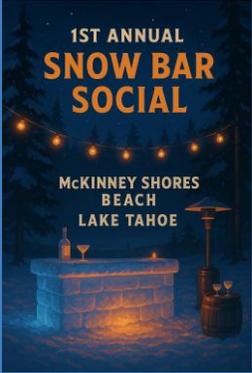
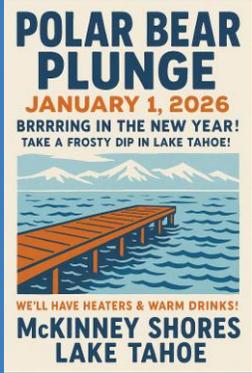
As always, thank you for being the kind of community that makes these events fun, the summers gorgeous, the winters entertaining, and the occasional commotion worth laughing about ... which brings me to one small note. It takes your involvement to make McKinney Shores the incredible place it is. If you would like to get involved by volunteering or have ever wondered what it's like to be on the MSPOA board (spoiler: surprisingly fun), please reach out. I'd love to talk with anyone curious about getting involved or bringing some fresh energy to the mix.

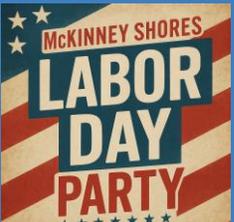
See you out there—ideally at the snow bar, drink in hand.

— Jake Parker

LET'S PARTY!

We're continuing our traditional McKinney Shores POA parties this year and have introduced a couple more! Here's what we have to look forward to this year! Members may bring guests to all events. We can't wait to see you there!

<p>NEW! 1st Annual Snow Bar Social</p>  <p>1ST ANNUAL SNOW BAR SOCIAL MCKINNEY SHORES BEACH LAKE TAHOE</p>	<p>Saturday, December 27 5pm*</p>	<p>When the sun goes down, the snow lights up.</p> <p>Join us for a nighttime winter party at the McKinney Shores Beach, complete with a full snow bar (yes, a bar made entirely of snow), glowing lights, heaters, music, and plenty of warm and chill-friendly cocktails.</p> <p>Wear whatever makes you cozy <i>and</i> captures your vibe. Furs encouraged (faux is perfect).</p> <p>We'll gather under the winter sky, sip drinks in the snow, and turn McKinney Shores into a little alpine lounge for the night.</p> <p>Bundle up. Show up. Bring friends. Let's make winter fun.</p> <p><i>*Note: If Tahoe doesn't cooperate with enough snow to build the bar, the date may shift or the event may be canceled. Stay tuned and do your snow dance.</i></p>
<p>3rd Annual Polar Bear Plunge</p>  <p>POLAR BEAR PLUNGE JANUARY 1, 2026 BRRRRR IN THE NEW YEAR! TAKE A FROSTY DIP IN LAKE TAHOE! WE'LL HAVE HEATERS & WARM DRINKS! MCKINNEY SHORES LAKE TAHOE</p>	<p>Thursday, January 1 1:11pm</p>	<p>Start your year with a splash— and maybe a little screaming!</p> <p>Join neighbors and friends for the bravest, coldest, most outrageous dip of the year into the magical waters of Lake Tahoe.</p> <p>Yes, the lake is freezing. Yes, you <i>will</i> question your life choices. YES, you're doing it anyway.</p> <p>But don't worry—we'll have heaters, warm drinks, and bragging rights waiting for you on shore.</p> <p>Bring your courage, your friends, and your best "WHAT AM I DOING?!" face.</p> <p>See you at the pier around 1:00 PM. We'll jump at 1:11 PM. Let's kick off 2026 with a chill you'll never forget.</p>
<p>Annual Memorial Day Party</p>  <p>MCKINNEY SHORES MEMORIAL DAY PARTY</p>	<p>Saturday, May 23 5pm</p>	<p>Please bring drinks for your group and appetizers to share with others. No dinner will be served, so please feel free to bring dinner for your group if you wish.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Annual Independence Day Party</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Friday, July 3 5pm</p>	<p>MSPOA will provide hamburgers and hotdogs, condiments, and paper products (including plates, napkins and utensils). Please bring drinks for your own group, and a dish to share with others. We will need appetizers, side dishes, desserts and serving utensils.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Annual Labor Day Party</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, September 5 5pm</p>	<p>Dinner (hotdogs and hamburgers) will be served. Please bring an appetizer, salad, side dish, or dessert to share, and please bring your own beverages.</p>

SO, YOU WANT TO BUILD A THING...

Thinking about a remodel, addition, or exterior changes for spring/summer 2026? Winter is the perfect time to line up your submission so you're not waiting for approvals when the ground thaws.

The Architectural Review guidelines and process are outlined in our CC&Rs + Amendments and have been summarized for ease. All documents are available on the Sierra Mountain Management site (<https://signin.sierramtnmgt.com/>)

If you're unsure whether your project requires review, ask. We're happy to help.

BEARS, ADORABLE... UNTIL THEY'RE IN YOUR KITCHEN

Because nothing ruins a weekend faster than a 300-pound "surprise." Yes, bears do slow down — but mild winters and easy meals in Tahoe keep them roaming all winter long. We've had many car and home incidents in past winters. Let's keep our community boring to bears:

- **Trash:** Use bear boxes and keep lids latched. No overflows. Make sure your guests know how to use the bear boxes properly.
- **Vehicles:** Clean, locked, windows up. Even gum, wrappers, or hand sanitizer can attract a bear.
- **Homes:** No propped doors or cracked windows when you're away. Bring bird feeders in. Consider services like electric bear deterrents for your home.
- **Never feed bears.** Not ever. It's dangerous for you and deadly for them.

A PLACE FOR MY STUFF

You share the beach, piers, and common areas with around 100 households. Cooperation, courtesy, and some effort are required to make sure these areas continue to be beautiful and useful.

- In winter, our common areas should rest — and not as a gear locker. Items left over the winter are at major risk of weather damage or theft and are not MSPOA responsibility. **Please remove** dinghies, paddleboards, kayaks, chairs, floats, and personal items from racks/beach unless you're actively in-residence and using them. This is important year-round, but especially in the winter. Let's make sure to take our stuff home.



- **No staking out territory** without a reservation: Reservations for the BBQ area and lawn can be requested by emailing Kathleen Gonzalez (gonzalez4gb@gmail.com). If you do not have a reservation, you may not pre-set areas of the beach or lawn for later use. A calendar with reservations is posted on the bulletin board hanging on the shed.
- **Pack it in, pack it out:** Our garbage services stop during the winter, and during the rest of the year, our garbage cans can't always accommodate the volume of trash we generate. Wind and weather move trash quickly into the lake — help us keep it pristine by packing out what you bring down.

YOUR LIGHTS ARE SHOWING (AGAIN)

Lake Tahoe's West Shore is beautiful and serene because it isn't lit up like a South Lake casino. In the April 2022 newsletter (https://mckinneyshores.org/?page_id=95), we talked about Dark Sky Lighting (https://darksky.org/what-we-do/darksky-approved/darksky-approved-luminaires-program/luminaires/#/quick_search) and being courteous with our lights.

This continues to be an important topic in our community. Unfortunately, many unnecessary lights are left on 24/7 or from dusk 'til dawn. At best, this significantly and negatively impacts our enjoyment of the beautiful night sky and moon. At worst, we have lights shining in our neighbors' bedrooms. And, these lights do nothing to deter bears, contrary to popular belief.



Two main things in addition to considering **Dark Sky Lighting** products:

1. **Turn lights off, or put lights on a timer or motion detector** so they're only shining when they are useful to people moving around your property.
2. One night, go outside and look at how your lights are shining. **Adjust them** if they're shining on a neighbor.



- Lake Tahoe is so deep that if you could tip it over, it would cover the entire state of California in 14 inches of water.
- Tahoe holds the record for the snowiest month in U.S. history — 230 inches in one month at the Central Sierra Snow Lab January 2017.
- Tahoe's famed clarity once measured over 100 feet deep in the 1960s. Recent years hover around 70 feet — still clear enough to lose a pair of sunglasses forever and still admire them sitting neatly on the bottom.
- Lake Tahoe is over 2 million years old, making it one of the oldest lakes in the world.

- **MSPOA Site:** <http://mckinneyshores.org/>
- **Sierra Mountain Management:** <https://signin.sierramtnmgt.com/>
- **Past Newsletters:** https://mckinneyshores.org/?page_id=95
- **Beach and BBQ Reservations:** Kathleen Gonzalez (gonzalez4gb@gmail.com)
- **Buoy Field Inquiries:** Greg Harris (gharris@bostonprivate.com)
- **McKinney Shores POA Private Facebook Group:** *(must answer two questions on Facebook to join the group)*
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1148030701980047>
- **North Tahoe Fire Protection District for fire restrictions:**
<https://www.ntfire.net/>
- **Lake Tahoe Water Level:** <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/USGS-10337000/> *(Current lake elevation = 6,220.0' + Current gage height shown; 6,229.1' is max level; 6,223.0' is when water stops flowing into Truckee River)*
- **Lake Tahoe Wind and Wave Forecasts:**
<https://www.weather.gov/rev/lakes>



LOOKING AHEAD

- **1st Annual Snow Bar Social:** Saturday, December 27 (2025), 5pm
- **3rd Annual Polar Bear Plunge:** Thursday, January 1, 1:11pm
- **Board Meeting:** Friday, February 6, 1pm
- **Board Meeting:** Friday, April 10, 1pm
- **Memorial Day Party:** Saturday, May 23, 5pm
- **Independence Day Party:** Friday, July 3, 5pm
- **Annual Membership Meeting:** Saturday, July 4, 9am
- **Board Meeting:** Friday, July 17, 1pm
- **Labor Day Party:** Saturday, September 5, 5pm
- **Board Meeting:** Friday, October 16, 1pm

NEIGHBOR SPOTLIGHT

Let's get to know one of our McKinney Shores neighbors. This time, we're spotlighting the **Bienati Family!**

How long has your family been part of McKinney Shores, and what first brought you here?

It was a bike ride that brought me to this cool home at 5699 McKinney Drive one summer day in 1990. At the time, we had a cozy A-frame in Tahoma. My 7-year-old and I were bike cruising through McKinney Drive looking at the



awesome homes and views. When I saw this green home encapsulated with ferns and nature's beauty, I told Christina, "I want this house honey." I felt an instant "sense of place" with the home and neighborhood. I truly had no idea how we were going to afford the home at the time we put an offer in, having to sell the other home within 60 days for the down payment, etc. My wife Cathy thought I was nuts. It was an interesting time of creative financing. Well, I guess the gods were with us and all fell into place. 35 years later, Cathy and I pinch ourselves sometimes when we have to leave and head home back to "the flatlands" in the Bay Area. We have truly loved every moment in this home, this neighborhood, our wonderful neighbors and being part of the Homewood vibe.

What is your favorite Tahoe ski run, beach spot, or hiking trail?

Well, just about everything on the West Shore truly. McKinney Shores is simply our family's, "Oasis for the Spirit." Over the many years, I have also served as Volunteer Board President for the Sierra State Parks Foundation (SSPF.org). This has been a truly remarkable experience to help support our State Parks, Rangers and the vision to educate, interpret and restore these legacy properties like Sugar Pine Lodge, DL Bliss Trails, Vikingsholm all the way down to Bodie to Donner State Park and other properties around the Lake. We spend a good deal of time in the summer enjoying our State Parks and doing what we can to raise funds, attend events and volunteer to promote the legacy for generations to come. I encourage all McKinney Shores families to connect with our Foundation and all we offer for the family and perpetuity of our magical West Shore.

What is your favorite Tahoe restaurant, bar, or hangout?

Without a doubt, it is the corner table near the fireplace at Swiss Lakewood almost every week if we can. We have been going there for over 40 years. We also enjoy the River Grill sitting along the water enjoying great food and music. As far as hangout, well, how about our great beach at McKinney Shores taking in all the beauty of the Sierras, watching the grandkids play in the sand while engaging in "cool conversations." Such a great place to chill and "forget about life for a while" as Billy Joel would say in one of his songs. Truly, our beach and Lake Tahoe are the only hangouts anyone really needs even after traveling around the world in my various business roles.

Any fun family traditions or Tahoe rituals?

Like many of those reading this newsletter, nothing beats just being there in Homewood whether in the snow, rain or shine just enjoying those special moments with the family on weekends, holidays, summers, etc. We are avid boaters and spend just about every moment we can on the Lake making the pilgrimage to Emerald Bay often and as the boating year comes to an end, we fill up the boat with gas and make the “Around the World tour of 72 miles” to end the season of fun in the sun.

Anything else you'd like neighbors to know, or any words of advice for new neighbors?

Yes, I truly appreciate all the volunteer efforts of our Board Members, volunteers who are there keeping our association safe, compliant, fiscally sound and aesthetically beautiful. It is not an easy job. I had served as a Board Member and President for many years ensuring we kept our Association in good stead having to deal with rebuilding the pier after a major water event, along with other improvements to our CCRs and promoting collaboration and family events. It takes a village to keep this special place here for our kids and generations to follow. If you can get involved with supporting the Board, policing our beach and doing what you can to keep our neighborhoods safe, clean and most important “engaged” in building relationships, watching out for each other and enjoying each other, then our oasis for the spirit will thrive.