ROCKY ROAD TO MT. WHITNEY

This year’s hiking season may start late, folks. The Whitney Portal road needs a little work. See brief, p. 8.

A DEVELOPING OPTIMISM

Could Mammoth see a new wave of construction this year?

While the election of President Donald Trump has been polarizing on many levels, the Trump presidency has certainly fostered economic optimism as reflected by the “Trump bump” in the stock market and the optimism expressed by property developers locally.

The terrific snow year has only added to that sense of optimism.

As Chuck Lande, CEO of the Chadmar Group, the developer of Snowcreek, told The Sheet recently, “Mammoth Lakes is the best [development] opportunity in the country. There’s so much potential.”

Lande said his group is going full-speed ahead. He is permitted to build 104 more units at Creekhouse, and said, “We will go as fast as the market dictates.” He said he is also working on the hotel component, citing increased opportunity in the high-end hotel market.

He feels a 4-star, 5-star property will do extremely well (here), he said.

On this point, Jim Demetriades, owner of the Sierra Nevada Resort, concurred.

“The Village at Mammoth is refreshing—he’s clearly stoked on the mountain lifestyle, but he doesn’t pretend it’s all back-flips into Hangman’s.

Taylor has gained a following of admirers grateful for his honest, authentic representation of conditions at Mammoth Mountain and its surroundings. He’s a tell-it-like-it-is kind of guy, and his fans appreciate that.

“Hey, if you’re a skier or snowboarder, would you like some basically readable weather and information on what’s really going on the hill?” Taylor asks rhetorically.

“A lot of people’s like, ‘Absolutely!’”

Taylor is realistic when he posts about the conditions at Mammoth (“be ready for a big weekend crowd”), but he lives by the philosophy that there is always an upside.

“On any given day during the season, you’ll be able to find some really good snow to ski,” he says.

Please see OPTIMISM, page 14.
Great walls of snow can do strange tricks to the mind. Stephen King’s “The Shining” is the great literary and cinematic testament to that.

While the snow and isolation turned Jack Nicholson crazy and murderous in the film, the abundant snow has a different effect on local politicians and government officials. It may not make them murderous, but it sure as hell makes them crazy—crazy to spend money. How quickly we forget the drought and the lean times and the cutbacks when there is snow underfoot and gathering clouds overhead.

On Valentine’s Day, Mono County CAO Leslie Chapman trotted out her most credible employee, Tony Dublino, to give an updated analysis regarding potential construction of a South County government building.

The County’s lease at the Sierra Center Mall expires in October, 2019, so the County has been actively engaged in plotting whether to renew its lease or build something for itself at the “McFlex” parcel (off Sierra Park Road up from the courthouse).

According to Dublino’s presentation, the County currently rents a little more than 30,000-square feet of space from the Sierra Center and Minaret malls and pays about $1.1 million annually to do so.

The state pays a little more than 50% of the rent to compensate the County for the services it provides. Currently, the rental of office space is an approximate $491,000 annual expense to Mono County.

Dublino then walked supervisors through three scenarios: 1.) The lease offer from Sierra Center Mall. 2.) A theoretical purchase of Sierra Center Mall at a price of $12 million with an additional $7 million budgeted for unidentified upgrades. 3.) Building a new 25,000-square foot building.

The lease offer is for 20 years, starting at a monthly base price of $1.75 per square foot. In 2020, the County’s liability would be essentially identical to what it is today. By 2030, the County’s General fund budgeted for unidentified upgrades. 3.) Building a new 25,000-square foot building.

The second scenario (a purchase of Sierra Center Mall) was studied at the request of Supervisor Larry Johnston, even though the mall owners insist the Sierra Center isn’t for sale.

Well, perhaps insist is too strong a word. As Sierra Center partner Paul Rudder said Tuesday, “I am a businessman … everything except for my wife and my dogs is for sale.”

When Johnston asked Rudder point blank for a sales price, Rudder deferred, saying he is just one partner and does not have a more than 50% controlling interest so couldn’t give an answer offhand.

A County purchase of the Sierra Center (at least at the theoretical $12 million price—Rudder and partners bought the mall for $8.6 million in 2012) was identified by Dublino as the preferred alternative in terms of value.

The third scenario was based upon the assumption that the County could build a new building which would accommodate all its needs for about $25 million. Assuming a 30-year loan at somewhere around 4%, Dublino forecast a $1.7 million annual obligation to the County at the outset, of which the state would pay approximately half.

So that was the thumbnail sketch. A new building costs more at the outset, but the cost gap decreases over time and at the end of thirty years, the County would have an asset if it built.

Of course, this is simplistic and ignores all sorts of variables. 1. Can the County actually bring the building in at Dublino’s all-in expenses of $580/foot? Or could you miss the mark by as much as $100/foot? The probability of a significant overrun is high.

2. Will the state be willing to assume a larger rent-share payment? Mono County Finance Director Janet Dutcher seems to think yes, that the state is required to pay a “reasonable share” of the cost. But if the state is paying $500,000/year one day and then asked to pay $800,000/year the next, one can imagine that a state bureaucrat might balk at the request, because what that would amount to, really, is the County asking the state to subsidize its new building. This seems a dubious assumption—that the state will gladly agree to this.

3. Say you build it. What’s to say that your office space needs are the same 30 years from now as they are now, particularly as more and more jobs are outsourced or performed off-site? Projecting space requirements is a tricky task. There is risk of creating a white elephant.

One obvious question that arose in my mind during the meeting was “How much of this has to do with personal antipathy between the various players? How much of this did Rudder bring upon himself with his performance as a landlord? Supervisor Fred Stump, never one to keep an opinion to himself, said that in his four years of observance, Rudder’s promises “aren’t reflected in the condition of the building.” Stump talked about material falling from the ceiling onto employees’ heads, about “strange” smells. I’m not sold on a new building, said Stump, but your words are disingenuous, he told Rudder. “Your credibility is diminished,” he added.

The County’s credibility was equally diminished by rescheduling the agenda item at the last minute to push it up by a week (from February 21 to February 14).
Let’s get the party started! Earliest Village après at Gomez’s and Lakanuki begin at 2PM.

- Relax with a post-shred massage at Simply Massage.

- So much happy! Enjoy the longest happy hours at Campo, Gomez’s, and Lakanuki.

- Boot up at the Mountain Center for all of your mountain needs! Lift passes, demos, rentals and more. Then grab the gondola to Canyon Lodge!

- CHATO Boutique
  Jewelry Trunk Show
  Sunday, February 19
  10AM-6PM

California Native Heather Gardner presents her trend-setting jewelry collection representing the essence of earth, femininity and fashion. Stop by CHATO Boutique in The Village see these beautiful jewels and meet Heather.

For more events, sales, specials, and more, visit: VillageAtMammoth.com

@ Village At Mammoth, @ Village_Mammoth, @ Village_AT_Mammoth
Dear Editor:

Regarding the Op-Ed “Give It A Rest” and other recent letters including “How Long Must We Sing This Song,” these headings can be read two ways in connection with the development of Mammoth Creek Park West.

How long must we listen to the same arguments and comments against the project? The time for debate and public comment over whether to proceed with the development of Mammoth Creek Park West has passed. Town Council and planners have moved forward with initial steps to put the real estate to its highest and best use, to provide the entire community with valuable recreation facilities.

Why not appear in favor of the park’s development? Because the purpose of the recent hearing was not to debate whether to proceed, based on arguments already made. The fate of the park’s development was not at stake. We are past that stage. The purpose of future meetings and hearings will be to address “new” issues as the project moves forward, not to debate matters already decided.

Those who object to the project will apparently continue to do so, making the same arguments and voicing the same opposition at every juncture, no matter what the purpose of the hearing or meeting. Those in favor will not engage in this endless debate based on comments already made and either accepted or rejected. An entire column could be written here discussing the multitude of reasons in favor of developing the park, but that has already been done.

Here, however, are some responses not necessarily related to the merits of developing the park.

1. It is simply inaccurate and disingenuous to say that Town Council members have not listened, and are not listening, to the people. Council members listened to all arguments, considered them, and made a decision. Disagreeing with the opposition does not equate with “not listening.”

2. We all know that this community has suffered in the past from a lack of planning and long term vision. We are still addressing the long term consequences of these oversights. That’s what this project is about; it is about vision and long term planning that have been sorely lacking.

3. The neighboring HOA will not be satisfied with anything but a bucolic, open space setting at the park. They wish to retain the sage and pine state of the land next door; this is normal and can be appreciated. A dog park or pickleball? The park property is intended and zoned for development. It is far too valuable as a major real estate asset to leave fallow and unused.

4. Perhaps the HOA should consider making a formal offer to purchase the land at Fair Market Value, based on an assessment of its highest and best use as a developed property. Then, view easements and restrictive covenants could be placed on the land, and it could be left in its natural state for the benefit of those few units that are actually effected. Otherwise, the Town should not be forced to accept a lower value for its asset.

5. We are surrounded by hundreds of square miles of nature and open space. The park property is land within Town limits, owned by the TOML, and is one of its few properties that can be used for future development.

6. Town Council is not moving the Transfer Station there, or proposing an industrial use. Council and community members wish to see first class recreation facilities at the location, which, as has been said before, could enhance the value of neighboring properties.

7. There has been no “reneging” on a long term lease. Reneging implies a breach, which this is not. The decision not to renew a temporary lease is not reneging on a lease.

8. The TOML does indeed have other priorities. We should, however, be able to address several priorities at once.

Now, if the TOML cannot afford the proposed ice rink, the new indoor facilities, or any combination thereof, that is another question. Financial issues aside though, the TOML should be allowed to develop its assets for the benefit of the entire community.

Dan O’Connell
Mammoth Lakes
I just left the February 14 Board of Supervisors meeting. My Valentine present came from one of the Supervisors who (I paraphrase) said, “What’s criminal is deporting and breaking up honest hardworking families who’ve been living here for years.” I watched County Counsel explain the carelessly written Executive Order to deport undocumented immigrants, especially those in Sanctuaries.

The shear number of people present came from one of the Supervisors meeting. My Valentine present came from one of the Supervisors who (I paraphrase) said, “What’s criminal is deporting and breaking up honest hardworking families who’ve been living here for years.” I watched County Counsel explain the carelessly written Executive Order to deport undocumented immigrants, especially those in Sanctuaries.

Dear Editor:

Happy Valentine’s Day

I’ve just left the February 14 Board of Supervisors meeting. My Valentine present came from one of the Supervisors who (I paraphrase) said, “What’s criminal is deporting and breaking up honest hardworking families who’ve been living here for years.” I watched County Counsel explain the carelessly written Executive Order to deport undocumented immigrants, especially those in Sanctuaries.

We have been threatened. If we unwittingly behave like a Sanctuary County then the Feds will take our Federal funds away from us. If the Feds ever take our Federal funds away from us, it will be the end of our County. That is what we have to fear. If we behave like a Sanctuary County then the Feds will take our Federal funds away from us. If the Feds ever take our Federal funds away from us, it will be the end of our County. That is what we have to fear.

I was very relieved and happy with the Board of Supervisors. They were showing compassion for our Latino friends on Valentine’s Day.

Carolyn Crawford Davis
Lee Vining
CAREER TECH AT MHS

New MUSD program will be the first of its kind in California high schools

By Giles

Mammoth High School Teachers John Simmeon and Chris Leonard are currently working with administrators Chris Powell and Lois Klein, as well as parents, to develop a Ski Area and Tourism Operations Management vocational education program at Mammoth High School.

Mammoth Unified School District was one of 14 school districts to receive a Specialized Secondary Programs Grant from the California Department of Education to write and develop a curriculum for a unique career tech program at MHS last year.

The program, which will provide students with the necessary skills to start careers in tourism and resort management with a special focus on ski area operations, is set to start in Fall of 2017 and will be a two-year program open to juniors and seniors in high school. It will be the first of its kind at any high school in California. According to MHS Principal Chris Powell, MUSD received $30,000 to develop the curriculum, which includes hiring substitute teachers, consulting curriculum experts, and travel costs for involved administrators and teachers to visit similar existing programs. Powell said that another $100,000 is expected once the curriculum is approved for purchase of program materials.

According to Leonard, the plan is to provide students with skills and technical training that will allow them to graduate high school and get a career-oriented job in Mammoth Lakes. The program will likely be modeled in part off of an existing curriculum at Colorado Mountain College. The funds will be used to purchase materials such as ski tuning equipment, a small snow cat, and other tools. "You could sit in a classroom and tell a kid to learn Algebra 2, or, you could get outside with a tape measurer and have them learn 2, or, you could get outside with a room and tell a kid to learn Algebra purchase materials such as ski tuning and patrol equipment, event planning and management. Other skills such as ski tuning and patrolling and instruction will be taught as well. Deanna Campbell, Director of the Eastern Sierra Cerro Coso Community College Center, told The Sheet her organization was very interested in expanding its existing partnership with MHS. "About 25 percent of MHS students are taking college classes already," said Campbell this week.

Powell told The Sheet that the curriculum is due to the State of California in April. He said that the program will be a two year program, where students spend the Fall and Spring learning "soft skills" such as communications, marketing, and event planning, and spend the winter interning at local businesses. Leonard said that MHS will be seeking industry professionals who would be willing to volunteer their time as instructors and speakers. "It's a win-win for everybody," said Leonard. "If high school looks great, the mountain has an immediate new source of labor with goal setting, students win, and any student that goes through this program will have job skills and graduation that allow them to stay in Mammoth Lakes."

Powell said MUSD is seeking industry partners for the program, and that any tourism, food service, hospitality, or ski industry oriented businesses interested in partnerships should contact him or Chris Leonard for more information.

MY NECK! MY BACK! MY NECK AND MY BACK!

Business booms for Mammoth's chiropractors as snow removal gets serious

By Rea

With Mammoth's record snow year, many professions are seeing an expected uptick in business—snow removal companies are swamped, roof shovelers are booked, and plow drivers are working overtime. But other service providers, namely chiropractors, are also reaping the benefits of the heavy snow.

"It's for real," said Dr. Amy Vevoda of Sierra Spine and Wellness. "Every single person that's coming in, it's their left shoulder, left wrist...I'm like, 'jeez you guys!'" She said she can tell a lefty off the bat because it's the right side of their body giving them problems.

Vevoda said last season was one of her best, business-wise, but that this year is giving the last run for snowboners. "I feel like I am working on soldiers... round up the troops and do not send them back out there!" she said with a laugh.

Mack of San Diego was at Mammoth Brewery Company on Monday, February 13, leaning on the food counter and was asked if she needed some food. "Actually, I'm just using the counter to hold myself up," she said with a pained expression. Turns out Mack was coming out of a local restaurant the night before, because it's still not work hard, or if they hurt themselves, they'll see a chiropractor. "I feel like I am working on soldiers... round up the troops and do not send them back out there!" she said with a laugh.

"I feel like I am working on soldiers...round up the troops and do not send them back out there!" - Dr. Amy Vevoda

"If this season is giving the last run for snowboners, isn't it?" he told The Sheet on Tuesday. "They're actually doing this for real, it's the right side of their body giving them problems."

Craig said he's one of the victims of excessive shoveling himself, and that he has a few visiting chiropractor friends who he sees for help. "It is the season for snow shoveling, isn't it?" he told The Sheet on Tuesday. "People actually are naming their snowboners.

Vevoda said shoveling and plowing aren't the only culprits. "It's snowing snow," said Vevoda, "but it's also tons of people on the mountain. I've had 5-6 people come in and say they just got sideswiped by another skier. All the ski patrollers are coming in. Waitresses, bartenders, electricians, contractors, plumbers, everybody is so worked right now."

Vevoda also said that just getting around can cause problems for those with preexisting conditions. "Just walking on icy surfaces for people that already have back problems, when you're really gripping your body and using a lot of balance coordination, those are tiny tiny muscles that go up and down help with balance and control, and can that really start aggravating old issues too."

She said that people's need to keep working often keeps them out of the doctor's office. "I think in general people are just busy, and they're going to go right back out and shovel and then if they do hurt themselves, if they don't get better, they wait. Often in springtime, I see winter issues.

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KABUKI DANCE AT TECH GROUP MEETING
Squabbling over wells as part of Long-Term Water Agreement between L.A. and Inyo County

By James

The Technical Group, established under the Long-Term Water Agreement between the City of Los Angeles and Inyo County, meets every other month to act on an agenda presented by both entities as represented by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the Inyo County Water Department. Its most recent meeting was on Thursday, February 9 in Bishop was a little contentious. The meeting started on a positive note. Eric Tilllemans with LADWP presented a report on pre-construction groundwater studies. He noted that the City of Los Angeles can only withhold its approval of the plan under which it will operate, if at all.

The replacement well in Laws will be located approximately 100 feet north of the current location and the water will flow to the nearby irrigation fields or to Owens River via the upper McNally Canal.

All four action items were approved despite severe angry outbursts and several ad hominem attacks during public comments that maligned the integrity of everyone from the Tech Group, the Inyo Water Department, and the Inyo Board of Supervisors to LADWP, the Standing Committee, and the DWP Board.

The main objections to the proposed wells revolve around whether California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation should be required for the new wells and the fact that the Environmental Impact Report being used in the evaluations is currently 25 years old (1991). County Water Department Director Bob Harrington told those in attendance that “the County has little or no control over the ‘new wells’ argue that conditions of this agreement to do what the city wants and they do not have to abide to the whole agreement.

The recommendations and reports of the Tech Group now go before the meeting of the Standing Committee, which will be held at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, February 22 in Los Angeles. The meeting will be live-streamed at the LADWP conference room.

Harrington also expressed concern during the meeting that there appears to be a misconception of how the process works. He explained that the County has limited authority over wells under the LTWA’s negotiations agreement. “It does not mean,” said Harrington, “that the County is in favor of putting in a new well. We are fulfilling our obligations before putting in the wells. We do have a say in how those wells are operated.” He also explained that “the County has little or no control over the drilling of new wells” and that “he does not question the public’s right to oppose the wells.” Even though the County is constrained by what it can or cannot do under the LTWA, “there is nothing to hinder anyone’s right to oppose the wells.”

Attending the meeting was the Owens Valley Bishop Paiute or Big Pine tribal members and their representatives, the Sierra Club, the Owens Valley Committee. Making public comments were Harry Williams, Sally Manning, Bagley, Philip Ayana and Daris Moxley. All expressed disagreement on the approval of the pre-construction evaluations based on the sentiment that, until Los Angeles first meets its obligations on mitigation projects, it should not be allowed to build any wells.

Daris Moxley of Bishop observed after the Tech Group meeting, in response to the list of 64 mitigation projects and 48 other obligations (including LORP provided to participants), “Why does L.A. get to use parts of this agreement to do what the city wants and they do not have to abide to the whole agreement?”

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on,” he told Chris Stanella in 2012. “On many mountains, that’s not the case. I’m out there 120 to 150 days a year, and I always find some good snow.”

His enthusiasm is palpable in his social media posts and the videos he features on his website—all done in a homegrown, low-fi style.

Taylor’s website, www.mammothsnowman.com is far from the polished image one finds on Mammoth Lakes Tourism’s [MLT] website, for instance. You have to forgive a few missing apostrophes and misplaced possessives. But that’s not really what Taylor’s fans are there for.

“People really just want to know what’s really happening,” says Taylor, “and when they go to [Mammoth] Mountain’s site, half the time when you click ‘information,’ it’s just a general thing.”

Taylor runs the site as a family business (he also runs Steve Taylor Marketing and People.com). His son Joe helps with editing and photo uploading, and his wife Jennifer handles the books. He’s currently looking for a partner, but he started the Snowman website in 1994 (he also runs www.discovermammoth.com).

He first skied Mammoth in 1965, got his first pass in 1985 (“I was a weekend warrior in ’85–’86, I skied 26 weekend ends in a row and I always had a great time!”) and moved from La Canada to Mammoth in 1990. That was when he first started blogging (before “blogging” was a thing) the weather and conditions at his beloved Mammoth. He met his moniker because he loved to sleep in the cold—he’d open up the windows when he slept in Mammoth. “Man, you’re like, a Snowman!” said one of his ski buddies. And a brand was born.

Taylor raised three children here, and he Jennifer doing what they could to make it work, as so many locals do, getting by with what they could, down south to live the dream in the mountains. His website came along in 2004.

“I started the website because I wanted to get skiers from the Los Angeles area excited about coming up so I wouldn’t have to ski alone,” Taylor writes on his website. “Now I have 30,000 followers and thousands of visitors to the Snowman Facebook page, plus many more via our Instagram, which mostly offer discounts to local businesses through Mammoth Mountain and Mammoth Lakes Tourism have had success with their social media campaigns—MLT’s ‘Mammoth Snow’ Instagram account has over 26,000 followers, compared with Taylor’s 1,500 or so. Visit Mammoth’s Facebook page has 50,000 likes, Taylor trails at about 30,000. As social media becomes ever more omnipresent in marketing (MLT hired Josh Wray has its “Digital Media Coordinator” in 2015), new concepts emerge in the world of marketing Mammoth. MLT’s Lara Kaylor, Director of Communications and Public Relations, explained MLT’s “digital influencer” program to The Sheet last week.

Essentially, MLT offers benefits (lodging, lift tickets, meals) to individuals in the outdoor industry who have large social media followings. The program is in its nascent stage, but Kaylor says it has already shown good results. “Right now, we choose a digital influencer if their accounts are kind of appropriate to Mammoth—outdoor recreation, adventure travel-type accounts.” She said that MLT doesn’t offer benefits to anyone who has less than 30,000 followers on Instagram. She explains that it’s simply a new form of media relations. “I liken it to the traditional media side of things,” says Kaylor. “If we host someone in a boot room [and that costs] a couple hundred dollars, and if the story they produce is worth a couple thousand dollars,” the cost-benefit analysis is a no-brainer.

Taylor is a little more old school.

He says about one third of the people he talks to in his forums on the mountain don’t use social media at all. It’s difficult to say whether his informal surveys are skewed towards an older crowd, but “on our social media [Facebook] we’ve got 25,000 fans, but on our website we don’t have over 30,000 people who read the blog…(it’s) much more much more effective than social media. A lot of people don’t like social media.”

Kaylor told The Sheet that www.visitmammoth.com had 287,000 visits to their site in December 2016 and January 2017, and that visits in January alone were at 160,000.

Taylor makes his living by selling ads, which mostly offer discounts to local businesses through Mammoth Snowman. He’s not in any sort of official arrangement with Mammoth Mountain or MLT—he describes his relationship with Mammoth Mountain as friendly (“they don’t promote us, but they tolerate us”), and says there was a bit of discord between him and MLT years ago (“they tried to basically dictate what I needed to do and how I should talk … so they’ve just been eliminated from my life completely”).

Urdt told The Sheet this week that he “didn’t want to get into a fight in the newspaper,” regarding MLT’s relationship with Taylor, but that “we had some disagreements on how to present things, so we never reached out to work with [Taylor] … I just think we had differences of opinion.”

In a carefully-crafted media market, Taylor seems to recognize, or perhaps just instinctually tap into, a visitors’ need for authenticity, regardless of whether the truth hurts.

“If it’s raining, we tell people. If there’s a forest fire and it’s smoky, we’re going to tell you not to come.” He also said people are finding their own friendships through his platforms—ride shares, lodging, and meet ups have all been organized through Mammoth Snowman.

And his approach is clearly working—type “Mammoth Snow” into Google (which uses a phrase association algorithm to rank results), and Taylor’s website is the fourth highest result, below two of Mammoth Mountain’s official web pages. He sees his followers as his friends, and believes that he owes it to them to give up the little locals’ secrets, post conditions frequently and give them a little “woo hoo!” to get them excited to get on the hill.

Taylor believes that the people who believe you’re at your best when one of her ski bindings released. The other ski did not release, and the 44-year-old woman suffered a knee injury. Unable to get out on her own, her companions called 911 for help.

The Mono County Sheriff’s Office, however, a little more old school. A large search team was called out and coordinated efforts to extract the injured skier. CHP helicopter H40 from Fresno responded, but due to blowing snow and increasing darkness was unable to land. While SAR ground teams were skiing and snowshoeing up to the lake, they organized over 2000 pounds of supplies to be dropped by a Seahawk helicopter from Lemoore Naval Air Station to be land and extract the four skiers. The injured skier was transported by Mono County paramedics to Mammoth Hospital for treatment.

Whitney Portal rock fall

Substantial snowfall from an atmospheric river event in mid-January has led to a major rock fall on Whitney Portal Road, causing significant damage to an approximately 100-foot stretch of road, the Inyo County Sheriff’s Office and U.S. Forest Service reported. This damage may delay the re-opening of the road this spring.

Initial assessments by Inyo County, Caltrans, and Inyo National Forest indicate that there will be approximately a couple thousand dollars, which include blasting and clearing the rock, and stabilizing and re-building the road bed. Road construction will not begin until after the permitting process is complete.

The road is currently gated just above Hogback Road on Whitney Portal Road to prevent vehicle entrance, however, foot traffic past the gate is not recommended due to the hazardous and potentially unstable conditions surrounding the rock fall. For now, the area remains under snow and there is no clear estimate of when the removal operations will begin. Continued winter storms as well as the cool temps for the stability of the slide area during the spring freeze/thaw cycle make it difficult to predict when this work can safely begin. The Whitney Portal Road opens on May 1, conditional permitting, and that is also the beginning of the Mt. Whitney Lottery for day and overnight hikes. Every effort will be made by all parties involved to have the road open by this date.

While the road is under construction, access to Mt. Whitney is via the Whitney Portal Recreation Trail or from other trailheads such as Kearsarge Pass or Cottonwood Pass. The NRT will close for public safety when blasting is underway.

**PHOTO:** Philip Keoen, Maura Smith, and the Snowman himself.
SEEKING SHELTER FROM THE STORM
Amidst a housing crisis, those displaced by roof collapses look for long-term solutions
By Bedine

Gary Whitford was listening to his house talk last Wednesday, February 8. It was popping, crackling and snapping like it had been doing since the big dump in January, but this time there wasn’t a break between the noises and they were getting louder.

He and his neighbor went out to look at the roof. Whitford said it was slowly sliding off the rafters, and taking a wall with it. His neighbor, Manny, told him it was time to go. The snaps got louder and Whitford was getting ready to exit, too, but before he could tie his laces, the roof caved in, filling his couch with snow and rafters.

Whitford was told later he would have been killed if he was sitting on the couch when the roof gave in.

He escaped and walked a short distance to Giovanni’s Pizza where his roommate Israel “Willy” Plazola Rodriguez works. Whitford and Willy reenacted the conversation they had.

“Willy, I’ve got good news and bad news.”

“What’s the good news?”

“There isn’t any.”

“What’s the bad news?”

“The roof collapsed.”

Willy said he didn’t believe it until he saw it with his own eyes. But the two had keys to a Shilo Inn room in less than 30 minutes, courtesy of the landlord, Ed Schuyler.

On Saturday, February 11, Red Cross representatives from Los Angeles set up an emergency shelter at the Mammoth High School in the prop room for the Drama Department, adjacent to the gymnasium.

There are currently 19 units/apartments in Mammoth affected by snow that compromised the integrity of structures. Only two families needed shelter over the weekend and by Monday, it was just Willie and Whitford left. The Whitmore Animal Shelter was opened to house family pets.

The Mono County Shelter Coordinator, who wished to remain anonymous, started in the shelter with families that first night to show solidarity and emotional support. The Coordinator explained the Sheriff’s Department notifies the county a shelter is needed and the county works with the Red Cross that has a memorandum of understanding with the agency to provide assistance.

Inyo-Mono Advocates for Community Action has put a link on its website, www.IMACA.net, to an application for those who have accrued weather-related physical damage to property or businesses that have suffered economically to fill out a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) survey to assess the damage.

There are no quarters for renters when it comes to being reimbursed for damage of property. Mammoth Lakes State Farm Agent Dave Easterby said there’s not much a renter can do after a disaster; the best bet is to be proactive with Renter’s Insurance. Renters can get ample protection for about the cost of a pizza every month.

Homeowners Insurance usually covers roof collapses because of snow and ice, says Easterby. Homeowners also have a plan called “loss of use” which means the insurance company will pay for housing for the owner until the home is habitable.

There’s a rumor that some home owners and property management companies are delaying snow removal or not removing it at all from roofs, in the hopes the insurance settlement will be more than what the building is worth. Easterby said there’s no guarantee a collapsed roof will exceed the deductible, much less render a structure a total loss.

Willy and Whitford haven’t had a chance to re-enter their apartment to survey their loss, but, “It’s not the best, but it’s been a great experience,” Whitford said.

Willy said everyone has been so generous. A maintenance guy at the high school, blowing snow, offered the two a place to stay.

Melissa Harris, Red Cross Disaster Program Specialist from the Los Angeles region said she was unsure how long the shelter would be in place. The weather forecast for this weekend calls for more apocalyptic conditions.

The shelter is in the Drama Room, not in the gymnasium and will not interfere with Mammoth High School’s game or practice schedule.

Both Whitford and Willy are moving with Willy’s sister until they can get something permanent.
A recent study found that millennials would rather disclose a sexually transmitted disease (STD) to their prospective partner than their personal debt. We asked young people which they would rather disclose. Note: All respondents vehemently denied having an STD. Debt was a different story.

Would you rather disclose an STD to your partner or the amount of debt you are in?

“I think it’s a little safer to disclose an STD. I don’t personally have debt, but that’s information you ought to share with someone you’re going to spend a lot of time with.”
- Eric Ely

“I think an STD would be the most pressing thing to disclose. I mean debt can go away. Herpes won’t. But it can go away and come back. Like debt, I guess.”
- Corbin Debiak

“It depends on the STD. I mean, if it’s AIDS, that’s a big one. But chlamydia vs. $40,000 in debt? Also depends why you’re in debt. Do you owe money to the Russian mafia or did you go to an Ivy League college?”
- Caitlin Rea

“The thought of talking about a hypothetical STD makes me far more uncomfortable than talking about my debt. I don’t have any debt, obviously student loan debt is different.”
- Nate Bevelaqua

“I’m on the fence. A lot of millennials are in the same boat when it comes to debt. I think all of us are looking for a partner who is more responsible than ourselves.”
- McKenzie Weaver (right)

“I think I would rather disclose an STD. It’s a pretty acceptable, common thing to talk about these days.”
- Emily Samarripas (left)

“I think it’s a little safer to disclose an STD. I don’t personally have debt, but that’s information you ought to share with someone you’re going to spend a lot of time with.”
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- Emily Samarripas (left)
County staff’s claim was that the February 21 agenda was so packed that it had to move some items to the February 14 agenda, but why this one? The rescheduling meant that Rudder’s partner, Drew Hild, as a real estate expert, would have eaten Tony Dublino (a very bright guy, but no expert in this arena. He’s spent months on this, not decades) for lunch.

The motion that Stump made was very telling. He directed staff to pursue either a lease renewal or the new construction. A potential purchase of the Sierra Center mall was abandoned.

Town weighs in

The next night, at Mammoth’s Town Council meeting, the Town addressed the idea of partnering with the County on a joint government facility.

The Town, according to the Assistant to the Town Manager Pam Koby larz, spends about $300,000 annually to rent space at the Minaret Mall.

Continuing with a theme from the day before (taxpayers whining about their landlords) Koby larz enumerated the many deficiencies with the town’s office space.

1. The front counter is very noisy and makes it difficult to serve multiple customers.
2. Numerous roof leaks have damaged equipment and records.
3. The HVAC is extremely inefficient and inconsistent and needs a complete overhaul.
4. The overall space is inefficient and dilapidated and the layout is confusing and awkward and doesn’t present a “competent” image for visitors or guests.

As Koby larz said at the County meeting Tuesday, a new building would be a source of pride and impress/convince those interested in investing in Mammoth.

Ed. aside: As a client, if I walk into lavish offices, I automatically know where my money is being spent, and I’m not necessarily happy about it. I’m positive that my clients would be more than happy to see me work out of a broom closet if it kept the price of advertising down.

Thank goodness I now know what to get all my Town staffer friends for next Christmas. New buckets for the ceiling run-off which can double as tear collectors. Some points in favor of a new facility worthy of consideration:

1. A combined facility with the County would provide a one-stop shop for citizens, and reduce duplication of certain services between Town and County.
2. A Town/County government facility might make a natural bookend to a Tavern Road extension, and really, Tavern Road is the closest the Town might ever come to developing some sort of “downtown” area.

Then again, you could sell the property and bookend Tavern Rd. with any number of uses.

Councilman Bill Sauser probably summed it up best when he said, while the idea of a joint facility is attractive, “I’m not even 15 percent there in terms of having the necessary information [to make a decision].”
DUMP AND PUMP?

By Oster

Q: My Mammoth real estate agent told me that all the new snow will pump up the Mammoth real estate market? What do you think? And in the past, how have the big snow years impacted the local market?

A: This is an interesting question because of Mammoth’s variable snow history and the “monster” snow years. This more recent era of the MVP (the less expensive pre-sale ski passes) the market has reacted more positively to outstanding snow and ski conditions. That is if they can get here and see the properties. And if there is any inventory. We are seeing that now. But the 500+ inch snow years have occurred in an wide disparity of macro and micro economic environments, so the effect has been different.

My first winter in Mammoth was 1981-82. According to the Ski Area’s records that was one of the seven 500+ inch winters of recent record. And coincidentally, back-to-back 500+ inch winters have occurred three times (’82-83, ’05-06, ’10-11). There are four winters have occurred three times coincidentally, back-to-back 500+ inch winters of recent record. And records that was one of the seven 500+ 1981-82. According to the Ski Area’s has been different.

The most recent back-to-back in 2009-11 occurred at the peak of the foreclosure cycle following (or during) the Great Recession. There was strong motivation on the part of qualified buyers to grab a good buy in the Mammoth market. Part of being really qualified meant the buyer had cash, but it also meant willing to accept some compromises with the property. Former owners were “striping” properties or they simply hadn’t been maintained. As we are currently learning, properties need extra maintenance when the big winters come.

But while the vultures were swarming and were willing to spend the weekend in their somehow compromised property, the rest of the local real estate market languished. A significant volume of foreclosed and bank owned (REO) properties will do that to markets. Buyers were chasing the foreclosures. There were increasing short sale offerings in the market too. But short sales weren’t providing the instant gratification that many buyers were looking for. The process was still too cumbersome. And the larger economy was certainly holding the market back.

The big snows help create enthusiasm for purchasers. But with it comes added expense to the property and added hassles. It seems like I was constantly shoveling-out REO properties just to give potential buyers access to the front door. 2011 was simply ridiculous. Many of the buyers thought it was comical. I hope they’re having fun now.

And in many cases it was merely the perception that the distressed properties were a better deal. There were many motivated sellers who couldn’t allow themselves to be foreclosed on or to be party to a short sale. Many were willing, or did bring “cash to the closing.” But for some buyers the simple bragging rights of “winning” a multiple bid scenario for the next foreclosure was more important. It was a weird time. All of the snow made it somewhat surreal.

The winters of 2004-05 and 05-06 were similar but completely different. It was a far more jubilant time; money was flowing abundantly and anybody and everybody was qualifying for mortgages. This was the crescendo of the Intrawest era and the beginning of the Starwood era. Lots of money and lots of snow make for good times in the mountain resort world.

But the Mammoth real estate market took a pause in the summer of 2005 between the two big winters. There were plenty of pre-sold Intrawest units under construction or being hyped. But then the big announcement of Starwood Capital becoming the principal owner of MMSA launched the local real estate sales into the stratosphere. And another massive 550+ winter hit. It was almost real estate euphoria.

The basis for this state of glee was that the man who built the Starwood Hotel brand, who essentially invented the famous “heavenly bed,” and who was accumulating some of the finest hospitality assets in the world, was now going to lead the Mammoth resort complex to its finest and grandest iteration. Oh, and by-the-way, the skiing was fabulous.

The market rose another 10-20% or more in value in a matter of months. (As an aside, the Mono County Assessor pegs the top of the Mammoth real estate market at spring of 2006). The plans to build the new “1” hotel and the famous “heavenly bed,” and who was accumulating some of the finest hospitality assets in the world, was now going to lead the Mammoth resort complex to its finest and grandest iteration. Oh, and by-the-way, the skiing was fabulous.

The market rose another 10-20% or more in value in a matter of months. (As an aside, the Mono County Assessor pegs the top of the Mammoth real estate market at spring of 2006). The plans to build the new “1” hotel across from the Village were in the works. The sign read “The Place To Be, Is About To Be.” And Roger Staubach’s real estate group was planning the Ritz Carlton Residences next to the Westin Monache; “Starting at $1.7 Million” the advertising said.

Contact MCWD for more info: 760.934.2596 ext. 274
But then the next winter produced a measly 220 inches of snow and soon after the national economy went into the tank. The plug was pulled on everything and the Ski Area became another private equity asset to strip down and milk for every dime. Not to mention it was a big, underwater asset. It was only last summer when the CEO reported that the “service” component of the operation was being brought back to the resort. Thankfully, most Mammoth fans consider the mountain conditions more important than customer service.

There were big winters in the mid-1990’s with a 500+ inch winter in 1995 and almost 500 inches in 1993 and 1998. These winters pulled the region out of the long drought of the late 80’s and early 90’s. But the recession of 1991 just killed the slight economic comeback of the late 80’s (despite the drought). Reality is that the big winters of the 90’s probably kept Mammoth from being thrown on the dung-heap. At least there was great skiing and that kept everybody interested. The die-hards stuck it out. And if they stuck around they were likely rewarded.

The drought and subsequent poor economic conditions opened the door for the Intrawest acquisition in 1996. I remember it being a big deal. Their economic conditions opened the door for the Intrawest acquisition in 1996. The two 500+ inch winters of the early 1980’s were a whole different story. They too came on the heels of recessions. But Mammoth had been a major boom town in the 1970’s (why do you think so much of it looks like it is still stuck in that time-warp?). By 1980 Mammoth Lakes was some of the priciest mountain-town real estate in North America, rivaling the likes of Aspen and Sun Valley. But then the whole sequence of recession, earthquakes, volcano scares, Mt. St. Helens, media hysteria, USGS posturing, etc. happened. It all went downhill from there. But the downhill skiing was great. And there was some serious partying going on. The people that made the very small town of Mammoth in the 1970’s were animals in many ways. There was no holding back, no political correctness. Nobody was insulted. It was good time to be young and watch. It was a critical time to get into real estate. It was a great time to get into real estate. As Mammoth’s prized real estate went down the tubes the long-time brokers were hyper-critical of the USGS’ handling of the seismic events here in Mammoth. The national media would report on it and show video of Mt. St. Helens blowing. Their assets and livelihoods were going down the drain. But the skiing was great (and so were the drugs and alcohol). They referred to the USGS as the “U.S. Guessing Society.”

I recently had the opportunity to sit through a private presentation by David Hill who was in charge of the local USGS laboratories in this area for decades. Today he is a “Scientist Emeritus” at the Menlo Park Volcano Science Center. He is old, fit and sharp but he seems to have tinge of regret for how it all went down. In the presentation he said “there was simply no protocol for what to do” for the situation he was observing; the earth was moving violently and there was major land mass uplift in the region. He simply felt it was prudent to let everybody know the place could blow. Thankfully it didn’t. But if this situation hadn’t happened, real estate values in Mammoth could easily be 3 or 4 times what they are today. And then none of us could afford to live here. So looking back, the big winters provided great excitement and short term bursts of interest. But the macro and micro economics played bigger roles. The question I also keep hearing is “Why hasn’t Mammoth rebounded back to 2000’s values like most of California?” The best answer is that the four drought years were likely to blame. Drought appears to be a stronger influence on Mammoth real estate values than big snow years.

But then again others would answer the question by pointing to the “Taking Action” plan of Mammoth Mountain. The plan seems to be waiting for the next recession so there will be another prolonged period of no action. But we’ve become accustomed to that. Meanwhile, the balance of the ski season should be fabulous. And tons of water for the summer and beyond. I have a feeling the upcoming snow and water content surveys will be impressive!

Paul Oster is the Broker/Owner of RE/MAX of Mammoth. For other timely real estate information you can go to www.MammothRealEstateBlog.com. For legal, accounting, or construction advice, please seek out the appropriate professional.
The Town could then use its property however it wished. It could contemplate population densities as high as 24 units/acre, as it did at its first-ever affordable housing project at Meridian Court, yielding 192 units, or it could opt for a more "livable" configuration (say 18 units/acre), yielding 144 total units.

The remainder of the site, says Carney, would also be dedicated to locals' housing. The vision: market-rate, but with some kind of restriction on eligibility. "If you limit the market, you necessarily limit the price," said Carney. The Shady Rest group is apparently working on a development agreement with the Town at this time. In terms of where the market is now, local real estate broker and appraiser Matthew Lehman says the median prices for Mammoth condos and single-family homes was down slightly in 2016 and that slight downward trend has continued into 2017. This, however, follows a 23% price spike in the single-family home market in 2015.

But overall, the market does seem to support a 10 p.m. close. As Carney says, "if you can't compete with some kind of market-rate, but with restrictions on eligibility. "If you limit the market, you necessarily limit the price," said Carney. The Shady Rest group is apparently working on a development agreement with the Town. The Plan Commission meeting that she and Amanda and David Carmichael, who has managed the Village Motel for the last 10 years, said she's fully in support of the new business at its proposed location. "Nobody I know wants June Lake to grow. What we do want is for it to reach its full potential with regard to existing buildings... let's have existing buildings thriving, local jobs that pay decently." Kramer, who has managed the Village Motel for the last 10 years, said she and her business partner want to create another hub for tourists and locals. She and her partner hope to open this summer. When Ohana's first opened in June Lake, a few local food vendors objected to the Hawaiian Soul Food Truck. "There's this old theory in north county that, 'there are only so many pieces of the pie,' said McCullough. She said she's seen established restaurants write letters and make phone calls to county staff to deliberately slow the progress of their competition. "Businesses need to let the county staff do their job, and let these people dream."
RARE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY—Limited inventory remains in Gray Bear at Mammoth. Mammoth Lakes’ newest residential neighborhood that allows for generous nightly rental income. Gray Bear is an intimate private enclave of 42 California Craftsman-style homes nestled in the forest along Sierra Star Golf Course in the heart of town. Easy walking access to The Village at Mammoth gondola. Expansive lot size, south facing fairway frontage, plans allow for a secondary rental home or guest quarters.

GRAY BEAR III, LOT 8
EAST BEAR LAKE DRIVE • MAMMOTH LAKES, CA
4 Bedrooms • 4.5 Bathrooms • 2-Car Garage
2900 Sq. Ft. • 0.88 Acres
$1,299,000
GrayBearMammoth.com

Tammy Hooper
CARRE LICENSE 3257866
760-937-7300
RockStarRealEstate.com
Local bands play a packed room to benefit Russel, Tina and Isabel Villa, avalanche survivors.

MBC HOSTS VILLA BENEFIT

As Mammoth locals are wont to do, they turned out in force to drink beer and boogie for a good cause on Monday, February 13—this time for Russel and Tina Villa (and their baby Isabel) who were displaced when an avalanche hit their home in Long Valley on Sunday, January 22.

Russel Villa is an employee of Mammoth Brewing Company, and $1 from every pint and ten percent of food sales from The Eatery was donated to the family. Local bands The Rising Sundogs and Dreddie Poppins and the Professionals performed for free. The Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center also gave an informative presentation.

Photos, clockwise from right: Eddie Wright fronts the band Dreddie Poppins. Dave Benami and Nick Marks on horns. Tina, Russel and baby Isabel Villa dance to the music. Sam Borque and Katie Sheehan enjoy some food from The Eatery. Matt Davison (right), Leslie Redman (center) and Lindsey Rich (left). Sheila Romane and Sarah serve up the brews.
Help Wanted

Mammoth Lakes Winter Sports & Events is seeking equipment rental/retail technical, service, and administrative staff. Some experience preferred for all positions. Please send resume to info@gomezs.com, or email applications to info@gomezs.com, or stop in and speak with Rene or Chris.

SUPERIOR COURT Mono County Accepting applications for full-time position (40-hour work week) in the Mammoth Lakes Courthouse for Executive Assistant; Gross monthly pay, $3,631 to $4,866 depending on experience. Successful internal candidates will be given preference. For job description and application go to the Court website at www.monocourt.org/jobs.htm. You may also contact the Court at (760) 723-3531, or pick up an application at the Mammoth Lakes Courthouse. Applications accepted until 4:00 p.m. Friday, February 10, 2017. Postmarks not accepted. EOE/AE/AE.

For Rent

2 BDR/1.5 BA apt. for rent, $1,800/mo. Newly remodeled. Rent includes water, cable/internet, W/D, Pets ok. Furnished. Near Village. Contact Michele Hansen for owner’s info. 760.934.1842.

3BD/2.5 BA Single Family Home. 2 car garage. Washer, dryer, gas heat, electric pellet stove. Great views. SV Sites next to Mammoth Lakes Snow Bowl. $1,500/mo. 6-month lease. Call Eric @ 760.420.4005.

Great family home in June Lake. Quiet, relaxing views. 2 BDR, 2 BA, Loft, Dog run. Pellet stove. Close to June Mountain for skiing. Easy access to lakes, swim, hike and bike. Pet deposit. 2/12/17. Address: 130 Nevada Street. Call Pat @ 760.923.7199.

For Sale

Qualified candidates are invited to apply to work at the Mammoth Lakes Courthouse for Executive Assistant; Gross monthly pay, $3,631 to $4,866 depending on experience. Successful internal candidates will be given preference. For job description and application go to the Court website at www.monocourt.org/jobs.htm. You may also contact the Court at (760) 723-3531, or pick up an application at the Mammoth Lakes Courthouse. Applications accepted until 4:00 p.m. Friday, February 10, 2017. Postmarks not accepted. EOE/AE/AE.

SIERRA NEVADA RESORT & SPA

Housekeepers ($11)
Cooks
Dishwashers
Maintenance Worker

Please complete an application at 164 Old Mammoth Rd.
and email resume to hr@sierraski.com

Part Time Year Round Maintenance Laronder Needed For Condominium Complex: You may complete an application at 2298 Sierra Nevada Road or email you resume to mtrunick@npgcable.com; or call 760.434.4993 for more information.

For Sale

For sale - well-established local catering company. More information: 760.934.1242.

In search of ... a catchy name for my big unit. Hmm... how about “Snow”?

NOEL HOYT LAMKIN 1931-2017

Noel Hoyt Lamkin passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on January 3, 2017. Noel was born on December 31, 1931 in Long Beach, California to Ethel (Hoyt) and John Louis “Jake” Jacobson, Noel was raised in Fuller- ton, California, where she attended Fullerton High School, and later, UCLA, and University of Redlands.

Noel began her artistic pursuits in earnest with a fashion design assignment in San Francisco. Her prize winning ceramics, jewelry, needlework, and pine needle baskets remain a lasting testimony to Noel’s artistry and passion.

Annual vacations with her parents, first camping at June Lake and later at their McGee Creek cabin, instilled a lifelong love affair with the Eastern Sierra. Snowy weather could not deter crossings between San Francisco and her beloved McGee Creek in her sporty ’55 MG. In the decades that followed and up until October 2016, Noel would share her Eastern Sierra passion with her family and friends through her hospitality at her beloved cabin.

On the other hand, she could evolve in her excellence in the various pursuits of diving to tennis to fishing and beyond, translated into her unwavering support for her children and grandchildren. In recent years, even with technology her nemesis, she would come to depend on her trusty GPS to guide her to all of her grand- kids’ activities near and far.

Noel is survived by her loving daughters Stephanie Hate (Cliff) of Mammoth Lakes, Laurie Ann (William) of Santa Ana, Jamie Board of Hermosa Beach, grandchildren Alexander, Kassiani, Elleni, Blake, and Tanner, loving family recruits Ty Nichols and Kemp Stanford, and four-legged family representatives Watson, Jasper and Indiana.
TOWN STUFF

February 17-19/ Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery presented by Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre continues. Friday-Saturday, 7 p.m. Sunday, 4 p.m. Edison Theatre, 100 College Parkway. Tic: $22 at door. $20/$18 online. Available at www.mammothlakesrepertorytheatre.com.

February 17-18/ MHS Drama Club presents its production of Orwell’s “Animal Farm” at the MHS MPR. Time: 7 p.m. both nights. All tix $5.

February 17-20/ Winter Art Festival: President’s Show with the Mono Arts Council. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Minaret Village Shopping Center, 437 Old Mammoth Road. See sidebar, next page.

February 18-19/ South Tufa walks happen on weekends at 1 p.m. and lookout hour at 7:30 p.m. Meet at South Tufa off of Hwy 120 east. Info: Mono Lake Committee @ 760.847.6959.

Friday, February 17/ Gallery reception: All you need is love with the Mono Arts Council. Featuring works by Lori Michelon, Kendra Knight, Linda Sue, and more. 5-7 p.m. at MAC. 437 Old Mammoth Road. “This is the rescheduled event postponed on Feb. 10 due to weather.” Imagination Lab film presentation of “I Love You To Death” and discussion with John Nordinger. Starts 7 p.m. Location: 621 West Line St. (upstairs).

Crowley Lake Peapod playgroup, 10-11 a.m. Crowley Lake Community Center, 458 S. Landing Rd. First timers skate assist lessons at the Mammoth Ice Rink, 4:30-6:30 p.m. See ad, p. 4.

Saturday, February 18/ Friends of the Inyo “Tahleland” tour. Info/reservations: 760.873.6500/info@friendsoftheinyo.org.

Woolly’s Saturday Parade in the Village at Mammoth. Music, fun and face painting begins @ 3:45.

MHS Ski and Snowboard fundraiser. Featuring works by Lori Michelon, Kendra Knight, Linda Sue, and more. 5-7 p.m. at MAC. 437 Old Mammoth Road. “This is the rescheduled event postponed on Feb. 10 due to weather.”

Saturday, February 19/ Eastside Writers Circle meets @ the Elks Lodge in Bishop. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. with the Mono Arts Council. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Crowley Lake Community Center, 458 S. Landing Rd.

Spring Fever in Mammoth. Info/reservations: 760.873.6500/info@friendsoftheinyo.org.

Super Bingo scholarship fundraiser @ the Elks Lodge in Bishop. See ad, p. 4.

Spend Your Presidents (and Hamiltons) Here On Beer

Beer lovers’ candy store
Selection of more than 300 beers
SPEND YOUR PRESIDENTS (AND HAMILTONS) HERE ON BEER

934.2820
Main St. Next to Rick’s

BARS & MUSIC

Happy Hour/ The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill. Pursuit of Happiness Hour, 3-6 p.m. off draft beers, $2 off wine, $4 well drinks, $2 off specialty drinks. $5 Flatbread.

Before The Show @ John’s Pizza Works. 4-6 p.m. every day. Austin Hof. 4-6 p.m. Sun.-Thurs. Fri.-Sat. 4-5 p.m.

Whitebark Restaurant Bar & Lounge Unwind with daily drink and food specials 4-6 p.m. Half price sushi Mondays.

Clocktower Cellar Happy Hour 4:30-7 p.m. daily and all day Sunday. $5 dollar menu items, drink specials.

Petra’s Bistro Happy Hour. $22 pasta bolognese, salad & glass of wine, 5:00-6:00 p.m. Specials on cocktails, wine, beer and menu items.

Happy Hour @ Sushi Rei. 4-5 p.m. daily. Half off apps and $5 hand roll +small sake. Sundays are all-night happy hour. Late night happy hour Fri-Sat 9-11 p.m.

Happy Hour @ The Bistro at Snowcreek. 4:30-6:30 p.m. daily. Mammoth Tavern Happy Hour Tuesday-Sunday 3:30-5:30 p.m. Closed Mondays.

Smokeyard weekend Happy Hour 4-6 p.m. in the bar only.

Side Door Happy Hour daily 3-6 p.m. Salted Fruit Wine tasting, Sunday February 12th from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. $20 pp.

Mammoth’s famous Slocums Happy Hour 4-6 p.m.

Giovanni’s Happy Hour. daily 4-6 p.m. Large pizza and a pitcher of beer gets you free wings.

Lakanuki Happy Hour daily 3-6 p.m., $4 oysters, $6 wings, $4 S& B, $4 Happy Hour drink specials 10 p.m. - close.

Black Velvet Coffee’s Happy Hour, from 4-6 p.m. every day. $1 glasses of wine.

Morrisons Happy Hour Daily 4-6 p.m.

February 17-18/ Joe Gray Jr. at the Baby Grand playing Jazz at Tamarack. 5:30-9:30 Cantua plays 53 Kitchen & Cocktails, 9-11:30 p.m.

Lose your Illusion: tribute band, plays Rafters Restaurant & Lounge. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. both nights.

Tuesday, February 21/ Taco Tuesdays at the Outlaw Saloon, $2 each taco (beef, chicken or fish) with toppings.

Trivia Tuesday @ Mammoth Brewing Co. 7 p.m.

Wednesday, February 22/ Half off wings @ John’s Pizza Works. See ad, p. 11.

Thursday, February 23/ Burger Night @ John’s Pizza Works. See ad, p. 11.

Thursday, February 23/ Thirsty Thursday at Black Velvet Coffee. $4 bolognese, 20% off any glass of wine or beer for the price of one.

Friday, February 24/ The Bodie 601 Band plays Liberty Sports Bar & Grill. 9 p.m. Free.

February 24-25/ WLDC plays 53 Kitchen & Cocktails. 9-11:30 p.m.
**TOWN STUFF**

**February 20-23/**

**NASTAR races come to Mammoth.** Largest grassroots ski race program in the world. Register for free at www.nastar.com.

**February 21-23/**

**$6 Luncheon Special at Mammoth Ice Rink.** Skate away your lunch sour. 12:15-1:30 p.m. S2 School Ski Special from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

**February 21-24/**

**MakerSpace at the Mammoth Lakes Library.** Tuesdays: 2-6 p.m. for elementary aged children. Wednesdays 2-6 p.m. for middle school students; Thursdays 1-6 p.m. for all ages; Fridays 10 a.m.-12 p.m. for adults.

**Tuesday, February 21/**

**Toddler Time @ Mammoth Lakes Community Center, with Angela and Victoria.** 9:30-11:00 a.m.

**Village Championships 2017 @** Fascination race arena. To sign up: drop by the race department office at MMSA before the race. Free.

**President's week activities in the Village** at Mammoth starting 4 p.m. including magicians, jugglers, DJs, disco and more! (Wednesday also). **Sierra Club Monthly Program @ Crowley Lake Community Center** 6:15 pm: Optional potluck—bring a dish to share and your table setting. 7:00 pm Talk: “Where will the trails take us?” Joel Rathie. Trails Coordinator for the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

**Thursday, February 23/**

**“Conducting the College search” workshop** for 11th graders and parents. 6:30 p.m. Mammoth High School library.

**Mammoth Trails Committee meets** 3 p.m. ML&R Conference Room, 2520 Main St. in Conference.

**MAC Winter Art Festival**

The Mono Arts Council is pleased to announce our President’s Art Show, part of our Winter Art Festivals inside the Minaret Village Shopping Center (by Vons). The show features work from several artists, and will run through Monday from 11-6 daily.

The opening reception for Winter’s Call “All Need is Love” takes place Friday, February 17, from 5-7 p.m. Info: kristin@monarts.org or 760.914.2731.

**TOML Damage survey**

The Town is collating flood or snow damage information from this winter. If your property experienced physical damage or your business suffered substantial economic losses, please contact the Town at 760.965.3632. Leave a short concise message. Based on the level of property damage or economic loss, the Town may recommend you complete the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) survey.

With the ratification by Town Council of the President’s proclamation on January 30, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) may provide financial assistance to eligible property owners or businesses. The completion of the worksheet or survey is not an application for assistance.

For additional information about this program or to complete the Estimated Disaster Economic Injury Worksheet For Businesses or Damage Survey, please click here or contact Diana Jacobson, Permit Technician at 760.914.9632 or via email djacobson@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.

**2017 June Lake Winter Festival**

The June Lake Winter Festival returns to June Lake on March 4 with exciting events for the whole family, from a winter triathlon to a snowmobile poker rally and snow sculpture competition. With record-breaking snowfall to date and more in the forecast, it’ll be an action-packed celebration.

“There is a reason June Lake is dubbed the Switzerland of California,” said Ralph Lockhart of the Double Eagle Resort & Spa and June Lake Chamber of Commerce board member. “If you are ever dreaming of a winter wonderland, then this year is the year to come.”

A winter triathlon combines Nordic skiing, laser rifle shooting and a fat bike segment on March 4, with prizes for winners in each division. There is a snowmobile poker rally where contestants follow a 20-plus mile course between June Lake and Mammoth Lakes with stations along the way to draw cards and assemble a poker hand. Awards for best hand, worst hand and more will be handed out at the finish.

To find out more, go to VisitJune.com or facebook.com/Junelakewinterfestival.

**AT THE MOVIES**

**Minaret Cinemas**

The Lego Batman Movie (PG): We can only imagine the plot. Lunch was very excited to hear this film was about to debut.

Fifty Shades Darker (R): Second installment in the popular romance trilogy.

For movie times, call 760.934.3131 or visit mammothlakesmoviess.com

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**MLR funds application**

Mammoth Lakes Recreation will be opening the application process for Measure R and Measure U funds for fiscal year 2017-18 on February 1, and closing on February 28. The funds will be allocated for programs and projects starting on July 1, 2017 and ending on June 30, 2018. The application can be found at www.mammothlakesrecreation.org/ allocation/.

The Mammoth Lakes Disc Golf Club is also seeking donations to reach its goal of $2,600 to possibly receive funds from MLR. If you want to donate, write a check to: MLR Disc Golf Club, PO Box 8298, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 or contact Mike Wellwood, 714.357.0741 or mikewellwood11@yahoo.com.

**High Sierra Chorus**

The High Sierra Chorus, in preparation for its spring concert, will begin practicing on Monday from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the first Presbyterian Church in Bishop starting March 7. Info: LouAnn @ 760.873.5088.

**Red Cross shelter in Mammoth**

In response to the structural damage occurring throughout the communities in the Mammoth Lakes area, American Red Cross Los Angeles Region disaster workers have opened a shelter at the Mammoth High School (365 Sierra Park Road).

The shelter supports the immediate needs of those affected, including a safe place to stay, food, water, and access to health services, emotional support and other recovery resources. Impacted residents are welcome to stop by during the day even if they choose to spend the night elsewhere.

For additional information about the shelter, please contact Kathryn Peterson, Social Services Director - Mono County Department of Social Services at 760.924.1763 or via email at kpeterson@mono.ca.gov.

**June Mountain shuttle**

Due to the excellent winter season we are having here at June Mountain, demand has been high, and we are expecting over 2,000 people on the mountain each day of the Presidents Weekend. To help reduce the amount of guests driving to the mountain, ESTA will be running a shuttle throughout town on Saturday, February 18, and Sunday, February 19.

The ESTA shuttle will run from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. and again from 1-5 p.m. on both days. The shuttle will start at boulder Lodge, then stop at Mountain Falls Ballroom (next to the Grill Room), 5001 Clubhouse Dr. in Pahrump, Nev. Local historian and author Michael E. Lenzen will share some of the insights and interesting tidbits he’s uncovered during his research. Coffee, tea, and appetizers will be served. Free to the public.

**Big Pine Winter Wildlife Tour** 8 a.m. till 1 p.m. Meet: Glacier View Campground at the intersection of Hwy 395 & 168 in north Big Pine. Tom & Jo Heindel’s annual Winter Wildlife Field Trip from Kondilke Lake to Tinemaha Reservoir. Bring your own water, snacks, binoculars, and telescope if you have one. Info: Tom & Jo Heindel at 760.938.2764.

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**UPCOMING**

Find the agenda at www.mammothlakesrecreation.org/Becoming an emotion coach with First 5 Mono County. This week: Attachment & Parenting styles, 5:30-7 p.m. Register by calling 760.924.7626. Visit www.monokids.org for info.

**Friday, February 24/**

Join local biologists and find Bighorn Sheep in the mountains nearby. Free. Pre-registration required. Limited space. Field trips weather/road condition dependent. Trips begin 9 a.m. and end around noon. Register at asknsb@wildlife.ca.gov. Meet at the Calif. Fish & Wildlife office on Main Street in Bishop. Plan to carpool.

Inyo County Employees Assn. hosts a “Protect Public Services” rally at Bishop City Park. Noon.

**Saturday, February 25/**

**Motocross race** in the Main arena at Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop. Gates open 7 a.m. Adult admission $10. Kids under 12 are $5. Join the Death Valley Natural History Assn. from 2-5 p.m in the Mountain Falls Ballroom (next to the Grill Room), 5001 Clubhouse Dr. in Pahrump, Nev. Local historian and author Michael E. Lenzen will share some of the insights and interesting tidbits he’s uncovered during his research. Coffee, tea, and appetizers will be served. Free to the public.

**Big Pine Winter Wildlife Tour** 8 a.m. till 1 p.m. Meet: Glacier View Campground at the intersection of Hwy 395 & 168 in north Big Pine. Tom & Jo Heindel’s annual Winter Wildlife Field Trip from Kondilke Lake to Tinemaha Reservoir. Bring your own water, snacks, binoculars, and telescope if you have one. Info: Tom & Jo Heindel at 760.938.2764.

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**THE SHEET | Saturday, February 18, 2017**

**Los Angeles**

**Department of Water and Power**

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NOTICE OF CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING
MAMMOTH LAKES TOWNSHIP COUNCIL will hold a PUBLIC HEARING on Monday, March 6, 2017, beginning at 6:00 p.m. and continuing until finished, at the Mammoth Lakes Town Council Chamber, Suite 2 within the Minaret Village Shopping Center, 437 Old Mammoth Road to consider the following

1. DEMPSEY CONSTRUCTION INC.
   Proposed Use of Fictitious Business Name

2. SNOWCREEK INVESTMENT CO., LLC
   Proposed Use of Fictitious Business Name

3. MUSIC WAVE, LLC
   Proposed Use of Fictitious Business Name

The following persons have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name:

4. SNOWCREEK MANAGEMENT CO., LLC
   Proposed Use of Fictitious Business Name

5. SNOWCREEK GOLF COURSE
   Proposed Use of Fictitious Business Name

6. SNOWCREEK INVESTMENT CO., LLC
   Proposed Use of Fictitious Business Name
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Mono County Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing March 7, 2017, at 10:00 am in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, Mono County Courthouse, Bridgeport, CA, to consider GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 16-02. The Planning Commission recommends approval of GPA 16-02 as follows: Part A) 1. Change Land Use Designation (LUD) of former Mountain Gate property from Rural Residential (R) 5 & 10 to Open Space (OS) (affected APNs 002-140-033, 002-430-002, -007, -008 & -011 are owned by Mono County; 2. Change LUD for Walker Behavioral Health property from Mixed Use one-acre minimum to Public Facility (PF) (APN is 002-361-012 and is owned by Mono County; 3. Change LUD for Public Works property at West Walker River/North River/Lane from Estate Residential (ER) to Public Facility (PF) (APN is 002-310-016); 4. Change LUD of Walker tennis courts from Estate Residential to Public Facility (APNs are 002-382-008 & -009); 5. Change LUD on various FEMA properties along North River Lane and Meadow Drive from Estate Residential (ER) to Open Space (OS) (APNs are 002-290-005, 006, 007, 002-350-002, 002-310-001, -009, -038, -037, -035, and 002-343-005); 6. Change LUD on APN 002-450-014 Antelope Valley Fire Station from Agricultural 10 (AG10) to Public Facilities (PF); 7. Add policy to Land Use Element; Antelope Valley Plan as follows: The RPAC endorses the use of FEMA County properties on N. River Road and Meadow Lane as open space, without development for public improvements and facilities until 2041; 8. Change setback in Mixed Use district for residential uses from 5 feet to 10 feet; 9. Specify that initiation of a General Plan Amendment by a private landowner must go before the Board of Supervisors for approval if the GPA is a major policy change with potential significant impacts county-wide; and 10. Amend Chapter 16, Accessory Dwelling Units, to comply with AB2200 and SB1069. Part B) Revise General Plan Land Use Element Chapter 25 concerning short-term rentals. Highlights of recommended changes include: establish process to permit short-term rentals on N. River Road from Estate Residential (ER) if specific permits are compatible with applicable area plans, extend notice requirements for public hearings to 30 days, define Type I rentals as owner-occupied properties and set Use Permit Process for approval, define Type II rentals as vacant properties with off-site management and set a General Plan Amendment process for approval, require Vacation Home Rental Permits (Ch. 28) for both Type I and Type II rentals, eliminate solicitation of multi-plex applications or setup of districts, focus on standards for approval as lack of reasonable opposition by neighbors directly affected rather than neighborhood support, and clarify “neighbor”; require that no short-term rental applications be processed for June Lake until the Area Plan revision is concluded, and that short-term rentals must be consistent with the applicable area plan. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, an addendum to the existing General Plan EIR is being utilized. Project materials are available for public review at the Community Development Department offices in Bridgeport and Mammoth Lakes; for more information call 760.924.1800. INTERESTED PERSONS may appear before the Board of Supervisors to present testimony or, prior to or at the hearing, file written correspondence with: Board Clerk, PO Box 715, Bridgeport, CA 93517. If you challenge the proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to Board Clerk at, or prior to, the public hearing.

MHS GIRLS DEFENSE WINS

The Lee Vining Lady Tigers Basketball fell to Mammoth Huskies on Tuesday after a tough and loud 51-33 match in Mammoth. The Huskies physically towered over the Tigers but that made little difference; the Tigers’ top scorer, Junior Karli Duro, is 4’11” and was the top scorer of the night, landing 21 points. The first period started with quick scoring by the Huskies with 11-5 in the first minutes. It didn’t take long for parents to start yelling at the kids and pointing at the right basket. Husky Sophomore Morgan Sanders, scored time after time from the corner. Second period started with a score of 17-9 and ended 26-15, Mammoth defense dominating the game. Husky girls basketball team is ranked 4th in the state for blocks per games, averaging 9, along with 17 steals. The fourth period opened with a score of 42-20 but both teams quickly added to those numbers. Lee Vining Coach James Godoy said his squad may not be as tall as some other players, but the girls were twice as hard. He said he was very proud of the team, “A great group of girls.” He considered the season a good learning experience given the disruptions by the weather. The 10th ranked Huskies (13-5) are moving onto the Wild Card CIF Southern Section Division 6 take on the 26th ranked Providence Patriots (9-10) on Friday, February 16 in Santa Barbara.
Aquarius: Your assignment for this next circle around the sun is to believe that anything is possible. It might help to remember that experts said Tom "The Best Ever" Brady was too slow, skinny and weak to make it as a professional quarterback. Therefore, if you can maintain unwavering faith, you're bound to win some of your own Super Bowls this year, and then you'll get to celebrate them like Gronk.

Pisces: Some days are better than others. Some days we feel like we've got it, others, like we don't. Sometimes, Tom "Five-Time Champ" Brady said, "getting up in the morning and brushing your teeth is the hardest part of the day—it all just hurts." But those are the days that actually matter most. Because sometimes all you've got to do is get up and get started and things will turn around, and if you're really lucky, the day won't even require pants.

Aries: After pulling off the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history and shattering all kinds of records in the process, most of us would like to know what Tom "I'm ing Brady's secret is. Some people will say it's cheating, and these people have anger issues, could use a hug and can be often be heard mumbling "I-E-T-S." Tom simply says, "if you don't believe in yourself, why is anyone else going to believe in you?"

Taurus: It wouldn't be surprising to hear members of this sign say things like: 1) "If I have something to say, I want it to be meaningful," 2) "This isn't ISIS. No one's dying. We'll get through this." Since both these lines are quotes from Tom "That's Not My Ring Finger" Brady, perhaps it's best that you adopt these Brady lines, too. "Let's Goooooo!" "Roger, That!" "I'll be right there, Giselle."

Gemini: One of the most popular moments of the Super Bowl was after it ended and Commissioner Roger "Con-cussions and the Ideal Gas Law are urban myths" Goodell had to present the trophy to the hated Patriots. The crowd boooed while Brady and Belich-ick laughed in the background. Since you should laugh more, enjoy this Tommy "Don't deflate my balls" Brady comment: "Everybody has a preference. Some guys like them round, some guys like them thin, some guys like them tacky, some guys like them brand new. Some guys like old balls."

Cancer: One of the big keys to happiness for Cancerians like yourself is to not become your worst enemy. To do that, be open-minded and more accepting that everyone is a nut job, but sometimes all you've got to do is turn around, and if you're really lucky, the day won't even require pants.

Leo: They say that great things are born in August. Since Jerry Garcia, Tom Brady and you are living proof, please take your advice this week from Tom "Shadow Lion" Brady: "We all have experiences in our lives that change us, and we all learn from people, like my dad, but at the end of the day, it's only us. And we're only responsible to make ourselves happy."

Virgo: Virgos don't mind working hard, so long as they can play hard, too. Therefore, please adopt this quote from Tommy "Mr.Clutch" Brady to many aspects of your life, from work and play to whoopee-making: "I am not a person that's self satisfied just because this is here. It's something you have in common with Tom "And One for the Thumb" Brady: "A lot of people don't believe in you. It's obvious by now... And I always thought you know what, once I get my shot, I'm gonna be ready. I'm gonna really take advantage of that."

Capricorn: Caps can kick butt, and behave like jackasses, with the best of them. Of course, if you kick too much ass, people will eventually think you are one. It's the price of fulfilling your dreams, and it can be a small one. As Tom "We're Bringing this Sucker Home" Brady says, "You have to believe in yourself. You have to believe in the big thing that you are doing to help... I think you have to take the good with the bad."
SNOW SMART WAYS YOU CAN MAKE WINTER A SAFER SEASON

BE SNOW SMART BY OBSERVING A FEW SIMPLE RULES:

CHILD SAFETY while snow removal operations are under way.
• Keep children indoors.
• Children should not play in yards, build snow forts or dig caves near the road.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
• Don’t watch snow removal operations from the edge of the road.
• Don’t walk in-front of snow removal equipment.

BACK OFF
• While driving, stay at least 50 feet behind snow removal equipment.
• Passing of a snowplow on the road should be done with extreme caution.

SLOW DOWN
• When chain control conditions are in effect, the maximum speed limit is 25 mph.
• Black ice frequently forms in shady areas and at night on roads.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY
• It is a violation to park on any roadway from November 1 through April 30.
• Park all vehicles/trailers away from roads and inside the orange snow stakes.
• Identify your vehicles/trailers location with poles for snow removal operators.

LIGHT IT UP
• Leave the exterior lighting of your home on at night during winter storms.
• Identify the entrance to your driveway with reflective poles.

SNOW STORAGE
• Do not place cleared snow in the roadway or within 10ft. from road’s edge.
• All snow must be stored on your property.

All Town Snow Removal Equipment Can Be Identified By The Town Logo Displayed On The Vehicle.

FOR CURRENT CHAIN-CONTROL RESTRICTIONS:
Call (800)427-ROAD
Listen to KMMT 106.5
Listen to ALT 92.5
Look for chain control signs throughout town

The penalty for failure to observe the posted chain controls may include a citation and a severe fine. Remember to always carry chains and use them when required to do so.

Visit www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi or scan this QR CODE >

PUBLIC SERVICE INFORMATION PAID FOR BY THE TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES. (760) 966-3812. WWW.TOWNOFMAMMOTHLAKESCA.GOV.
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