MCOE officials receiving stipends okay, says DA

T he Sheet was recently approached by several local citizens concerned that Mono County Office of Education Superintendent Stacey Adler was turning their tax dollars into bonuses for administrators. Administrators have received $93,530 in stipends since 2012. A group came to the Mono County District Attorney’s office in 2017 with allegations involving stipends to employees. Adler, which prompted a private investigation. Mono County Superintendents Educational Services Association and is running for reelection in June.

Adler has been awarding stipends to employees involved in a charter school in Southern California, including herself, since 2013, according to documents obtained by The Sheet. According to a press release from Kendall, the contract between the charter school and Mono County Office of Education (MCOE) allows for the stipends. MCOE has managed and overseen the finances of several charter schools since 2013, including the Urban Corps of San Diego Charter School.

MCOE officials receiving stipends okay, says DA

RUSTY SUMMITS ALTEGRA

or... Things to do in Denver when you’re Big Red

A lterra Mountain Company announced the appointment of Rusty Gregory as Chief Executive Officer on Wednesday, February 7. Gregory, the longtime former CEO of Mammoth Resorts, is an investor in the company and has been a member of the Board of Directors since the company’s inception in August 2017. The newly-formed Alterra Mountain Company consists of 12 resorts (Steamboat and Winter Park Resort in Colorado; Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows, Mammoth Mountain, June Mountain and Big Bear Mountain Resort in California; Stratton in Vermont; Snowshoe in West Virginia; Tremblant in Quebec, Blue Mountain in Ontario; Deer Valley in Utah; and CMH Heli-Skiing & Summer Adventures in British Columbia) and has a total of approximately 23,000 employees.

“Since the formation of Alterra Mountain Company, Rusty has served as a Senior Strategic Advisor and has been instrumental in creating its vision and direction. He has played a crucial role in the creation and collaboration of the Ikon Pass,” said Eric Resnick, Chief Executive Officer of KSL Capital Partners. “He is a clear leader in the industry and a natural fit to lead Alterra Mountain Company into the future as well as execute on our promise to innovate while enhancing the unique nature of each of our destinations.”

The Sheet spoke to Gregory on Thursday morning. And couldn’t resist making a comparison of Gregory’s ascension at Alterra to that of Dick Cheney in 2000 (Cheney led the vice-presidential search committee for then-Republican nominee George W. Bush and subsequently became the

STARS COME OUT IN MAMMOTH

Mammoth Film Festival takes over Minaret Cinemas, Village

The Mammoth Film Festival debuts this weekend at Minaret Cinemas. Over this weekend (February 8-11), the Festival will screen 15 feature films (including six world premieres) and 105 short films. There will also be a slew of panel discussions, including a “Women in Film” panel on Sunday at the Brasserie at Mammoth Rock’n’Bowl, followed by screenings at the theater. The Festival schedule is posted at www.mammothfilmfestival.org. At the website, you will also find ticket/pass information. There are special rates for local residents, including $10 for a single premiere or $20 for a one-day pass. An All-Access badge good for all events is $300.

The Arctic comes to Mammoth Understocked Going Wilde How gentlemanly Runaround

See STIPENDS, page 5

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See RUSTY, page 7
BUY THE NUMBERS?

By Lunch

It was the last item on the agenda Wednesday night. It should have been the first. The agenda item was titled: Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget Review.

Mammoth’s Town Council had zero questions regarding Finance Director Rob Patterson’s methodology in his forecast of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue for the next six months. Not that Patterson’s forecast isn’t defensible or reasonable, but it certainly deserved a shred of curiosity.

In 2016-2017, the Town had TOT (Room tax revenue) of approximately $17.8 million. For 2017-2018, Council conservatively budgeted for TOT revenue of just $12.5 million.

During the first six months of this fiscal year, TOT revenue came in 3 percent ahead of last year and 46 percent ahead of budget. Through December, the Town ran a $2.5 million surplus to budget. The Town applied $1.4 million of that to the Shady Rest Parcel purchase. It plans to allocate the remainder of excess funds to Housing, Transit and Tourism reserve accounts.

It estimates the new Police Facility has an overage of $250,000 that it also needs to cover from this excess, and the Town also dedicated $75,000 to install a new handicapped accessible play structure for Mammoth Creek Park.

So far, so good—but this is where I diverge from Patterson a little bit. Patterson advised Council that it is reasonable to expect the Town will meet its budget forecast over the next six months.

However, a check of the actuals from the last drought year (2014-2015) shows that our budget for January through June, 2018 exceeds 2014-2015 actuals for the same time period by $1.34 million.

Now, granted, this is three years of intense marketing later, and it is quite possible that we’ve sold people on coming to Mammoth regardless of snow conditions because they just love being here… so perhaps we’ve achieved a new paradigm and past history doesn’t matter as much.

I spoke to one hotelier who told me he was down just 12 percent for January year-over-year. In the past, he said, that performance would have been a lot worse, given the lack of snow.

We’ll all be studying the numbers with great fascination over the next three months. A real test as to the residual half-life of marketing efforts.
TBIDNESS DEALS

Will MMSA “bankrupt TBID” to ensure air service to Bishop?
By Rea

“Commercial Air Service, we believe, belongs in Bishop,” said Mammoth Mountain Ski Area COO Eric Clark at a meeting of Mammoth Lakes Tourism’s (MLT) Board of Directors on Wednesday, February 7.

During a discussion about the renewal of the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), the Board’s conversation focused on air service, with Clark saying “I think what is important to understand is [Mammoth Mountain] wants to move the air service to Bishop. And we want to create infrastructure that could help us do that.”

Mammoth’s TBID expires on August 31, 2018. However, the details of a possible renewal have not been finalized.

Mammoth Mountain is the largest ski pass holder of the TBID—it commits 2 percent of lift ticket and ski school sales (as well as 1 percent of lodging gross revenue and 1/2 percent of restaurant and retail gross sales) to the tax, which funds marketing under the umbrella of MLT. Mammoth also commits up to $1.5 million per winter to an air service subsidy for flights out of Mammoth-Yosemite Airport.

Enplanements at MMH rose steadily from 2008, when Mammoth first began offering commercial air service, until 2013, when Mammoth began reducing seat capacity.

On January 25, representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration visited both MMH and Bishop Airport and indicated that they would be supportive of a regional solution to Mammoth’s notoriously unreliable commercial air service (see “Better Together!” January 27).

Clark said that Mammoth Mountain (now a part of parent company Alterra) initially voted to contribute to the TBID in 2013 because “we wanted to create infrastructure that would help us deliver air service to Mammoth.”

Now, Clark said, “we want to move our resources in a different direction to create air service in Bishop.”

A “Statement of Intent” to work together was signed by both Mammoth Mayor John Wentworth (on January 17) and the Inyo County Board of Supervisors (on January 16) ahead of the FAA’s visit. That statement mentioned the possibility that Mammoth Lakes could engage in “cost sharing” with Bishop Airport.

Board member Sean Turner said at Wednesday’s meeting that “I’ve heard we cannot legally contribute TBID to the Bishop Airport” in order to help it attain Part 139 (commercial) certification, but MLT Executive Director John Urdi responded that was not the case. California Tourism Improvement Districts (TIDs) were formed under the Property and Business Improvement District Law of 1994. Per State law, passage of a TID tax requires a 2/3 supermajority of district business owners (under California proposition 26).

The vote is on a proportionate basis, but no one entity can have more than 40% of the vote. Mammoth Resorts has 40%.

In effect, if Mammoth Resorts votes against a renewal, the TBID is dead. It was initially passed in 2013 for a five-year term.

The law requires that the TBID must provide a specific benefit to people who pay into it. However, Urdi said, there are ways to quantify that benefit to Mammoth if TBID money goes towards improvements or subsidies at the Bishop Airport. For instance, he said, if passengers flying into Bishop were bused to Mammoth and “dropped off at the Westin, we’d know the specific benefit.”

However, Urdi said, a “blanket subsidy is where [an] attorney feels we could get into a potential issue.”

Clark said that the future of Mammoth Mountain is in “destination air service coming from Chicago, Atlanta, Houston …long haul flights.” Clark announced at the January 25 FAA meeting that Alterra Mountain Company had just introduced its Ikon Pass, which aims to compete with Vail Resorts’ Epic Pass. According to Clark, “they have over 750,000 Epic Passes out there … if you look at our access strategy and how we can bring more people to Mammoth Lakes, we think air service is one of the areas we can do that.”

Clark said that the reason the TBID renewal language has “been held up is because we want to understand what the air service strategy is going forward … we don’t think we can take [Mammoth-Yosemite] air service any further than what it is now.”

“It is the Mountain comfortable with holding up TBID and potentially spurning TBID in absence of that strategy?” asked Board member Scott McGuire.

“Can you rewrite the TBID in terms of moving towards that to three year strategy of air service in Bishop?” replied Clark.

It was decided that three MLT Board members (Michael Ledesma, Brent Truax and Paul Rudder) would be appointed to represent the organization moving forward at meetings of the Mono-Inyo Air Working Group.
ROUND VALLEY DOWNGRADES

The District of Choice school, also a Basic Aid District, will lose 15 percent of funding through SB 52 renewal stipulation

By Bodine

Round Valley School is facing a $220,000 cut, which amounts to a loss of about 15 percent of its total budget. The cut is due to a stipulation in California Senate Bill 52 (SB 52) which cuts funding for Basic Aid school districts like Round Valley.

The passage of SB 52 extended the District of Choice program, which allows school districts to accept interdistrict transfer students. Round Valley School receives many of those students. That was renewed for another five years in May 2017. However, a stipulation of that renewal was that funding was cut to Basic Aid districts, which collect their revenue exclusively from local property taxes. Superintendent and Principal Karen Marshall said at a town hall meeting on February 7 that Round Valley took the biggest budget cut of any school in the state.

Round Valley is one of 23 Districts of Choice in the state to lose funding. The school and Board of Trustees knew this day was coming. Marshall explained the District of Choice program into a contingency fund. That fund will keep the district out of the District of Choice in the state to lose funding.

The school and Board of Trustees knew this day was coming. Marshall has been working on acquiring the red for the remainder of this year and 2018-2019, according to Marshall. To handle the cut, stay solvent and retain the high level of education kids will receive following funding has also allowed them to save per classroom teaching model. That funding has also allowed them to save money with the hope of purchasing property adjacent to the school for the Mt. Tom Middle School, a facility that would include a gym. Marshall said the district has been working on acquiring that property for a decade and she’s not giving up on it yet. It’s also too early to say how student transportation will be arranged following the budget cuts, but, Marshall said, Bishop Unified School District has been receptive and is willing to work with Round Valley. Marshall told the crowd of more than two dozen at the meeting that when Round Valley first started accepting interdistrict students, there was no bussing available. According to a recent poll of parents, 90 percent of them would be willing to drive their kids to Round Valley School.

The District wants to keep the classes to one grade per classroom and retain smaller class sizes (17 to 19 students per teacher). To accomplish that, it must part with 7th and 8th grade, Marshall said. Round Valley School will continue to accept interdistrict transfer students, and will fill all available seats, as it has always done, Marshall said.

Continuing sports programs will be difficult, says Marshall but those details will be ironed out in the future. Concerned citizen Linda Archilarius asked if there was some way the school could shift its funding categorization to be a district that receives its funding based on Average Daily Attendance, or the average number of students it has in class on a given day. Marshall replied that those decisions are made in Sacramento.

Marshall said there will be updates on the transition every other month, which will be presented at Board of Trustee meetings.
HOME AWAY FROM HOME
Inyo County Supes ready ordinance for short-term rentals
By James

On February 6, the Inyo County Board of Supervisors approved a draft ordinance for short-term vacation rentals, and will vote again to approve the final ordinance at its next meeting on February 13. The ordinance governs several types of short-term rentals, ranging from owner-occupied or "hosted home rentals," to "non-hosted homesteads" that don't have an owner on the premises. One agreed-upon rule was that a property manager (or owner) must be readily available to address any problems that might arise in non-hosted rentals.

According to Planning Director Cathreen Richards, there are approximately 50 short-term rental operations currently operating already within Inyo County. At Tuesday's meeting, Third District Supervisor Rick Pucci asked, "How do we let those people already renting out homes and rooms 'illegally' do so legally?"

County officials hope to stop people from buying, renovating and renting out entire homes to transient guests. Supervisors expressed concern about out-of-town investors coming in to buy and convert homes to short-term rentals.

County Administrator Kevin Curchio urged caution on efforts to restrict out-of-town investors to avoid violating the U.S. Constitution's Commerce clause, an opinion seconded by Deputy County Counsel John Vallejo, who said that any ordinance restricting short term rentals would have to be defensible in court.

Under the new ordinance draft, permits for short-term rentals will be limited to one parcel per owner to accommodate the concern voiced by Second District Supervisor Jeff Griffths, that Inyo County already has a severe housing shortage in unincorporated areas in Bishop. Under the new ordinance, an owner-resident could "host" a guest room in the primary residence and provide a non-hosted granny flat rental on the same parcel.

During public comment, one homeowner in Independence who owns an adjacent short-term rental house was concerned that he might have to remove two mature trees to meet the ordinance's parking requirement that "...the owner shall provide off-street parking for all such allowed vehicles, that the renter(s) shall utilize." He was assured that there will be flexibility through variances that would most likely allow for street parking for two vehicles in front of the property.

STIPENDS
continued from page 1

There has been no information disseminated to the public concerning the stipends. There is no information regarding charter school boards on the MCOE's website.

The Sheet asked Adler if she thought there would have been an investigation if the stipends were made public. "Transparency is important," Adler said, though she knows nothing of the complaint I can't say whether or not it would make a difference."

She said the budgets and charter school contracts are all public record and available to anyone who asks at MCOE's office in Mammoth.

The Sheet was given documents with the stipend amounts and names of who got how much, with those names covered in White-Out. This reporter used his years of journalism experience to figure out the redacted details—by holding the paper up to a light source.

According to those documents, Adler has received $24,500 in stipends since the 2013-2014 school year. Since 2012-2013, several other administrators have also received stipends, including Chief Business Officer Caty Ecklund ($26,000), Chief Technology Officer George "Joe" Griego ($8,910), Assistant to the Superintendent Jon Carr ($25,500) and Director of Information Technology Jody Ecklund ($10,410).

According to the website Transparency in California, which lists the salaries of every public employee in the state, for 2016, Adler made $148,198; Caty Ecklund $125,120; Cy's husband Jody Ecklund made $89,951; Carr made $115,928.

The amounts of the stipends are based on a formula developed by former Inyo County Superintendent Terry McAnear, who showed MCOE how to develop out-of-county charter school contracts as Inyo County does.

When asked if she thought the money would have been better spent on students, Adler replied that "The students are receiving the funding they need. And I feel an obligation to compensate the employees." The concerned citizens made a second allegation that Adler was giving herself a raise without the approval of the trustees. "This did not occur because a stipend is not a salary increase," Kendall wrote in the February 7 press release.

According to California Education Code 47613, MCOE may bill the charter school for its administrative services as long as that bill does not exceed 1 percent of the total budget of the charter school. The code also allows a county office of education to manage the finances of the charter school. It is authorizing the Superintendent Mendick of the California Department of Education stated in an email to The Sheet. Ed Code 47605 demands that a charter school must be authorized by a district school office or office of education. That school district or office of education is then responsible for attesting to the charter school's academic standards and for ensuring that implement the necessary state codes to be accredited.

Invoices from MCOE to the charter school were not available to The Sheet before press time. Kendall stated that the stipends came from funds set specifically to compensate the extracurricular work that employees performed for MCOE's charter schools.

Kendall said he found no policies, procedures or directions from MCOE or the Mono County Office of Education Board, which address the allocation of stipends, bonuses, or other payment types that would have curtailed Adler's actions. There doesn't seem to be anything legally wrong with the stipends allocated at MCOE.

Without a map, Adler's only limitation in issuing the stipends was a dollar amount. Stipends had to be issued in amounts of fewer than $10,000 at one time.

In his press release, Kendall wrote, "...there is no indication that the Board was aware that stipends may be given" at an earlier trustee meeting, when the subject came up for discussion as an informational item only. According to minutes of that meeting, trustees were given documents pertaining to the stipends. The minutes for that meeting were not available to The Sheet before press time.

Trustee Sue Bouska told The Sheet she could not comment on an ongoing investigation. Trustees Greg Jennison, Dave Titus, Karl Seiberling, Kathy Manichuk either had no comment or did not return calls for comment. Bouska, Seiberling and Jennison are up for re-election in November 2018. Under Ed Code 1302, stipends are allowed, Kendall stated, and Adler was within her authority to issue them.

Kendall added that for there to be criminal activity, there must be criminal intent, and given that the stipends were given to employees in exchange for work, there was no malfeasance. He threw out the complaint.

The Sheet scoured the MCOE website and could find no record of the stipends or their issuance of any kind.

One source that wished to remain anonymous was furious, saying tax payers should know where their money is going.

Another source who wished to remain anonymous said the group has come forward because it can make a difference locally. "...it adheres to the necessary state codes and for ensuring that the district it is authorizing, Jonathon Kendall added that for there to be criminal activity, there must be criminal intent, and given that the stipends were given to employees in exchange for work, there was no malfeasance. He threw out the complaint.

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SEKI LIMITS STOCK PERMITS

Sequoia-Kings Canyon's Wilderness Stewardship Plan will up the price of stock trips into the park, say packers

By Bodine

For the 2018 season, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) are instituting new, lower quotas for user days, for commercial stock, and for backcountry pack stations.

"Commercial stock" refers to the animals used by backcountry packers. Operators say that fewer days allowed for business will translate into higher prices for trips, creating an environment in which only the affluent can afford the luxury of a horse ride into the woods.

The new policies will apply only to SEKI, and not to neighboring land under the jurisdiction of other public agencies. For example, there are no changes scheduled in the quota policy for the Inyo National Forest.

"The sad thing is, this is taking packing away from people that have always enjoyed the backcountry but need a little help getting there," Craig London, owner of Rock Creek Pack Station, told The Sheet on February 7.

In 2018, pack outfits will have 650 user days to split between four commercial use authorizations, or CUAs, for 114 days of use each. A user day is defined as a full day that a CUA client stays in the backcountry.

Allocations were granted equally to every CUA and packer, with no consideration for how long outfits have been in business.

Some, like Rock Creek Pack Station, have been in business for decades.

Craig's father, the late Herb London, started the outfit in 1947. Craig started packing in 1957. A big reduction in user days means higher prices. The cost of using a mule for one day will now be in the $500 range, but prices vary with use, London said.

Prior to the implementation of the new quotas, prices for a single mule in the Whitney Zone ranged in price from $165 to $900 per day, said London.

The biggest hits will be for guides that use stock to carry in caches of goods.

London operates in the Mount Whitney Zone, the most popular destination in SEKI, and also the one with the tightest quotas.

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The biggest hits will be for guides that use stock to carry in caches of food or gear. London said. He added that, following the implementation of the quotas, a guide could now pay as much as $2,500 to go in and out of the park with stock.

He made an analogy to the price of gas at supermarkets. If the price of gas goes up, so does the price of produce and eggs, because a hike in gas prices yields an increase in the cost of transporting the goods.

The new plan also requires backcountry packer employees to have a Wilderness First Responder certification, which costs about $600 to obtain and about at least a week of training.

The new quotas are a response to a series of lawsuits. In 1981, the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision that ordered the park to institute a plan to manage commercial use in the backcountry. The result was the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Previously, SEKI could allow any commercial use and issue as many permits as it saw fit, said SEKI's Chief of Administration, Jason Watkins, in an interview with The Sheet on February 2.

There were no quotas for pack stations or stock prior to 2012. SEKI's previous management plan, developed in 1986, did not require a specialized audit of commercial use in the backcountry, as the Wilderness Stewardship Plan now does.

Watkins said the Wilderness Stewardship Plan and subsequent quotas are the result of the Ninth Circuit Court's decision. That decision aims to comply with Section 4 of the Wilderness Act of 1964. That section reads "... any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area... wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use...

The allocations for the quotas were calculated according to the volume of commercial Park use between 2010 and 2013. The conclusion of quota numbers is "in part of the intent of the plan and the character of the wilderness, said Watkins.

Some climbing guides who have held CUA permits for years did not receive them this year (see "SEKI for Business, February 3)

Dave Miller, owner of International Alpine Guides in June Lake, said he has not received an explanation from SEKI for his permit denial.

According to the CUA application, SEKI has to provide explanations to those rejected.

Watkins said SEKI tries to provide as much information as possible to the applicants about why they weren't awarded permits. However, he said, the applicant isn't given detailed instruction on where they went wrong, or they would know how to ace the test next year.

The maximum penalty for operating without a permit is a $500 fine and up to six months in jail, says Ned Keller, Chief Park Ranger at SEKI.

Another issue is how the Inyo National Forest will play into the quota's. Holders of CUAs have to travel through Inyo National Forest land to reach SEKI. Watkins explained that it is not Inyo's responsibility to enforce SEKI's codes.

"The burden is not with them," he said.

"If you request a permit that enters Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, we honor our interagency agreements to adhere to their policies and procedures," said Deb Schweizer, Public Information Officer for the Inyo National Forest. "We are issuing fewer permits in accordance with the parks' Wilderness Plan."

Keller said a guard post has been thrown on the table as a way to stop permitless CUAs, but he said he doubts would work. It's the backcountry, he said, people can sneak around a post.

London said the plan is set, and there's not too much anyone can do about it now. Packers and other CUAs are going to have to figure out how to adjust.

London said users will have to adjust as well, and that an unextendable consequence of the quotas and prices is that it's turning pack trips into a sport for wealthy people.
RUSTY
continued from page 1

the committee’s choice). “Well, Dick Cheney’s a little to the right of me politically,” laughed Gregory. “And in Mr. Cheney’s case, he chose himself. My partners chose me.”

Gregory’s experience with meshing four ski areas (Mammoth, June, Big Bear, Snow Summit) under the banner of one company, Mammoth Resorts, would seemingly make him a logical choice to do the same on a larger scale.

“That’s the theory,” he said. On January 25, Alterra Mountain Company announced the Ikon Pass, a new product for the 2018-2019 winter season that combines the company’s 12 destinations with 11 partners from six industry leaders—Aspen Skiing Company, Alta Ski Area, Boyne Resorts, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, POWDR, and Snowbird.

“With the Ikon Pass, we have created an unrivaled platform that offers one-of-a-kind mountain experiences under one pass, by combining our portfolio of 12 destinations with 11 iconic mountain destination partners across North America,” said Gregory.

In the coming months, Alterra will unveil pricing details and options regarding the Ikon Pass.

And the unveil, said Gregory, promises to be an un-Vail. Vail Resorts, with its Epic Pass, is very much branded as Vail, he explained. By contrast, he said, Alterra is a “house of brands … our approach is different. We do business as our individual resorts. It’s not about making Mammoth [or any other resort for that matter] Alterra. It’s about Alterra providing the support to help Mammoth [achieve its aspirations].”

Gregory said Mammoth will continue to be a resort focused on Southern California that also “invites the world.” Which provided a natural segue to talk about commercial air service.

Gregory affirmed that he believes commercial air service in the Eastern Sierra needs to be based out of Bishop as opposed to Mammoth. We’ve given it a great effort, he said, but our experience with Mammoth Yosemite has taught us that reliability of service has proven difficult because of the airport’s characteristics.

He said Mammoth Resorts will not support the renewal of the TBID (Tourism Business Improvement District) unless the portion of TBID related to air service is directed towards a Bishop-based solution.

“T’s a big believer in air service,” said Gregory. “But it needs to be reliable.”

He noted that the distance from the Eagle County airport to Vail is literally the same as the distance from Bishop Airport to Mammoth.

“I’m very supportive of the TBID,” he continued, “But we feel it’s about marketing Mammoth for longer stays. We ought to be able to open a [air service] route and stabilize it.”

Gregory will be based out of Alterra Mountain Company’s headquarters in Denver, but says he will still spend a significant amount of time locally. Bryan Traficanti, interim CEO, will return to KSL Capital Partners, LLC as Head of Asset Management and remain a board member of Alterra Mountain Company.

Sheet: You becoming CEO of Alterra … does that make Mammoth more likely to see significant investment, because of your ties here, or less likely, because you are intimate- ly familiar with how difficult it is to get anything done around here?

Gregory: If I do my job right, investment priority is based upon what makes the most sense, not upon emotional attachment … in Mammoth, we need to work together to get out of our own way. Alterra has the capital to back the [destination resort] vision if the community is on board.”
A GENTLEMEN’S AGREEMENT

Counties in California opt not to bill each other for the cost of rescuing each other’s citizens

By Giles

In the State of California, County Sheriff’s Offices have the ability to bill each other for the cost of Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, but choosing not to do so due to a long-standing ‘gentlemen’s agreement.’

According to Mono County Sheriff Ingrid Braun, the counties opt to swallow the cost of rescuing people within their boundaries out of a spirit of “mutual aid.” Mono County is not billed when its residents are rescued elsewhere; however, as Mono County SAR President Carole Schultz points out, if Mono County residents are seldom rescued in their home turf. It seems unlikely they’d require it elsewhere in California.

In California, people who have accidents in the backcountry are not billed for the cost of SAR operations launched to facilitate their rescue. Rescues are funded by the county in which SAR operations take place. For instance, San Francisco County would not be billed if a resident of the city were rescued from Mt. Ritter. Instead Mono County accepts the cost of rescuing that person as part of its budgeted annual SAR expenditures.

In California, SAR operations are overseen by County Sheriff’sDepartments. Counties have SAR budgets, and Mono County typically spends about $45,000 per year on SAR (whose members are all volunteers), according to Sheriff Braun.

According to Mono County SAR Team President Carole Schulz, Mono County typically responds between 30 and 50 calls for backcountry rescue per year. In 2016, Mono County SAR received assistance from helicopters on 15 of its missions. Between 2009 and 2016, only five percent of the people Mono County SAR rescued were locals. Every SAR operation carried out in Mono County (outside of the portion of the County within Yosemite National Park’s borders) is paid for by Mono County. According to data provided by Schultz, helicopters were used in 40 percent of Mono County SARs carried out in 2016. This figure remained relatively constant between 2009 and 2016.

Because SAR is budgeted through the County Sheriff’s departments in California, it is funded by local tax dollars, and the SAR budget covers rescue vehicles, fuel, and some training for volunteers. The rest of Mono County SAR’s expenses are funded through donations.

Braun called Mono County SAR adequately funded, and said that the operations typically run at or within budget every year. According to Bridgeport California Highway Patrol (CHP) Public Information Officer Elena Villa, helicopters for SAR operations in Mono and Inyo Counties are deployed from CHP’s Inland Division in San Bernardino, or from the agency’s Valley Division, based in Sacramento.

Fran Clader, Director of Communications for CHP, said in an email that helicopter use for SAR operations is included in the statewide CHP Office of Air Operations budget. He could not provide a figure for how much this service costs taxpayers annually, but said that the burden of that cost is distributed statewide.

Clader said that CHP helicopters facilitated 394 rescues statewide (this number does not include rescues in National Parks) in 2017. Schultz did not have data for SAR operations requiring helicopters in Mono County for 2017, but reported that there were 15 in 2016.

According to Clader, the Inland Division operates two helicopters for SAR. One operates at an hourly rate of $591.73, and the other at $1,044.92.

Chris Boyer, Executive Director for the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR), says California’s system for funding SAR is relatively unique. In New Hampshire, for instance, helicopter use must be outsourced to the National Guard, and flight fees for emergency operations hover at about $2,100 per hour of flight time.

Boyer thinks California’s mutual aid mechanism for SAR operations in the country. Boyer, whose organization provides training and networking opportunities for State SAR coordinators, said requiring victims to pay for their rescues yields poor outcomes in perilous rescue scenarios. Typically we recommend that people don’t get charged for SAR costs because that means that daily members may be reticent to call someone in as missing. They’ll delay… and the difference of a few hours means that [a victim] has suffered more or is already dead.

Some states have laws that allow the government to bill people for the cost of their rescue. Maine, Hawaii, Utah, and Oregon have laws that allow this practice, and California, Colorado, and Vermont can bill skiers who travel out of bounds at ski areas.

In New Hampshire, the annual cost of statewide SAR operations averaged $360,000 between 2010 and 2012, before the cost of helicopter use, which costs the government about $140,000 annually. Colonel Kevin Jordan, Law Enforcement Chief for New Hampshire Fish and Game and Game said that New Hampshire’s SAR program has operated with an annual deficit of $120,000 to $180,000 since 2008.

In 2008, a law was passed to allow Fish and Game to collect reimbursement from people determined to be negligent in creating a situation where a rescue was required.

Jordan said that, since the law was passed, only about 12 people have been deemed negligent and billed for their rescues, though an average of 180 people per year have been rescued since 2008. Jordan said most people can’t pay out of pocket (the average cost of a SAR in NH for that period was $2,100), but that the measure has not disincentivized people from seeking help when they need it. “If people need help, they’ll get it. It’s like the fire department or any other service,” said Jordan last week of SAR operations.

SAR in the Eastern Sierra could not exist without the county’s SAR volunteers, and Schultz said that, although they are always seeking donations to support their efforts, the volunteers are eager to help residents and visitors alike. Schultz reported that in 2016, Mono County SAR volunteers clocked 1,585 man hours rescuing people, and spent 3,272 man hours building the skills necessary to do so in the Sierra.

“Our motto is ‘We do the searches and rescues at any time, in any weather, for as long as it takes, for free,’” said Schultz.
IS MY HEROIN COVERED?
Mono County Behavioral Health struggles to help the uninsured get addiction treatment

By Bodine

Opioid addiction is a nationwide epidemic, and Robin Roberts, Director of Mono County Behavioral Health, says her organization’s mission is to offer treatment to whomsoever asks for it. Mono county Behavioral Health accepts insurance and payment through Medi-Cal, private insurance, and the Healthy Families and County Medical Services Programs (CMSP), which provides limited-term health coverage for uninsured low-income adults that do not qualify for other public health programs.

“The people without [insurance] are the big struggle here,” Roberts said of Mono County. These are the people that fall through the cracks who either make too much money to qualify for Medi-Cal or subsidies through the Affordable Care Act, but do not make enough to afford private insurance services.

Roberts said that, for people seeking treatment for addiction who do not have Medi-Cal, Mono county Behavioral Health can set up a payment plan for treatment based on a sliding income scale. There are so many rules and regulations tied to funding that no-cost services are not easy to provide, she added.

Treatment is also available out of the area, but, as Roberts explained in an interview on January 30, many people seeking treatment don’t want to leave the area. They don’t want to be away from their support system, and many fear that they will lose their job if they leave the area to seek addiction treatment.

Mono County contracts with Tarzana Treatment Center for in-patient services, which accepts Medi-Cal. Roberts said. She said there are a half-dozen Mono County success stories from that center. Behavioral Health has recently contracted with a pain specialist in Reno, but in order to utilize impatient treatment services, people need money, transportation and an employer that will allow them time off to travel there and stay for the duration of treatment.

Despite recent national political attempts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act (ACA), California Governor Jerry Brown has promised to keep money flowing to California Health and Wellness, the State program that administers Medi-Cal. However, Brown also announced he will not seek re-election when his term is up in 2019.

Presently, Mono County Behavioral Health offers outpatient treatment, counseling, telepsychiatry, therapy, case management, telemedicine, and substance abuse counseling all through its sub-department of Mono County Behavioral Health Substance Use Treatment. It offers everything but pharmacological therapy (otherwise known as Medication Assisted Treatment, or MAT) for substance abuse.

MAT can only be administered by a physician. Roberts said Mono County’s treatment program is 75 percent complete, but is incomplete without a doctor who can provide MAT. MAT utilizes drugs like Suboxone that reduce the likelihood that a recovering addict will relapse and overdose, according to Roberts.

It’s difficult to entice a healthcare specialist to live and work in Mono County, Roberts explained. Many doctors who specialize in pain management and psychiatry prefer to work next to a university for easy access to training and clinics, and to make more money. Roberts said that the isolation and limited medical resources available in Mono County are an acquired taste.

Roberts said that the County is actively recruiting a physician who can provide MAT to recovering addiction patients with limited success. Currently, those who seek MAT for their recovery must travel to Reno to receive it. She said that in the past few weeks alone, seven different people have entered Behavioral Health seeking medical treatment for their addiction. If it were provided locally, MAT could prove a useful tool for helping working people regain functionality in their lives.

MAN FOUND DEAD NEAR SALINE VALLEY

On February 8 at approximately 11:45 a.m., search crews located the remains of Matthew Beyl, 48, of Mission Viejo, near Saline Valley. Beyl had been missing since February 1, and was last seen fueling up his 2005 golden-colored Ford F150 in Pearsonville, at the southernmost edge of Inyo County. On the evening of February 5, Inyo County Sheriff’s Office received a “be on the lookout” alert from the Orange County Sheriff’s Office for Bell. The report indicated that Beyl left his home at 3:15 a.m. on February 1.

On February 6, Beyl’s vehicle was discovered unoccupied in a remote area six miles north of Saline Valley Road, north of State Route 190 by an off-duty law enforcement officer. From February 7-8, an interagency ground search ensued, involving teams from Inyo Search and Rescue, Inyo County Sheriff’s Office, China Lake Mountain Rescue, a CHP H-82 helicopter and Kern County Sheriff’s Air-5, in the area where Beyl’s car was found. On February 8, after several hours of searching, Matthew Beyl’s remains were located approximately half a mile west of his vehicle, below the Nelson Range.

There was no evidence of foul play; all evidence at the scene indicated that Beyl died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Janet Bell told The Sheet the couple had vacationed in the Eastern Sierra, but never in Death Valley. She said her husband hadn’t missed a day of work in 26 years.

—Sheet Staff
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PHOTO: HIP HOP GOLDEN AGE

Festival headquarters are located in the Village Lodge conference rooms at the Village at Mammoth. This is also the site of what event producers are calling MammothCon, a trade show and exhibition hall which is free and open to the public and includes an interactive virtual reality component.

Another free event is Saturday’s 4:30 p.m. screening of John Wayne’s “North to Alaska.” Members of the Wayne family will be in attendance. Some scenes of the film were shot locally along Hot Creek.

The opening night gala took place Thursday night at 53 Kitchen & Cocktails in the Village.

The closing awards ceremony will take place Sunday evening at Canyon Lodge with live entertainment by Eric Tessmer. Tessmer is described by his hometown Austin, Texas American-Statesman as a blues-rocker. The first line of an August, 2017 interview with Tessmer by Bryan Rolli is fairly priceless. Tessmer is quoted as saying, “I am paid poorly to exploit my own personal human experience, and the payoffs are mental illness and dying poor.”

Access to the closing ceremony requires a Festival Badge.

The Mammoth Film Festival is the brainchild of co-founders Tanner Beard, Tomik Mansoori and Theo Dumont.

The Sheet spoke with Beard, who also serves as the Festival’s President, and Alexandra Chando, its Operations Manager, outside Minaret Cinemas on Wednesday.

Beard said the Festival has been “something I’ve wanted to do for eight years.”

A filmmaker in his own right, Beard produced a documentary (directed by Tim Newfang) called “Sons of St. Clair” about the rap group Bone Thugs-n-Harmony. That film will screen at 7:45 p.m. on Saturday night.

Beard fell in love with Mammoth when he had a film screened at the first Mammoth Film Festival in 2008. “When I heard they were not going to do it again, I became interested,” he said.

He bought the defunct name a few years ago, he said. This has ended up causing some-what of a stir, as in the intervening years between the last Mammoth Film Festival and this one, Shira Dubrovner has created the Mammoth Lakes Film Festival, which will celebrate its fourth year in 2018 over Memorial Day weekend.

Dubrovner has since filed a lawsuit against the Mammoth Film Festival, saying the names are too similar and that has led to confusion within the industry.

Mono County Superior Court Judge Mark Magit has allowed the Mammoth Film Festival to operate this year under its name until the case can be formally decided.

Whatever the name, Beard maintained this could very well be the biggest first year festival ever produced. “It’s about 700 percent larger than I anticipated,” he laughed. “We had too much time to plan it. That’s why it’s grown to this level … I don’t think people anticipated the talent we’re bringing in.”

One of those big names is Anthony Hemingway, who brings his “Unsolved: The Murders of Tupac and Notorious B.I.G.” to Mammoth for a 9:30 p.m. screening on Friday.

The documentary will air nationally on USA Network on February 27. Hemingway recently won an Emmy for The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story, and will participate in a Q&A following the screening of “Unsolved.”

Alexandra Chando, whom Beard referred to as being part of the original festival “biker gang of five,” is an actress who formerly starred in the ABC Family television series “The Lying Game.”

She is making her directorial debut at the Festival on Sunday at 3:30 p.m. with her short “LPM, Likes Per Minute.”

Beard says the flights from Southern California to Mammoth, including on the charter JetSuite X, are sold out for this weekend. Still, he says, “I sure hope the locals come out.”

Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, the subject of Tim Newfang’s documentary “Sons of St. Clair,” also provided the soundtrack to every 1997 homecoming dance according to Rea.

PHOTO: HIP HOP GOLDEN AGE
On Wednesday, the BLM announced that it has withdrawn the DOI’s original (Obama-era) application. The announcement, under the Trump Administration’s BLM, signals a major change to the DRECP, which critics said limited energy development in California. The renewable energy industry and local governments have long complained that the old DRECP did not designate enough public lands for future renewable energy development. Those claims were based on the premise that it created regulatory hurdles that made projects too expensive, pushing developers to pursue renewable energy projects on private land.

The BLM now says that “after review of mineral exploration levels and mining data in the California Desert Conservation Areas. That withdrawal would have been in effect for a period of 20 years, and would have substantially restricted mining or banned it entirely within the withdrawal borders.

We need to reduce burdens on all domestic energy development, including solar, wind and other renewables.

-Katharine MacGregor
Petra's Chef Radisson Williams shares his potato gnocchi recipe, with a demonstration by Mike Sibert

By Rea

“Petra’s Potato Gnocchi is more difficult than typical potato dishes to make,” admits Radisson Williams, Petra’s head chef. “It’s the process that elevates this dish to an ‘intermediate’ level of difficulty. Below are some tricks and tips that I use to make the dish just ahead of Valentine’s Day.”

Ingredients:
- 2 potatoes
- 1 egg yolk (and sometimes another half)
- 1/4 tsp white pepper (or to taste)
- 1 Tbsp kosher salt (or to taste)
- 2 cups flour

Instructions:
1. **The potatoes**: “If they get to the oven just before the potatoes are done, you’re done,” says Rad. “Take the spuds out of the oven and cut them into 1/4-inch thick wedges. He cuts those into one-inch long dumplings and rolls each onto a floured pan with one last motion, smoothing out the cut edges so the gnocchi are more cylindrical than floured.

2. **Bringing the dough together**: This is the toughest part of the recipe. “I’d feel the cement off of them first,” jokes Rad. “I’d clean the cement off of them first,” jokes Rad.

3. **Rolling the gnocchi**: Initially, Sibert makes a large roll about two inches thick and eight inches long. “You can feel it wanting to collapse in the middle,” says Sibert. “You want it to be right on the edge of being too wet, to feel some resistance.” It’s also helpful to keep sprinkling flour on the work surface to keep things running smoothly. Sibert then cuts the dough into about six pieces and rolls each piece out individually. “This is the part I like, because it reminds me of ceramics class,” he says as he makes a fancy shape. He cuts those into one-inch long dumplings and rolls each onto a floured pan with one last motion, smoothing out the cut edges so the gnocchi are more cylindrical than floured.

4. **Flour**: Flour is a necessary binder in this recipe, but you want to use as little as possible, as it will weigh down the gnocchi. Sibert says a decent ratio is about 1/4 cup of flour per potato.

5. **Triple cooking**: “You’ve cooked these things three times by the time you’re done,” says Rad. “They’re baked, boiled, and then Petra’s puts a final sear in browned butter on the dish, though traditionally gnocchi are eaten right out of the hot water. With boiling, you want the biggest pot of salted water possible. ‘I call this the “reverse depth charge,”’ says Rad—the gnocchi enter the boiling water and immediately sink to the bottom. Sibert gives the pot a nudge to make sure they don’t stick. Within about five minutes, the dumplings begin to bob to the surface, and that’s when Sibert uses the handle end of a slotted spoon to free any laggers at the bottom. The best way to tell if the gnocchi is done is to free any laggers at the bottom. The best way to tell if the gnocchi is done is to free any laggers at the bottom. The best way to tell if the gnocchi is done is to free any laggers at the bottom. The best way to tell if the gnocchi is done is to free any laggers at the bottom. The best way to tell if the gnocchi is done is to free any laggers at the bottom.

6. **Bringing it all together**

“Petra’s Potato Gnocchi: Serves about 15. “It’s a pretty elaborate dish to make for one,” says Rad, so he recommends just going for a big batch. “If they taste like flour, they’re not done yet,” says Sibert. However, “wait too long and they’ll fall apart.”

An egg yolk (and sometimes another half) brings gnocchi dough together.

Mike Sibert grates hot potatoes.

Mike Sibert cuts gnocchi dough. The final product, à la Petra’s Bistro.
Caltrans District 9 clears SR 120 to Tioga Pass—but it’s just a test

By Giles

On Wednesday, February 7, skiers in the vicinity of Tioga Pass witnessed several plows and other snow removal equipment clearing snow from State Route 120. There was less than a foot of snow on the road in most places, and much of the road was already free of snow and ice before the plows hit it. According to Christine Knadler, Maintenance Public Information Officer for Caltrans District 9, the operators were not clearing the road for the season with the intent of opening it to vehicular traffic (the road is currently closed), but were testing snow removal equipment “to ensure the effectiveness of new and reconditioned equipment for the future opening of SR 120,” Knadler wrote in a press release issued on Thursday, February 8.

Caltrans will assess all mountain passes statewide for spring opening on April 1, and not before, the press release stated. Knadler reported that Caltrans will continue to test equipment throughout the upcoming week in the Ellery Lake area.

Knadler said the agency will be testing an 11,000-pound loading attachment called a Snow Lion, which uses surface-adjusting technology to follow the contour of the roadway and strip less asphalt than a traditional loader. Knadler said the machine is new to Caltrans District 9, and that the agency hopes it will reduce the amount of annual repair work required on SR 120 that results from snow removal. The Snow Lion features rollers with tines that break up ice and compacted snow. The debris is then fed into what’s known as a “moboard,” which lifts and feeds the ice into an auger to direct it off the roadway.

Additionally, Knadler said that Caltrans District 9 operators will test the retrofitted Snow Go, the mounted blower which the agency used exclusively last year, and which had hydraulic failures that required it be returned to the manufacturer mid-season. The agency will also be testing the Schmidt Rotary Plow, which was also re-built after last year’s snow removal campaign.

Come April 1, Knadler said, Caltrans will work with local agencies to assess snow levels on the road and a potential opening date for Tioga Pass. “Once assessment and coordination are completed… Caltrans and Yosemite National Park will begin the task of clearing snow, ice and rocks from their respective roadways.” Knadler said that “once the road conditions are safe for the traveling public, Caltrans will announce the opening of each pass.”
calendar of events

BARS & MUSIC

Happy Hour/
The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill. Pursuit of Happiness Hour, 3-6 p.m. @ Rafter’s. $2 off drafts, $2 off specialty drinks. $5 Flatbread. See ad. p. 7.

Outlaw Saloon—Happy Hour Monday: All Night Happy Hour; 4-Midnight, Tues-Fri 4-6 p.m.; Tuesday: Sushi bowls 4-10 p.m.; 6-9 p.m. Wing Wednesday 50% off all wings. Thursday: Burger & Beer special 4-5 p.m. See ad. p. 9.

Roberto's 4-6 p.m. every day.

Austria Hof 5-8 p.m. daily. See ad. p. 11.

White Bark Restaurant Bar & Lounge Unwind with daily drink and food specials 4-6 p.m.

Clocktower Cellar Happy Hour 4:30-7 p.m. daily and all day Sunday. $5 dollar menu items, drink specials. See ad. p. 13.

Petra’s Bistro Happy Hour, 5-6 p.m. every day. See ad. p. 1.3

Mammoth’s famous Slurcums Happy Hour Mon, thru Fri 4-6; Saturdays 4-5. Closed Sun. See ad. p. 5.

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.

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

Side Door Happy Hour daily 3-6 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., $4.50 margaritas, Mai Tais. Happy Hour drink specials 10 p.m.-close.

Black Velvet Coffee’s Happy Hour, from 4-6 p.m. every day.

Morrison’s Happy Hour Daily 4-6 p.m.

Friday, February 9/

Evol Walks @ Rafter’s. Electric rock ‘n roll band with attitude. 10 p.m. Free. 21+.

Sunday, February 13/

Mammoth Film Festival closing party @ Gomez, 10 p.m.

Some Assembly Required plays Black Doubt Brewing. 7-9 p.m. Free.

Monday, February 12/

Open Mic at Black Doubt Brewing Co. 6-9 p.m.

Bowling ‘n Beats @ Mammoth Rock’n Bowl. 9 p.m.

Tuesday, February 13/

Trivia @ Mammoth Brewing Co. 7 p.m.

Table for Two Tuesdays @ Sushi Rei.

Three course meal for two plus half- off wine, $5 p.m.-close for $50/couple.

Karaoke at Rafter’s with DJ CDS. 10 p.m.

Wednesday, February 14/


Mammoth hosts Valentine’s Day Special: $65 for two. One drink and entree per person, plus a starter and dessert to share. See ad. p. 4.

Black Velvet Coffee hosts an evening of romance. Featuring a selection of wines for Wine Wednesday. Bottle of choice from SLO Down Wines and specialty cheese plate for $50. Wine tasting is $16 and includes a waffle.

Friday, February 16/

DJ Rodney-O @ Rafter’s. 10 p.m. Free. 21+.

Saturday, February 17/

Naked Walrus plays Rafter’s in Mammoth, 10 p.m. Free. See ad. p. 1.

The Whatever plays Schat’s Roadhouse in Bishop. 6 p.m. Free.

Sunday, February 18/

Afrorum live at Rafter’s in Mammoth, 9 p.m. Tix: $20 advance at ticketweb.com, $25 day of. 21 and over. Feat. DJ Rodney-O and Luck Factor Zero.

Eric Lindell and the Grand Nationals @ Liberty Bar. Benefit for Eastern Sierra Conservation Corps. Suggested donation: $30. 5 p.m.

TOWN STUFF

February 9-11/

Mammoth Film Festival. Over 100 films in four days. See days below for special events. Visit www.mammothfilmfestival.org for complete film schedule.

February 10-11/

South Tufa walks with the Mono Lake Committee, ESIA, USFS. 1 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday. $3, but walks are free. Info: monolake.org/today/calendar.

February 9-18/

Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre presents The Importance of Being Earnest. Wednesday through Saturday at 7 p.m., Sunday at 4 p.m. @ Edison Theatre. Mammoth. Tix: Mammothlakesrepertorytheatre.org or 760.934.6592. See ad. 4.

February 9-10/

Mammoth Film Summit: Judges Panel. 1-4 p.m. at Minaret Cinema, Mammoth. Free to Mono Co. students with student ID.

Saturday, February 10/

MFF: Celebrity charity bowling tournament, fundraiser for the Mammoth Media Institute, Mammoth Rock’n Bowl, 4-8 p.m.

MFF: Featured panel discussion, session with Anthony Hemingway and Kyle Teckela, Village Lodge Palisades Room, 12 p.m.

MFF: Free screening of John Wayne’s “North to Alaska” 5 p.m. at Minaret Cinema.

3rd Annual International Feast Fundraiser hosted by Bishop Sunrise Rotary @ the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop. Info: 760.920.0109.

Annual Owens River Cleanup. Meet at 9 a.m. at Pleasant Valley Campground with waders and gloves, Coffee and baked goods at 8 a.m., lunch for all volunteers at noon, Hosted by the California Waterfowl Association. Scotty’s Castle walking tours, every Saturday 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tix: $25 per person. Space limited. Info: www.dvna.org/news/183-scotty-s-castle-flood-recovery-tours.

Eastern Sierra Audubon Society monthly COSA walk. Birders of all levels welcome. Meet 8:30 a.m. at the BLM/Forest Service Buildings, Line St. in Bishop. Info: Hillary Behr, hillary.behr@bisshopaiute.org or 760.920.5287.

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The Importance of Being Earnest

Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre will perform Oscar Wilde’s play, The Importance of Being Earnest, from February 9-18. The production is directed by Susan Dalian. The Importance of Being Earnest is a farcical play in which the protagonists maintain fictitious personae to escape burdensome social obligations.

Tickets are available online at www.mammothlakesrepertorytheatre.org. There are 4 performances this year, all at the doormoney is $20 for adults, $18 for seniors, and $10 for students. All shows will be at the Edison Theatre in Mammoth, starting at 7 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, and 4 p.m. on Sundays. See ad, page 4.

The Mammoth Film Festival

The inaugural Mammoth Film Festival will run from February 9 through 11. The festival features a variety of events, including a dinner with women in film and discussion panels featuring Emmy-nominated producers, as well as live musical performances.

Over the course of the festival, over 100 films will be screened, and there will be six world premieres of new films.

Individual premier tickets are available for $20. VIP passes are available for $280. All-Access Passes are available for $300. Basic Festival Badges are available for $160.

Films start at 7:30 and 8 p.m. on Thursday, February 8. On Friday, films will run from 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. The last screenings start at 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, and the last screening will begin at 11:30 p.m. Screenings run from 10:30 a.m. on Sunday to 3:30 p.m.

For a full schedule of events and tickets, visit mammothfilmfestival.org.

AARP Tax Aide programs

The AARP Foundation Tax Aide programs in Bishop and Mammoth are now preparing federal and state tax returns online without charge to low and moderate income residents.

Appointments are available at the Bishop Annex Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. To schedule an appointment, call 760.937.0174.

March 27-28/ Full moon snowshoe tours @ Tamarack XC, Ski Center. Depart @ 7 p.m. for a 1.5-hour guided tour, then enjoy dessert and hot drinks at Tamarack Lodge. Tix: $59 including rentals. Reservations: 1.800.MAMMOTH

UPCOMING

February 17-18/ Silent Disco in The Village at Mammoth. Three DJs will pump their sounds into wireless headphone sets. Pick your channel and rock out.

Tuesday, February 20/ Sierra Club Talk on Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep by ESA’s John Kelly. Crowley Lake Community Center @ 7 p.m. ROLG meeting @ 6:45.

Wednesday, February 21/ Mammoth’s Town Council meets, 6 p.m. in Suite Z.

Thursday, February 22/ Community Coffee with Mammoth Lakes Tourism, 8-10 a.m. at Looney Bean Coffee, 26 Old Mammoth Road. Free coffee!

Saturday, February 24/ Dirbath: The Legend of Fred Beckey. 6 & 8 p.m. at the Edison Theatre. 100 College Parkway. Presented by the Mammoth Lakes Foundation. Tix: $15. brownpapertickets.com.

Monday, February 26/ Bishop City Council meeting. 6 p.m. @ 377 W. Line St.

Tuesday, February 27/ Business After Hours @ A Better Fireplace & Stove Company. Hosted by Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce. 5-7 p.m. 145 Center St. in Mammoth.

Mammoth’s Town Council

Scotty’s Castle tours

DVNHA and the National Park Service are pleased to offer walking tours of the Scotty’s Castle Grounds. This season’s tours are scheduled for Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., now through April 14, 2018. Tickets are $25 per person, plus ticketing fee. Space is limited to 13 participants per tour. Reservations are required. For more information and to register online, visit Scotty’s Castle Walking Tour Event Page on Facebook or www.dvnha.org/news/183-scotty-s-castle-flood-recovery-tours.

A Night for the Arctic Refuge

Brennan Lagasse presents “A Night for the Arctic Refuge” as part of the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association’s Adventure Series.

Doors at 6 p.m., talk at 7 p.m. at the Mammoth Lakes Forest Service Welcome Center. Admission is $10, and includes a local beer. See ad, p. 3 and story, p. 15.

Poetry Out Loud

Inyo County’s Poetry Out Loud (POL) will take place on Thursday, February 15. Students select poems from the POL Anthology of more than 650 classic and contemporary poems to memorize and recite... First in a classroom competition, with the winners moving on to the Inyo County Finals. Our county champion proceeds to the California State Finals, held in March each year in Sacramento, to compete for a chance to represent California at the National Finals in Washington D.C. in April. Each winner at the state level receives $200 and an all-expenses-paid trip with an adult chaperone to Washington, DC, to compete for the national championship. The state winner’s school receives $500 for the purchase of poetry books. The first runner-up in each state receives $100, with $200 for his or her school.

Minaret Cinemas

Minaret Cinemas will be closed for the Inaugural Mammoth Film Festival the weekend of February 9-11. Visit www.mammothfilmfestival.org for film schedule.

For movie times, call 760.934.3131 or visit mammothlakesmovies.com.
Notice of Petition

Notice of Petition to Administer Estate of

The petition requests authority to administer the estate. Notice of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in section (b) of Section 58 of the California Probate Code, and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed and to the person, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal service. A copy of the petition may be obtained for a fee of $1.00. IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

Notice of Public Hearing

Notice of Public Hearing

The Governing Board has made a determination that retention of 5% of the bids is a reasonable and necessary requirement to ensure that the bidder will enter into the proposed contract. The written statement of reasons for the decision is available for public review at: Town Hall, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. The decision will be published no later than February 9, 2018, and prior to the public hearing. For additional information, please contact Gerry Le Francois at (760) 965-3602.

Notice of Public Hearing

Notice of Public Hearing

The public hearing will be conducted as a regular meeting of the District Governing Board to be held at 7:00 p.m. on February 14, 2018, in the Conference Room at the Town Offices at 3627 Cloudy Drive, in Mammoth Lakes. The meeting will be open to the public. Town officials will announce to the public whether the hearing is deemed complete by not less than the required prevailing wage guarantee that the bidder will enter into the proposed contract. The written statement of reasons for the decision is available for public review at: Town Hall, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. The decision will be published no later than February 9, 2018, and prior to the public hearing. For additional information, please contact Gerry Le Francois at (760) 965-3602.

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The polls will be open between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the day before the election (in this case, February 6, 2018), and will be closed no later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the election. If you are interested in volunteering as a public officer, please contact the Town Clerk at Town Hall, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or call (760) 965-3602. www.mammothlakes.ca.us/bids.aspx.

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**Help Wanted**

Sierra Employment Services, Inc. is hiring for the following positions:

- **Janitor B $15**
- **Building Maintenance $12**
- **Cashier M $12 $14**
- **Class B Driver $18-$22**
- **Part-time Night Audit Position at Sierra Lodge, 3540 Main St.**

Check out our many open positions [here](#)

**Mammoth Rock & Bowl/Mammoth Rock Brasserie** has the following positions available:

- Bowling Desk Employees
- Server, Bartender, Brasserie Hostess

Contact Kevin O’Connell 760.934.4200 ext.23, or Ann Ward ext. 221

**Immediate opening for Assistant Inn Manager, Mammoth Rock Inn** is a 25 room boutique hotel in Mammoth Lakes, CA. We are looking for a people-person with a flexible daytime and evening hours. Responsibilities include: checking guests in and out, answering phones, answering phone calls, booking reservations, monitoring the reservation system, managing front desk and general maintenance. Please email your resume to Leina’ala at lk@mammothcondos.com. or stop by 663 Old Mammoth Road.

**Temporary Snow Removal Operators** The Town of Mammoth Lakes is hiring for Temp Snow Removal Operators for the 2017/18 winter season. $22.82 - $26.03/hr. Commercial license required. Full-time hours, opportunity to work day or night shifts and potentially overtime. Secure a job for the winter and be part of a dedicated, hard-working road crew. **The Town of Mammoth Lakes is looking for Interns to join our Community & Economic Development and Public Works Departments.** These are paid internships with full time hours over the summer months, ideal for students undergoing study in the fields of Planning, Economic Development or Engineering. **$15.51 - $17.96/ hr.** Visit [www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov](http://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov) for more information.

**Office/Customer Service Representative, Part-Time Position available with Insurance Scouts, LLC.** Insurance or prior office service experience is required but not necessary starting pay $16-18 hr. Applicable training will be confirmed with technology platforms and interacting with Agency Client's in a confidential manner. Applicant must have a pleasant and positive attitude towards completing daily tasks and projects. Application and Job Description can be requested by emailing: briand@ins scouts.com.

**On site Maintenance Specialist** Seeking full-time live on maintenance person for 84-unit condominium complex in Mammoth Lakes. Duties include being responsible and outgoing. Duties will include basic carpentry, plumbing, electrical, pool, spa and landscape maintenance. On call and working weekends required. Pay based on level of experience. On-site two bedroom, two baths apartment is part of the package. Bring resume to St. Anton Condos #95 Canyon Blvd. 760.934.2764 or stop by 92 Canyon Blvd. for an application.

**Morrison’s Restaurant and Bar** is looking to hire servers. “Must have prior serving experience. If interested please bring your resume in or email Rachél@ morrisonsrestaurantsandbar.com

**The Austria Hof Lodge** has a position open for a full or part-time front desk associate. Experience is preferred but not required. We are looking for someone who is motivated, reliable and enjoys customer service. Please call 760.934.2764 or stop by 92 Canyon Blvd. for an application.

**Sierra Lodge, 3540 Main St.** is seeking a friendly, dedicated, hard-working person. Typical pay. Please email resume to stacey@mammoth reservations.com

**Office Assistant:** Seeking an office assistant who is motivated, organized and has exceptional customer service skills. Part-time, 9-11, flexible hours with potential for full-time employment. Please send resume to: Jessica@country-glass.com

**For Rent**

- **2BR, 1.5 Bath Apartment for Rent! Furnished washer/dryer hook-up, no garage. $1500.00, 1 year lease, and local references.** Please call 760.337.7569
- **One bedroom duplex in Long Valley (Center) available now. $550 per month. Call John for details 760-709-2511.**

**Fictitious Business Name Statement**

- **The Following Person Is Doing Business As:**
  - **Waste Management Inc.**
  - **Pawsitively Spotless Grooming**
  - **Skyline Arborist Inc.**

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**Mammoth Hospital is Hiring!**

**Benefits • Year-Round Stability • Paid Time Off**

We are currently hiring positions in nursing, radiology, accounting, housekeeping, and more! Check out our open positions on our employment page at [www.mammothhospital.org/employment](http://www.mammothhospital.org/employment) and see why our last employee satisfaction survey scored in the 90th percentile of hospitals! For help with your resume, please contact [here](#).

**Nursing & Clinical Lab Scientist sign-on and relocation bonus available!**

**Mammoth Mountain is Hiring!**

**Benefits • Year-Round Stability • Paid Time Off**

We are currently hiring positions in nursing, radiology, accounting, housekeeping, and more! Check out our open positions on our employment page at [www.mammothhospital.org/employment](http://www.mammothhospital.org/employment) and see why our last employee satisfaction survey scored in the 90th percentile of hospitals! For help with your resume, please contact [here](#).

**Nursing & Clinical Lab Scientist sign-on and relocation bonus available!**

**Hiring for Front Desk Person. Excellent pay DOE.**

**Holiday Haus Motel and Hostel Now Hiring for year round permanent position for a Front Desk Person. Excellent pay DOE. Please contact Todd Roberts at 760.934.2764 or stop by 92 Canyon Blvd. in person at 3965 Main Street in Mammoth Lakes.**

**Full Time Hospitality Position**

Seeking responsible, outgoing hospitality/ reservation agent for local management company. Excellent phone/customer service skills required. Previous reservation experience preferred. Flexible 32-40 hours per week starting immediately. Competitive pay. Please email resume to stacey@mammothreservations.com

**Office Assistant:** Seeking an office assistant who is motivated, organized and has exceptional customer service skills. Part-time, 9-11, flexible hours with potential for full-time employment. Please send resume to: Jessica@country-glass.com

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**Mammoth Mountain is Hiring!**

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HOROSCOPES
By Clouds McCloud

Aquarius: The key to happiness for this next year of your life will be found through dealing with things from your past. While it may seem scary or daunting at times, whatever is holding you back must be mended and moved on from. It will help to remember that you can't have rainbow's without rain, and that life is short, so you should smile as much as you can while you still have teeth.

Taurus: There's no time like the present, especially if it involves big dreams or projects in your life. As they say about corn, it ain't going to shock itself. So it's time to get after it, and it probably won't help to adopt this motto: "Never give up on your dreams--just go back to sleep."

GEMINI: The Stars are reporting that this should be a very social and sensual month for Geminis. To help get things in the mood, try one of these lines. Uno) There must be something wrong with my cell phone, because I haven't received a single sext from you recently. 2) Spooning often leads to forking, so it's best to use condiments.

Cancer: Your new mission, if you have the abs to accept it, is to laugh at life and yourself more. Sometimes you've just got to stop and say a little prayer like, "Dear Dog, I'm trying my best." Sometimes you've also got to stop to show some gratitude with a line like, "I'm thankful that I don't suffer from insanity. I enjoy every moment of it!" Sometimes it's as simple as taking a positive and healthy attitude by saying something like, "My sexual preference is often.

Leo: Sometimes you just have to accept that miracles are arriving. Unfortunately, it's not always easy to stay happy, positive, kind and hopeful in a world that highlights the opposite. Luckily, you were blessed with the strength do so as well as to inspire others to. To help, make this your new mantra: "When ever someone tells me I'm living in 'Fantasy Land' I just ride away on my unicorn."

Virgo: At some point or another, most Virgos will have someone say something to them like, "You act like you don't give a crap." Of course, the usual Virgo response is something like, "I'm not acting." But that response isn't usually good for anything but a laugh. Therefore, your new goal is to work on you communication skills.

LIBRA: The Stars are reporting that this would be a good time to start on a project you've long been thinking about. Basically, either start putting time into it, or put it away for good. To help get you motivated, please remember that giving up on your dream because of a setback is like slashing your other three tires because you got a flat.

SCORPIO: To help bring inner peace and joy to your life, Clouds would like to help make sure the through the middle of winter. Clouds would like to help make sure that any speed bumps or mogul lines. Uno) There must be something wrong with my cell phone, because I haven't received a single sext from you recently. 2) Spooning often leads to forking, so it's best to use condiments.

CAPRICORN: It's about time you started trusting yourself more, especially when you have good and/or sexy intentions. To help, make sure that the next time someone tells you to do something, like to stop acting like a flanging, that you put your foot down. Stand strong in what you believe, even if it means dealing with pink feathers.

ARTS

A TRIVIAL COMEDY FOR SERIOUS PEOPLE
Oscar Wilde's "Importance of Being Earnest" opens at Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre

By Lunch

Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" was first performed in London in 1895. Which boggles the mind, given how contemporary the play remains. The writing crackles and will keep you laughing. So damn clever. Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre is staging the show over the next two long weekends (Wednesday-Sunday) at the Edison Theatre on College Parkway.

The show, directed by Susan Da lian, is well-paced and the acting crisp. Rob Gill (as Algernon Moncrieff) and Juliana Olinka-Jones (as Lady Bracknell, his aunt), are particularly good.

Gill's role as a charming rogue is tailor-made for him and he nails it. The set is terrific as well. On the walls are written various witticisms attributable to Wilde. My favorites: "Work is the curse of the drinking classes" and "There are two tragedies in life: one is not getting what you want, and the other is getting it." Th e thumbnail sketch of the plot, as concisely provided by Producer Shira Dubrower: John (Jack) Worthing has created a fictitious brother named Ernest, whom he uses as an excuse to travel from his country home to London to enjoy the pleasures of the city while visiting with his friend Algernon.

He has fallen in love with Gwen dolem who believes he is actually named Ernest. Meanwhile, back in the country, Jack's ward Cecily has fallen madly in love with the idea of Jack's wicked brother Ernest, and Algernon arrives pretending to be that brother.

The lights go up on this comic crowd-pleaser at 7 p.m. each night (except for Sundays, when there is a 4 p.m. matinee). For tickets, call 760.934.6592 or visit www.MammothLakesRepertoryTheatre.org.

Cast list:
John Worthing, J.P.……Marcus Nobreus
Algernon Moncrieff………………Rob Gill
Lane……………………….Jeff Frome
Lady Bracknell………………..J. Olinka-Jones
Miss Prism……………………………..Gigi de Jong
Rev. Canon.Casuble……..Stephen Gill
Karl Henize Maid One…………….Madeline Hardiman
Maid Two………………………….....Lisa Gill

Photos, clockwise from top: Rob Gill (as Algernon Moncrieff) and Juliana Olinka-Jones (Lady Bracknell); Lesley-Anne Hoxie (Cecily Cardew) and Madeleine Roy (Gwendolen Fairfax) and Marcus Nobreus (John Worthing).
Brennan Lagasse answered the phone at 9:30 p.m. in Austria, as he was walking down a dark street trying to find a restaurant his host (who he'd never met) had recommended. He didn't know what kind of food they served, or even that he'd end up in a town on the Italian-Austrian border near the Dolomites that night (February 6), staying at the home of a friend-of-a-friend who wasn't even around.

"I basically just broke into somebody's house," laughed Lagasse, a writer and educator based in Lake Tahoe.

Lagasse will speak in Mammoth on Thursday, February 18 as part of the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association's Adventure Series. His presentation will focus on the plight of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), an area that Lagasse called "the definition of a wild landscape."

The Gwich'in, the native people who inhabit the Refuge, "don't even have a word for 'wilderness,'" said Lagasse. "Wilderness is just what it is—that's the earth."

The ANWR is a 19 million acre stretch of land "just sitting at the base of the Brooks Range," says Lagasse. "It's the largest protected wilderness in the United States, bordered by the Beaufort Sea and Prudhoe Bay, and was set aside by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980.

When he was getting his Master's at Humboldt State (he's currently going for his PhD in Sustainability Education at Prescott College), Lagasse was contacted by Gwich'in elder Sarah James. James lives in a part of the ANWR known as the "Area 1002," named after the section of the 1980 Act which deferred petroleum exploration within a 1.5 million-acre expanse, the northernmost portion of the refuge. James is one of the matriarchs of the Gwich'in, which "literally translates to 'people of the matriarchs of the Gwich'in, which of the refuge. James is one of the matriarchs of the Gwich'in, which "literally translates to 'people of the matriarchs of the Gwich'in, which" said Lagasse. "But an invitation opens the door. Through that invitation I was able to bring [Humboldt State] students up for three trips." He said that his interactions with the area and its people "Started a whole chapter of my life where I've been working on activist issues. To me, the more that I see what is happening in the Refuge, the more I see this as a symbolic issue of so many things."

Republicans have attempted to allow drilling in the Refuge almost 50 times since the 1980 Conservation Act was passed. And with the passage of President Donald Trump's Tax Cuts and the Jobs Act of 2017 (signed into law on December 22, 2017), a provision was included that would open Area 1002 to drilling.

The people of the caribou fear that drilling in the area will push caribou from the coastal plain into the foothills, where their calves will be more vulnerable to predation. "Culturally speaking, if the caribou die, the Gwich'in and their way of life will disappear as well," wrote Lagasse in a story for Big Life Magazine.

By speaking at events like ESIA's Adventure Series, Lagasse said, he's hoping to share the story of the Gwich'in, who have been "relentless...in a struggle to survive."

"We believe everything is connected. The land, the water, the caribou—all of it," James told Lagasse. "The mission of the Tribe for the past 30 years has been to make more friends," said Lagasse, who said that distant members of the Tribe first gathered together in 1988, "the first time the whole Tribe has ever gotten together," and said, "we heard oil is going to come in our land...we need to find some friends and have them experience what it's like to be up here. Essentially...I’m one of the many people that's fallen into line and have developed an alliance with them."

Though Lagasse is an athlete with multiple passions (check out his website, stateofthebackcountry.com, for posts on surfing Lake Tahoe, ice climbing and powder hunting in Chile), he says the story of the Gwich'in has kept him working for their cause.

"I'm constantly looking for new ways to engage on the issue and make a contribution," he said.

"Even one person that shows up and is inspired by what they hear that night can turn into something positive on multiple levels."

Brennan Lagasse will present "A Night for the Arctic Refuge" on Thursday, February 15 at the Mammoth Ranger Station Auditorium. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the presentation begins at 7. Tickets are $10 and include a beer. Visit www.esiaonline.com for more information.
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