PARTY WITH A POINT

The only thing more crooked than a drug dealer is a bureaucrat.

On October 23rd of this year, two different companies submitted applications to the Town of Mammoth Lakes for cannabis land use permits. The locations listed on the two applications are 290 feet apart. Cannabis dispensaries cannot be located within 500 feet of one another in the town of Mammoth Lakes. Whichever one of these companies had its application approved first could open shop; the other would be precluded from receiving a permit by virtue of being too close to the other.

It was a race to be first. On Wednesday, Mammoth’s Planning and Economic Development Commission [PEDC] approved one of these applications. Now the also-ran is calling “foul-play.”

TD Enterprises of San Diego was awarded its land use permit. This LLC owned by Tony Hall and Doug Cans hopes to open its cannabis dispensary at the northeast corner of Tavern Road and Old Mammoth, in the Century 21 building. Ascent Supply Company must now appeal to Mammoth’s Town Council to prevent its prospective location at 58 Sierra Park Road from being geographically excluded. Robert Calvert, co-owner of Ascent, his attorney, Tim Sanford, and property owner Paul Rudder all came to the PEDC meeting to air their grievances in the spirit of Festivus.

“We were treated differently than TD Enterprises,” Calvert said plainly to the committee. Calvert and his associates believe that the town didn’t want to give Ascent a second cannabis permit in Mammoth Lakes. Ascent already has a dispensary opening at 3399 Main Street. They say that the town considers Ascent’s second application to be “monopolistic behavior,” and that the town handicapped the application accordingly.

This handicap came in the form of deferred communication. Here’s how the supposed application was rejected:

1. Both cannabis applications are 290 feet apart.
2. Open shop; the other would be precluded from receiving a permit by virtue of being too close to the other.
3. It was a race to be first.
4. TD Enterprises of San Diego was awarded its land use permit.

“TD Enterprises approved first. Now the also-ran is calling ‘foul-play.”

LOVIN’ THE ESCALATOR
Livin’ it up when I’m goin’ down

Canyon’s escalator is operational. Mammoth’s NPS scores are sensational. For more, see page two.
MEET ME AT THE LUNCHBOX

Mammoth Mountain CEO Mark Brownlie graciously gave me a tour on Thursday of various mountain projects - a capital improvements update.

And no, the up & down escalators at Canyon Lodge are not being counted as two additional lifts.

Renovations have given Canyon a lot nicer vibe. Frankly, the whole mountain’s got it. There’s a buzz in Mammoth right now. You can feel it.

Snow certainly helps. And the idea they’re taking your money and plowing it back into some improvements. That helps, too.

As Brownlie joked (and then half-regretted it when he saw me writing it down), “Telling people where the restrooms are [at Canyon] is a new feature for this building.”

In other words, Canyon Lodge has actual signage.

Brownlie noted that the Mountain’s NPS (Net Promoter Scores), which already skewed towards the high end within the ski industry, are up significantly so far this year.

In 2017-2018, Mammoth’s average NPS was an 85.

This year, the resort is averaging an 89.

As Brownlie said, guys like Nicholas “Moose” Switek, a Food and Beverage General Manager, are on the front lines making this happen.

Brownlie then told a story from a year ago when Moose, who was running 53 Kitchen at the time, picked up snowbound employees via snowmobile to get them to work so that all the snowbound people staying in the Village at Mammoth would have a place to eat.

In turn, the feeling from visitors has been reciprocal.

Again from Brownlie: “The day we opened the top, people got off the gondola, super-excited. They rushed halfway down the stairs, and then they did something I’ve never seen before. They turned around, ran back up the stairs, poked their heads inside the ski patrol room, thanked the patrol guys for getting it open, and then went skiing.”

As of Monday, Dec. 10, Mammoth was also up 7% year-over-year in room bookings.

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One thing to look for starting this holiday season. There will be food service at the bottom of Chair 4. Mammoth plans to put a food truck down there, which it has named the “Lunchbox.” It will serve chicken, steak and veggie cheese steak options. Beer and wine will also be available.

And as we all know, anything with Lunch in it is bound to be terrific.

Meanwhile, in industry news, the Wall Street Journal reported this week that Vail Resorts stock price crashed last Friday after posting a larger-than-expected quarterly loss.

The stock, which traded at a record close of approximately $301 per share in September, closed at $221 per share Thursday, a 27% plunge.

The article, which appeared this past Tuesday, states that Vail has spent about $1.4 billion in resort acquisitions in recent years, and that the “recent quarterly loss was partially driven by costs related to new resorts.”

But the article then goes on to talk about something else Vail is dealing with: serious competition.

Alterra is cited as a likely reason for a retreat in season pass sales for Vail’s Northern California properties.

“This new competitor [Alterra] has a very compelling lineup,” said Tyler Batory, an analyst at Janney Montgomery Scott.

Vail Resorts still enjoys a market capitalization of approximately $9 billion.

MCWD settles

Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD) settled its lawsuit against Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD) on Thursday.

The parties have filed a joint stipulation to dismiss pending litigation.

The dispute began in the fall of 2013 over Ormat Inc.’s Casa Diablo IV geothermal wells, which MCWD claimed could taint the Mammoth Lakes water supply.

GBUAPCD had approval power for Casa Diablo IV project and approved Ormat’s plans. In response, MCWD filed litigation against GBUAPCD and the two have been dancing since.

In the statement issued on Thursday evening, MCWD’s General Manager Pat Hayes said, “Going forward, our customers will be best served by us focusing on delivering solutions that are within our control. To that end, we will be acquiring additional well sites and drilling more production wells to provide alternate supply should we lose existing wells.”

GBUAPCD Air Pollution Control Officer Phillip Kiddoo’s statement was optimistic, “Great Basin is looking forward to having litigation behind us and pursuing cooperative interagency discussions with the MCWD.”

A recent feature story penned by Jeremy Jacobs which appeared in October in E&E (Energy and Environment) News stated that MCWD “has spent $1.7 million on lawsuits, PR and consultants” related to the Ormat issue.

Refilling the bucket

Mammoth Lakes Tourism voted on Monday to return ~$61,000 of the $250,000 that it withdrew last month from its “Bucket Fund” of funds with the town. The funds were withdrawn for an emergency marketing campaign entitled “Operation Snow Blitz,” meant to ensure holiday bookings despite poor early snow conditions compared to Colorado.

The non-profit was able to exceed their projected impressions for the marketing campaign while staying under budget.
FULL SUSHI BAR
GRAND OPENING!!

WED : LIVE MUSIC
6:30 – 8:30PM

THUR & FRI : KARAOKE
9:30PM

SAT : CLUB NIGHT
10PM

DEC 31 : NYE 10PM
(FOR MORE INFO WWW.SAMURAI.CO.COM)
PENSIONS continued from page 1

The liability lies in underfunded pension plans, an underfunded Other Post Employee Benefit (OPEB) trust and pension obligation bonds. It’s important to note that in 2002 the county stopped providing actuarial benefits to employees. Those hired before 2002 were grandfathered in and guaranteed their pensions. For an employee hired after 2002, the county will match a contribution of 3% of that employee’s annual salary into a 401(a) retirement account. A 401(a) is basically a 401(k) for public employees.

In November 2007, the county created the OPEB trust with Public Agency Retirement Services (PARS) to fund the grandfathered and eligible retirees. Right now, the county takes care of 175 retirees and there remain 26 active employees who are eligible for retirement benefits through the OPEB. Since 2012, the county has contributed $1 million annually to the OPEB trust, which has brought the funds balance to $19.6 million dollars as of April 2018. The county doesn’t know how long the county will need to continue to contribute to the OPEB trust. It could take six to eight months to update the actuarial done that will define how long the county will have to contribute to the OPEB fund. It’s having an actuarial firm to update that.

The county has two pension plans with California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS): a Safety Plan for public safety workers and a Miscellaneous Plan for other employees. At the end of 2017, the Miscellaneous Plan was underfunded by 31% and the Safety Plan was 26% too low. Dutcher said that the underfunded ratios were similar to the ratios of other agencies in the CalPERS system. “Don’t hate the player, hate the game.”

“Don’t hate the player, hate the game.”

“This plan is doing much better than PERS,” Dutcher said. For the year to date, the PARS account has an actuarial rate of earnings of 10%. Last year, the CalPERS accounts accrued less than one percent. According to CalPERS’s discounted rate of earnings the less than one percent equals 7.5%.

The report called: “We believe that the county has not yet developed a robust plan to address CalPERS contribution rates that will increase significantly in the coming years due to revised actuarial assumptions.”

The OPEB and pension obligations account for 15.9% of total expenditures. The report called that percentage, “high.”

Dutcher harkened to the turn of the century when all of the agencies in CalPERS were 100% funded and even super funded, which means that those agencies had excesses. When agencies were super-funded, CalPERS granted them ‘contribution holidays,’ meaning they could skip contributions. Not so, today.

“The bottom line is PERS contributions continue to rise with no end in sight,” Dutcher said. She added “Is it wise to turn over extra money to PERS? Probably not.”

The solution to negating CalPERS increasing contributions is to not give them money. The only thing we could do is to set aside money outside PERS to pay those obligations,” Dutcher said. The county would set aside money in what is called a pension smoothing fund, which would move cash from mandatory pension contributions to other projects, like OPEB. A pension smoothing fund might save money in the near-term and end up delaying the inevitable. Fortunately for the county, it has a smaller obligation to current employees who aren’t eligible for pensions and has OPEB to back those fund losses up.

Why not withdraw from CalPERS? The termination fee is exorbitant. It’s been termed ‘a poison pill’ and ‘golden handcuff.’ Terminated accounts are demoted into investment funds with lower return rates, making it even harder to meet retirement benefits.

About S&P’s credit rating, Supervisor Bob Gardner said, “It was a good reinforcement of our good financial health.”

When asked about the pension liabilities, Gardner said, “They’re sitting on our shoulder and we can’t ignore it … We changed the provision of lifetime medical in 2012. In the meantime, we still have to meet those past commitments.”

Supervisor Fred Stump called it a “pleasant surprise.” He added, “We are probably in better shape than other local jurisdictions in the state.”

Supervisor Jennifer Halferty said of the report, “I think it’s great. I’m optimistic and encouraged.”

Supervisor Stacy Cortless said, “I’m extremely pleased with the financial report.” For the county’s liability’s: “The main liability is the same issue that every single local government in California and probably the entire country is facing.”

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Inyo Supes relax hemp grow requirements

By James

I t Inyo County’s Supervisors’ meeting on Tuesday, December 4 proved anything, it is that cannabis sativa is a very versatile and useful plant.

Agreement Commissioner Nate Reade, with an assist from Jeff Griffiths, First District Supervisor (who seems especially knowledgeable and well-informed on “the Weed”), coupled with public comments from hemp growers with the support of cannabis growers, gave a pretty good overview of the economics and cultivation techniques of growing hemp for making a large variety of products, including cannabinoid (CBD), compared to the profitability of cannabis grown for recreational and medical use with high concentrations of tetrahydrocannabinol.

Turns out that the same plant, cannabis sativa, with modifications, can just as easily be used to make soap on a rope (available at Amazon.com and other fine retailers).

Hemp products, made from the cannabis plant, has been used throughout humankind’s history to make rope, sails and clothing. It is also used in making paper, food, and biofuel. And that’s just a partial list which also includes bird seed. Yes, bird seed. Now you know why some birds sing a lot more than others, especially in Europe where it has long been legal to have cannabis seeds in bird food.

Part of the problem in overcoming resistance to legalized cannabis has always been a misunderstanding, and, in some cases, outright falsehoods, surrounding its use.

What cannabis grown for hemp (which is the “woody” part of the plant, i.e., not the leaves or flowers) is not good for is getting “high.” Canabis grown for hemp has very little (which is the “woody” part of the plant) 

Hemp products, made from the cannabis plant, has been used throughout humankind’s history to make rope, sails and clothing. It is also used in making paper, food, and biofuel. And that’s just a partial list which also includes bird seed. Yes, bird seed. Now you know why some birds sing a lot more than others, especially in Europe where it has long been legal to have cannabis seeds in bird food.

Part of the problem in overcoming resistance to legalized cannabis has always been a misunderstanding, and, in some cases, outright falsehoods, surrounding its use.

What cannabis grown for hemp (which is the “woody” part of the plant, i.e., not the leaves or flowers) is not good for is getting “high.” Cannabis grown for hemp has very little of the active ingredient, THC, the stuff that gets users “high.” Hemp must have a content of less than .3 percent.

Think of hemp as Near Beer, a malt beverage that doesn’t contain enough alcohol to be considered a true beer. It was created during the great failed social experiment known as Prohibition.

In 1920 to 1933 through the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which made the sale of alcohol illegal. It was believed that it would protect families, women and children from the effects of abuse of alcohol. Guess what? It didn’t work! The lessons learned from Prohibition were completely ignored by our government in its policies toward cannabis, which Congress outlawed in 1937, just a few years before the start of World War II, a time when many Americans could well have used a little pot to tamp down the anxiety, hysteria and fear.

According to PBS news, during the massive Great Depression of the 30s, marijuana was linked with violence, crime and other socially deviant behaviors.

In 1936, the propaganda file “Reefer Madness” was released further adding to the hysteria. Today the video is best noted for its comic relief because it was ridiculous considering the facts that have come out in the last several decades. That and the fact that millions of users, much as during Prohibition, ignored the laws prohibiting its cultivation and use.

In 1970, the federal government declared marijuana more dangerous than cocaine, meth, oxycodeone and fentanyl. That the Drug Enforcement Agency, created during the Nixon administration in 1973 with its War Against Drugs policies. The DEA still categorizes marijuana as a Schedule 1 drug, which are purportedly drugs considered having “no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.” They include marijuana, heroin, LSD, ecstasy, methaqualone and peyote.

Schedule II, which are drug “also considered dangerous” with a high potential for abuse. They include Vicodin, cocaine, methamphetamine, methadone, oxycodone, fentanyl, Dexerdine, Adderall and Ritalin.

Interestingly, marijuana was listed as a legal medicine in the U.S. up until 1942. Even the American Medical Association was against it becoming an illegal medicine until it bowed to government pressure.

For Hemp, let the sun shine in So how should the different properties of cannabis with very low THC levels (as grown for hemp) and those deliberately grown with higher levels of THC impact the county’s regulation of commercial grows?

For Inyo County commercial hemp growers, being forced to grow indoors and meet all the regulatory requirements as proposed in the county ordinance being discussed by Supervisors, would be prohibitively expensive and spell the difference between making a profit or making a beeline to somewhere else.

Cannabis grown for medical and recreational use has a much higher market value per pound than hemp, a fact acknowledged by cannabis growers that attended and supported the hemp growers at the meeting.

Concerns over cross-pollination between plants grown for hemp, especially if allowed to be grown outdoors, and that for recreational and medical use marijuana werees discussed. Female plants are where the money is for both hemp and cannabis growers. Both groups however told supervi-sors that they would work together to avoid problems in that area.

Supervisors ultimately revised the ordinance and removed the indoor grow requirement for hemp cultivation. Another win for capitalism! Supes also approved two commercial retail outlets in the county that have met all the state requirements.
Independence festival back after two-year hiatus

By Maddux

Lovers of fruitcake, fret no more. The internationally acclaimed 12th Annual Fruitcake Festival is returning the American Legion Hall in Independence, on Saturday, December 15.

Founder of the Fruitcake Festival, Nancy Chambers said, it was cancelled for the past two years. In 2016, one of the organizers was ill. In 2017, organizers thought they had booked the Legion Hall, but it was booked for another event. That’s not the case this year. The event has a place and a following.

The festival is an opportunity for people to get together, to celebrate the much-maligned Fruitcake,” Chambers said.

This year’s festival theme: “When you wish upon a Fruitcake, all your dreams will come true.” It was suggested by Liz Livermont who “is also based on Comet 46P that is set to visit us this year,” Chambers said.

The theme was discovered that the fruitcake festival is the fourteen-year-old Archival Civil Defense fruitcake, which Nancy Chambers said is tended down through the generations.

Chambers explained how the Archival Civil Defense Fruitcake is preserved. First, there is the inoculating it yearly with brandy. Then it is wrapped in waxed paper, placed on a glass, non-reactive cake plate and sealed. Lastly, powdered sugar is liberally applied in order to act as a desiccant.

Deciding who to attend can look forward to “good tasting fruitcakes [and] if they are lucky, the King will pick you to taste the archival 14-year-old fruitcake [and] people dance and mingle with eggnog in hand,” Chambers said.

For those who are worried about spiked eggnog, Nancy Chambers said that “we are careful to separate the spiked eggnog from the non-alcoholic eggnog.”

For those worried about the dress code, Chambers said “costumes are optional [and] some people dress up their fruitcake to align with the year’s theme. The human fruitcakes in costume steal the show!”

At this year’s festival, $5 jambalaya will be available for purchase. There will also be a vegetarian option.

One thing that is not allowed at the festival is fruitcake shaming. Fruitcakes of all makes, shapes and sizes are to be respected.

The idea for the festival was born out of boredom. During an Election Night Potluck at the Inyo County Courthouse one year, “the subject turned to Fruitcake while waiting for the ballots to come in from the precincts. It was discovered that people were passionate about fruitcake and that talk led to the discussion of having a Fruitcake festival,” Chambers said. One of the founders of the festival, “had an overabundance of punch cups that needed to be used, and voila, the Fruitcake Festival was born!” she said.

According to Nancy Chambers, “the variety of fruitcakes is endless… they are not all composed of what most people come to associate with fruitcakes, the candied fruit available will be available for purchase. There will also be a vegetarian option.

“Never fear, no one will be left out,” Chambers said. “There was an immediate uptick in reservations at our place.” Board Chairman Scott McGuire and Mammoth Mayor Cleland Hoff led the charge to return the funds to the reserve fund. McGuire felt that returning the funds was not only the right thing to do, but would act as a sign of fiscal responsibility.

“The decision to return the funds was unanimous,” McGuire said.

The subject turned to fruitcake while waiting for the ballots to come in from the precincts...

-Nancy Chambers

PAGE TWO
continued from page 2

“This disaster was averted,” said MLT board-member Kirk Schaubmayer. “There was an immediate uptick in reservations at our place.” Board Chairman Scott McGuire and Mammoth Mayor Cleland Hoff led the charge to return the funds to the reserve fund. McGuire felt that returning the funds was not only the right thing to do, but would act as a sign of fiscal responsibility.

“This says to the community that we will ask for this money when we need it, and if we don’t spend it we will give it back,” McGuire said.

“I will look a lot more kindly on MLT’s next requests if this money is returned… Otherwise I would feel jerked around.”

The decision to return the funds was unanimous.

Kelly leaves, Kelly arrives

While General John F. Kelly is no longer serving as President Trump’s Chief of Staff, another Kelly has arrived to take the reins as Bishop’s City Administrator.

David Kelly officially started work on Tuesday.

David and his wife, Jernon are from Surprise, Arizona, which is located 35 miles west of Phoenix, where he served as Assistant Public Works Director.

At one time, Mr. Kelly said he was a Washington state.

Kelly said that he has 20 years of experience in local government.

“I just want to do a lot of listening to the Council, City employees, [and] the Mayor,” he said. “We’re just excited to be here, and get to know the community.” David Kelly said.

Hopefully David Kelly’s experience in Bishop proves better than Gen. Kelly’s in Washington.

In June of this year, Mr. Kelly reportedly told visiting senators that the White House was a miserable place to work.

-Maddux
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YOU, ME AND DE FEES
Mammoth Lakes Town Council delays vote on development fee hike
By Gorman

The Multi-Use Facility, er, Wreck Zone, was not the only contentious issue discussed by Mammoth Lakes Town Council at its December 5 meeting. A hike in development impact mitigation fees was considered and hotly debated by council and members of the public.

Councilman Kirk Stapp led off with an explanation of what impact mitigation fees are all about. In 1978 California passed Proposition 13 limiting the amount that property taxes could increase annually. In order to compensate for this tax revenue loss, the town of Mammoth Lakes created impact mitigation fees, which are imposed on new development so that the town can afford to fund the additional police, road repair, housing for employees, and all the other impacts that new development would create.

Three and a half years ago the town performed a “Nexus Study,” which audited the impacts that development would create and put a price tag on it. The town then passed an ordinance which the town paid professionals to calculate.

At the time, the town was hurting from the recession, and so set fees well below the recommended maximum price in an attempt to avoid disincentivizing development.

Now, Council is thinking about raising the fees substantially. Council is contemplating a 40% fee increase for single family home construction (from $5,700 to $8,200 per unit), and the lodging fee (for hotel and motel construction) is proposed to increase 250% from $3,700 to $9,300 per room.

Both of these contemplated new fees are within the range recommended by the Nexus Study, with the lodging fee being the maximum recommended amount.

“Anchoring” is a principle of negotiation that says the initial number presented sets an anchor which influences the rest of the negotiation. It is a logical fallacy, and the anchor set by council years ago is not as important as the recommendation which the town paid professionals to calculate.

Tom Hodges, Vice President of Development for Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, spoke on the effect that such a fee hike would have on development. “This is going to affect a developer’s decision to build,” Hodges said, “and I don’t see much strategic justification.”

This isn’t a way to incentivize or disincentivize development. It is to mitigate the effects of development.

Councilman Bill Sauser disagreed. “Right now this [the mitigation fee] is about 10% of building fees. It is almost prohibitive already,” he said.

County Supervisor Jennifer Halferty asked, rhetorically. “Councilwoman Lynda Salcido said that if the town is to raise mitigation fees, she would rather see it done incrementally year-after-year, and evenly across building types.

“I want it to be fair, and not favor one type of build,” she said.

Hodges stood up again to say that the town has not given the development community enough time to respond to these proposed fee increases, and Councilman Wentworth presented a motion in reply.

The council unanimously approved a motion to push the decision on these fees until the January 16th meeting.
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HOLIDAY HOURS M-F: 9:30am-5:30pm | Sat 9:30am-4pm | New Years Eve 9:30am-2pm | CLOSED: Sundays, Christmas Eve & Day, New Year’s Day

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WEED continued from page 1

chicanery shook out.

On November 7th, Town Associate Planner Nolan Bobroff sent an email to Calvert saying that his application was incomplete. Calvert went into Bobroff’s office that afternoon to walk through the issues, and submitted a corrected application that same day.

The Development Review Committee (DRC) reviewed the new submission at its meeting on Nov. 13th. Its members, consisting of staff from the fire and water districts; the planning, building, and engineering divisions; and the police department, were given two weeks to return their comments on the application. They returned them on the 26th.

At 5:38 P.M. on November 27th, twenty days after his application was resubmitted, Robert Calvert was notified by Bobroff that his application was deemed deficient by the DRC. The timing of the email raised suspicion from Rudder, who said he’d give The Sheet $100 for every government official it finds in its office after 5 p.m.

What was even more suspicious, possibly even malicious, was the date of notice. The agenda for the PEDC meeting was had been finalized and was to be sent to the public the following morning, November 28th. Therefore, Ascent’s application for the use permit would not go before the PEDC for approval on December 12th, and TD’s would.

Had Ascent been notified a day earlier, or even a few hours earlier, Calvert could have addressed the small issues raised by the DRC and made it onto the agenda for Wednesday’s meeting.

Bobroff said that the timing was unfortunate, but not intentional.

The way that Mammoth Lakes has been zoned for cannabis retailers, there is feasibly only room for about four locations in town.

A cannabis retailer must be 500 feet from any other cannabis shop, and 600 feet from a K-12 school, a daycare, a public park, or a community center. These regulations were designed by Town Council to limit the number of pot shops in town.

“Adult Businesses” like sex shops or tattoo parlors are only zoned for the industrial district. This would have been sound protocol for cannabis as well. Put them all on a “green alley” somewhere.

Instead the municipal code has forced them into distributed locations, 500 feet apart, throughout the heart of downtown.

With TD’s permit granted, the fourth and final parcel left in town that could likely become a cannabis retailer is the Body Shop building on the corner of Laurel Mountain Road and Sierra Nevada Road, according to Bobroff.

If Calvert and Co.’s accusations of treachery are to be believed, then the DRC had a choice between these priorities:

1. Prevent a single entity from owning two of the four pot shops in town.
2. Support local businessmen. They (none of whom are elected) chose the former.

What happens next is foggy at best. Ascent has stated its intention to apply for the commercial cannabis permit, which it cannot receive until it has the legal space at 101 Old Mammoth Road until a lease expires on August 1, 2019.

It is not likely to repeal the permit of TD Enterprises, as TD did nothing wrong. It could find that the process undertaken by the Planning Committee was unfair. In this case, the council could exempt Ascent’s application from the 500 foot restriction, but Rudder thinks such an admission of guilt by the Town is unlikely.

“When the Town lost $50 million in the airport litigation, no one took responsibility,” Rudder said. “After the settlement they all congratulated each other on what a great job they did… It was like the emperor’s new clothes. That mentality persists today,” concluded Rudder.

To complicate matters, this use permit is only one of the two permits that TD Enterprises needs in order to sell cannabis. It now must apply for a commercial cannabis permit, which it cannot receive until it has the legal right to occupy its retail space, and it does not have the right to occupy the space at 101 Old Mammoth Road until a lease expires on August 1, 2019.

This saga is likely to continue for months. There are few precedents for the nascent cannabis industry, and there is no telling how this will shake out, but one thing is for sure: the lawyers are going to get paid.
HOLIDAYS

Holiday scenes from around the Eastern Sierra. Eastern Sierra Jewish Community hosted a party at Snowcreek Athletic Club on Sunday, December 9 to celebrate the last night of Hanukkah. Mr. and Mrs. Claus visited the Laws Railroad Museum last Saturday.

HAPPY, MERRY HOLIDAYS

Nathaniel Beaver and Danica McCoy at the last night of Hannukah

Mr. and Mrs. Claus with Grant and Austin Gillespie (who have both been good!)

Conductor and new Bishop Councilman Stephen Muchovej.

FREE MAMMOTH BEanie WHEN YOU BUY $150+ GIFT CARD

Gift cards are the perfect stocking stuffer for the mountain lovers in your life. They’re good for lift tickets, activities, gear, clothing, lodging, dining and more. Available online or at any ticket window.

Cheers Too A Happy Holiday & A Wonderful New Year

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

The Wing Of The Game = A weekly rotation of Awesome Sauce! Extended Happy Hour. Free entry into the Pea Pod to win a gift card!

THURSDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

1/2 off wing night! Extended Happy Hour. Free entry into the Pea Pod to win a gift card!

SUNDAY MORNING

open @ 9:45am
New Breakfast Menu. $5 Cocktails!

OPENs DAILY AT 11AM •
3399 MAIN ST IN THE LUXURY OUTLET MALL
JOIN US ON • FOR MORE INFO 760.965.0514
Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra held its annual Whiteout Extravaganza fundraiser at Main Lodge on Saturday night. Revelers ate, drank, chatted, danced, sang-along, and won prizes.

Clockwise from below: Mort Teterman and Sally Pritchett; Polar Bear Tim Gorman and Sarah Saturday; Justin Lee won make-up and a book, titled “The Grazland Tales” while Nicole Lee won a large jar of mini-liquor bottles; Steve and Amy Ambellan; Jim and Kim Montgomery.
Learning about SNARL
By Gorman

The Sheet asked Dr. Carol Blanchette of the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL) the immortal question once posed by The Bobs:

“What would you say ya do here?”

Blanchette, the director of the Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserve, which encompasses the SNARL and Valentine Camp, answered the call.

These two reserves are part of the University of California Natural Reserve System. They are administered by the University of California, Santa Barbara, but due to their distance from campus, their governance is mostly independent.

By transporting the entire remaining population by bucket to a safe location, Blanchette said, “It’s all over the board.”

For a long time, SNARL was in charge of studying Mono Lake, but the lake is, “political,” according to Blanchette, and has now been put under the purview of the state.

Even so, there is no shortage of ecology to be studied in the Eastern Sierra.

Dave Herbst is a resident scientist at SNARL studying stream ecology. He looks to aquatic invertebrates as bellwethers for stream health, and he is currently tracking the effects that contamination from mines is having on streams.

Roland Knapp, another resident researcher, has committed himself to saving the Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog from extinction.

Once the most prevalent vertebrate in the Eastern Sierra, the Yellow-Legged Frog’s numbers have dwindled to dangerous lows. First, hatchery raised trout were found to be voracious predators of the frog’s tadpoles. Then, after trout were precluded from some lakes, it was found that the Chytrid Fungus had been causing organ failure in these frogs, as it has been found to do in frogs across the United States.

Knapp goes up to alpine lakes and swabs frogs. He brings the samples back and quantifies the amount of fungus the frogs carry in the SNARL’s molecular diagnostics lab.

Jeff Dozier, who recently retired, and his student Tom Painter, use SNARL as the base of operations for their Airborne Snow Observatory.

Using lidar, laser-based radar shot from planes, this observatory creates multi-spectral 3D maps of the Sierra to measure snow-pack, snow-density, anticipated spring runoff, and tree mortality.

Beyond scientific research, the SNARL is known for its outdoor education and outreach programs.

For a day each Fall and Spring, SNARL brings in K-5 students from Mono and Inyo counties for a day of outdoor education. Blanchette called the SNARL program one of the best in the state.

“It is very important for kids to have this exposure to natural sciences,” Blanchette said. “Any job one of these kids gets will involve environmental science ... Even though we are in the middle of nowhere, we’re ahead on that.”

Dr. Blanchette is only the second director in the History of the VESR. She replaced Dan Dawson who headed the reserve for 40 years.

Before taking over the VESR, she was studied Marine Ecology at UCSB and worked with the education department to better understand the ways students learn science.

Now education is one of her highest priority for SNARL.

When students come to SNARL they learn about bears, bird-watching, tree identification, archeology, ants, rope making, and Native American outdoor skills.

She said that a child who may be uninterested in the classroom becomes engaged in the outdoors.

“We wish we had them longer.”

Blanchette also plans to partner the SNARL with the Forest Island Project for artists-in-residence. The groups will collaborate to visualize a project, and it will culminate in a show.

“When people come to appreciate this stuff,” SNARL Administrator Annie Barrett said, “they might not litter. They might vote a certain way. They might live a more fulfilling life.”
calendar of events

BARS & MUSIC

Happy Hour / The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill Slider Mondays, Open mic plus return! Mon & Tues @ 5 p.m. Taco Tuesday, 3 homemade tacos for $6. Wine Wednesday is 1/2 off the entire list all day, happy hour wine from 3 p.m. close See ad, p. 11.

Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour: All Night Happy Hour (4 p.m. close), Tues. Fri. Happy Hour from 4-6 p.m. Tuesday: $2.50 tacos 4-5 p.m.; Wing Wednesday 50% off all wings 6-9 p.m. Thursday: Burger & Beer Special 6-9 p.m. See ad, p. 9.

Morrison’s Happy Hour Daily, 5-7 p.m. The Mogul All Night Happy Hour during NFL games Sun., Mon., Thurs. In the bar only.

Mammoth Rock ‘N Bowl Friday and Saturday: Cosmic Bowling 8 p.m. See ad, p. 15.

Peña’s Bistro & Wine Bar Daily, 5-7 p.m. $5-10 menu items and drink specials. See ad, p. 12.

Clocktower Cellar Happy Hour: 4:30-7 p.m. daily. $5 dollar menu items, drink specials. Sunday: open at 10 a.m. for football. See ad, p. 12.

Roberto’s Happy Hour: 4-6 p.m. daily. Sunday: open at 10 a.m. for football.

Mammoth’s Famous Slocums Happy Hour Mon.-Fri 4-6 p.m.; Sat./Sun 4-5:30 p.m. Dining at 5 pm, daily. “No Reservations, just come on in” See ad, p. 5.

Social T-Bar Live music, comedy, screenings. See below.

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

Shelter Distilling Happy Hour 3-5 p.m. daily; half off all drinks. Free Spirit tasting flight 2-3 p.m. daily. See ad, p. 13.

December 14-15/ Devils Creek Distillery tasting hours. Time: 2:30-5:30 p.m.

Friday, December 14/ Shelter Distilling’s One Year Anniversary. Free barrel aged whiskey tasting and a free limited edition hat to the first 350 people. Time: 4-7 p.m. Location: Shelter Distilling, The Village. See ad, p. 13.

Blasé Pub & Restaurant’s Three Year Anniversary. Music by Daring Greatly from 7-9 p.m. Drink specials all night. Location: Sierra Center Mall.

December 15-16/ Bluebird Christmas Concerts @ Social T-Bar. Holiday Classics with blues and rock flair. Times: Saturday at 9 p.m., Sunday at noon. Family-friendly.

Sunday, December 16/ Catch all the NFL action @ Clocktower Cellar, Liberty Bar, Outlaw Saloon, Roberto’s.

Tuesday, December 18/ Team Trivia at Mammoth Brewing Co. 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 19/ Mammoth Brewing Co. screens Warren Miller’s “Face of Winter” Time: 6 p.m.


TOWN STUFF

Friday, December 14/ Stuff-A-Bus donation drive and tree lighting. Location: Footloose Sports, Mammoth. Time 12-6 p.m. More info: see sidebar column next page.

Holiday Concert by Eastern Sierra Chamber Orchestra and Chorale Music Unbound Students. Location: St. Joseph’s Church, 58 Ranch Rd., Mammoth. Time: 7 p.m. Free. More info: see sidebar column this page. Concert repeats December 16 at 4 p.m. at Bishop’s Cerro Coso campus.

Mammoth Varsity Boys Basketball plays in the Mammoth Holiday Tournament. Location: Mammoth High School gym. Mammoth’s games are scheduled for 2:40 p.m. and 5 p.m. Friday and 10:30 a.m. Saturday. After that, future games are TBD.


Saturday, December 15/ ICARE Shopping Day at Spellbinder Books. More info: see sidebar column next page.

Breakfast with Santa at the June Lake Community Center. Sponsored by the June Lake Women’s Club. Time: 8:30-10:30 a.m. Cost: Kids are free, adults $5. Sponsor: Owens Valley Paiute Shoshone Cultural Center Holiday Party. Time: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Native themed ornament contest at 10 a.m. Ugly sweater contest at 2 p.m. Music, food, raffle, crafts, and a visit from Santa. Location: 2300 West Line St., Bishop. Info: 760.875.3584. Historian Arthur A. Hansen Discusses his new book “Barbed Voices” about Manzanar. Location: Manzanar Historic Site nine miles south of Independence. Tuesday: 1 p.m. Info: 760.878.2194.

Meet Santa @ High Country Lumber. Enjoy crafts, bake sale, product sales, deals, music. Time: 5-8 p.m. Tree and bake sales benefit Sierra Roller Hockey League. Location: the Bishop store, 444 S. Main St.

A celebration of the late artist Lorna Yarbro. Location: The Imagination Lab, 621 W. Line St., Bishop. More info: see sidebar column next page.


14th Annual International Fruitcake Festival. Time: 6 p.m. start. Location: American Legion Hall, 201 S. Edwards St., Independence. More info: see article p. 10 and sidebar column next page.

**Free holiday Chamber program**

On Friday, December 14, the Eastern Sierra Chamber Orchestra and Chamber Music Unbound’s music students perform a free program of classical and holiday favorites at St. Joseph’s Church in Mammoth Lakes.

The program will feature music by Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Felix Mendelssohn. The program will repeat in Bishop at Cerro Coso College at 4 p.m. Sunday.

Soloists will include Alexis Molina, violin, Liam Bassiller, violin, Ari Schuldt, piano, Marissa Pomfret, violin; John Wehausen, oboe; Carolyn Tiernan, clarinet; Stephen Thiroux, bassoon; Mike Hammers, horn.

Showtime: 7 p.m.

**Fruitcake Festival**

The 14th Annual Fruitcake Festival takes place on Saturday, December 15 at the American Legion Hall in Independence. This year’s theme is a ‘When You Wish Upon A Fruitcake.’

The evening begins at 6 p.m. with the festival convocation by way of clang of flatware and the introduction of distinguished guests.

There will be egg nog and dancing. Fruitcake and costumes will be judged and prizes awarded. The fourteen year-old ‘Archival Civil Defense’ fruitcake will be unearthed and tasted. It is said that fruitcake improves with age.

The event is free. Price of admission is your own fruitcake or egg nog, spiked or not.

More Info: Violette Cerise, 760.878.8084 or nancymas@qnet.com.

**Barefoot in the Park**


Synopsis: “Paul and Corie Bratter are newlyweds in every sense of the word. After a six day honeymoon, they get a surprise visit from Corie’s loopy word. After a six day honeymoon, they get a surprise visit from Corie’s loopy mother and decide to play matchmaker during a dinner with their neighbor-in-the-attic Velasco, where everything that can go wrong, does.”

Tickets online at edisontheatre.org for $20/adult, $18/senior and student, $10/child. At door for $22.

Showtimes: Thurs.-Sat. 7 p.m., Sun. 4 p.m. Location: 100 College Pkwy., Mammoth. Mimmo Info: edisontheatre.org

**ICA Holiday Craft Fair**

Get holiday gifts at the Inyo Council for the Arts Holiday craft fairs the next two Saturdays (15, 22). The fair runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location: 1050 S. Richards St, Independence.

**AT THE MOVIES**

**Minaret Cinemas**


Instant Family (PG-13): Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne become foster parents. Mayhem ensues.

*Mary Poppins Returns starts Wednesday, Dec. 19 For movie times, call 760.934.3113 or visit mammothlakesmovies.com.

**TOWN STUFF**

**Sunday, December 16/ Big Pine Elders Bazaar:** A fundraiser for the Paiute Palace of the Owens Valley. Baked goods, art, food and raffles. Time: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Location: 1050 S. Richards St, Big Pine. $20/table for vendors. Info: 760.263.4008

**Poetry Out Loud Mono County Championship:** Rehearsal competition for high school students. Time: 4 p.m. Location: Edison Theatre, 100 College Pkwy., Mammoth Lakes. Free admission. Info: 760.873.3608

**Tuesday, December 18/ Mono County Board of Supervisors meets:** Time: 9 a.m. Location: Suite Z, Minaret Mall, Mammoth Lakes.

**Inyo County Board of Supervisors meets:** Time: 10 a.m. Location: County Administrative Center, 224 N Edwards St, Independence.

Bishop High Varsity Boys and Girls basketball hosts California City. Girls at 56 p.m. Boys at 7:30. Location: 301 N. Fowler St.

**Wednesday, December 19/ June Lake Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meets:** Time: 11 a.m. Location: June Lake Community Center.

**MHSA Annual Update and Public hearing.** Snacks provided. Time: 5 p.m. Location: Sierra Wellness Center, 2nd floor of the Sierra Center Mall, Mammoth.

**Mammoth Boys and Girls basketball host Trona.** Girls at 5 p.m. Boys at 6:30.

**March 20:**

**ICA Shopping Day**

Spellbinder Books and ICARE invite you to the 19th Annual ICARE Shopping Day on Saturday, December 15. Purchase a $5 ICARE Donation Ticket at the store from 10 am to 5 pm and receive 20% off a wonderful selection of books, calendars, greeting cards and assorted gifts. There will also be a drawing for prizes. Your $5 donation goes directly to ICARE and 100% of the proceeds go directly to ICARE’s Stitch Fund, which provides veterinary care for ill or injured “special needs” Inyo County Shelter cats and dogs.

Spellbinder Books is located at 124 South Main Street in Bishop. If you have questions about this event, please call Lynee at 760.873.4111.

**Lorna Yarbo Art Sale**

The late Lorna Yarbo’s work will be on display at the Imagination Lab in Bishop on Saturday, December 15. Lorna passed in 2001, but over 60 of her paintings, including watercolors, acrylics, collages and mixed media will be available through silent auction. 10% of all sales/donations will be donated to Wildcare Eastern Sierra and additional 10% to ICARE. The silent auction starts at 8 p.m. Preview the work and place early bids at the Imagination Lab on Friday from 5-8 p.m. or by appointment 760.872.2446.

**Stuff-A-Bus**

On Friday, December 14 from noon to 6 p.m., Footloose Sports hosts a stuff-a-bus and tree lighting. Bring a toy, gift or canned food item and help stuff a bus. Proceeds benefit Wild Iris, IMACA and Mammoth Unified School District. There will be hot cocoa, Santa and Wozniak arrive at 4 p.m. The tree lighting takes place at 5 p.m.

Info: Caitlin, CRea@wild-iris.org.

**Crawl For A Cause**

On Saturday, December 22, booze crawlers at the inaugural Crawl For A Cause. The event is sponsored by The Town of Mammoth Lakes, Jameson Irish Whiskey, Sauza Horritos Tequila and among others, Mammoth Taxi (760.934.8294).

It’s a Christmas-themed bar crawl with four locations. At Kitchen 53 & Cocktails down a Jameson whiskey tour, At Lakanuki, drink a Sauza Siesta. Clocktower offers a Jameson mule and Gomez serves a Sauza Cadillac Margarita. Draft beer may be substituted upon request.

The crawl lasts from 2-8 p.m. Tix are $35/person. That’ll get you a Santa hat, a pull tab wristband and the aforementioned free house cocktails. Tix and info: mhsoobusters.org.
**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Notice of Right to Claim**

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO CLAIM EXCESS PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF TAX-DEFAULTED PROPERTY

Made pursuant to Sections 4670, Revenue and Taxation Code

Excess proceeds have resulted from the sale of real estate located at 200 Bryant Street, Bridgeport, Mono County, California, as described in Section 4670, Revenue and Taxation Code. Parties of interest, as defined by California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 4670, are entitled to claim the excess proceeds.

All persons must file in writing and must contain a sufficient amount of information and proof to establish a claimant’s right to all or any part of the excess proceeds. A copy filed with the county more than one year after recordation of the tax sale referred to in this advertisement is valid for filing at the county assessor’s office. A copy of the complete text of the Ordinance is posted at the Town Clerk’s office.

For your convenience, claim forms and information regarding filing procedures may be obtained at the Mono County Tax Collector’s Office, 25 Bryant Street, Bridgeport, CA 93517, or by calling (760) 952-5480 between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

I certify or (declare), under penalty of perjury, that the party the real party in interest and that there are no other parties interested in the property described in the above. I file this claim in accordance with the provisions of Revenue and Taxation Code Section 4675.

Dated: November 11, 2018

JAMIE GRAY, Town Clerk
Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, and/or a copy may be obtained from the office of the Town Clerk at a nominal charge.

**Notice of Public Hearing**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on Wednesday, December 5, 2018, beginning at 8:00 p.m. and continuing until finished, at Town Council Chambers, Suite Z within the Minaret Village Shopping Center, Mammoth Lakes, California, the Town of Mammoth Lakes Town Council will hear the following:

A public hearing to discuss the close-out of the Community Development Block Grant (14-CDBG-9903) for the Minaret Village Shopping Center, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, California. The published staff report will include a report summarizing the expenditures and accomplishments of the grant activities. The purpose of this public hearing is to give interested persons an opportunity to make their comments known regarding the grant.

All persons having an interest in the proposed item may appear before the Town Council either in person or by representation. All persons having an interest in the proposed item may appear before the Town Council either in person or by representation. All persons having an interest in the proposed item may appear before the Town Council either in person or by representation. All persons having an interest in the proposed item may appear before the Town Council either in person or by representation. All persons having an interest in the proposed item may appear before the Town Council either in person or by representation.

**Notice of Ordinance**

Notice is hereby given that on December 5, 2018, the Town Council introduced an Ordinance entitled:

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ENACTING ARTICLE II OF THE MAMMOTH LAKES MUNICIPAL CODE.**

A copy of the complete text of the Ordinance is posted at the Town Council Chambers, Suite Z, within the Minaret Village Shopping Center, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, and/or a copy may be obtained from the office of the Town Clerk at a nominal charge.

Dated: December 7, 2018

JAMIE GRAY, Town Clerk

**Fictitious Business Name Statement**

The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

**Function Clinic Healing Center**

Jennie Walker MD Inc.
P.O. Box 2441
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on December 11, 2018. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on December 11, 2018.

File Number 18-200
2018-0210 (12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5)

**Fictitious Business Name Statement**

The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

**Clean Queens**

Tracie L. White
24 Tyrol Lane, P.O. Box 2414
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on December 11, 2018. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on December 11, 2018.

File Number 18-200
2018-0210 (12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5)

**Statement of Abandonment**

Of Use of Fictitious Business Name Statement

Maid in Mammoth

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

Holly Orr
253 Sierra Manor Dr., P.O. Box 850
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant ceased to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on March 30, 2018.

2018-0207 (12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5)

**Fictitious Business Name Statement**

The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

**Elite Sports and Therapy Consulting, Inc.**

Julian Marx
1208 Majestic Pines Dr., P.O. Box 5068
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on December 10, 2018.

File Number 18-0199
2018-0219 (12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5)

**Fictitious Business Name Statement**

The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

**Jennie Walker MD Inc.**

1208 Majestic Pines Dr., P.O. Box 5068
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on December 10, 2018.

File Number 18-0199
2018-0219 (12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5)

**Fictitious Business Name Statement**

The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

**California Healthcare Initiative Project**

Julian Marx
574 Sierra Springs Dr.
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name listed herein.

**SAR AWARDS**

Press Release

Mono County Search and Rescue recently held its annual awards dinner. S & R’s highest honor, Lifetime Member, is rarely conferred - but this year, Barry Beck got the nod. The award is given to a Rescue Member who has made unusual, faithful, and regular contributions to the Team and may to the welfare of victims over a significant number of years. Beck has served the Team very actively for 14 years. Records show that he has participated in 230 search and rescue missions, 307 trainings, and 243 meetings, for a total of 780 Team events. Beck currently serves as the Team President. He was praised for his versatility and dependability and has consistently been eager to accept difficult field assignments in any weather.

The Team’s annual goal for achievement is the Pete Schoener Rescue Member of the Year award.
GROCERY OUTLET(S) TO OPEN NEXT MONTH
Mammoth, Bishop stores target Jan. 26 grand opening date
By Maddux

Bargain hunters, look forward to Grocery Outlet openings in both Bishop and Mammoth in January.

Bishop’s Grocery Outlet (which will be located across the street from Wye Road Feed and Supply and just down the road from Bishop Ford) held a job fair in Bishop on Dec. 3-4. Bishop store owners Dennis and Sarah Freundt are looking to hire between 35-45 employees before the opening date.

If potential job seekers missed the two-day fair, there is still a chance to catch a second fair on December 19 and 20 at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Bishop. These interviews will be by appointment only.

The Applicants

Chalfant resident Amy Shelton Saladin, 58, is seeking work as a cashier. Previously she was a seasonal worker for Chalfant Big Trees Nursery. Saladin found out about the job fair online through indeed.com, she said.

When Saladin lived in Portland, Oregon she shopped at a Grocery Outlet. “My daughter and I affectionately call it the “Gross-Out,”’ she said. She noted the different and “odd” items available at Grocery Outlets.

Big Pine resident, Giselle Jiron, 45, is also looking for work. Jiron has shopped at a Grocery Outlet before, in Southern California. She likes that they sell in bulk. “[I] look forward to the opportunities, a Grocery Outlet will bring to the community,” she said.

Bishop resident, Matthew Dunaway, 57, currently works at El Pollo Loco and is applying for a position in replenishment and stocking. Dunaway has never shopped at a Grocery Outlet.

The Owners

Dennis Freundt lives with his wife Sarah in Clovis, California. They have owned a Grocery Outlet in Fresno for about a year and are selling it to move to Bishop.

“Our last day of ownership is December 14,” Dennis said. Each Grocery Outlet “is independently owned and operated, there are different rules and regulations and franchises,” he said.

According to groceryoutlet.com, the Grocery Outlet was founded “in 1946, [by] Jim Read [who] started selling military surplus for deep discounts.” Two generations later, the stores are still run by the Read family. There are over 300 independently operated franchises in California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Dennis and Sarah fell in love with Bishop and said they “cried and begged” to get the store.

The Store

Grocery Outlets carry a full selection of bulk and healthier items. In addition to the Bishop and Chalfant locations, it is expected that the Bishop grocery outlet will also carry a full selection of bulk and healthier items.
of produce, fresh meats, dry goods, health and beauty products, general merchandise, and organic specialty and healthy products.

"[These] are specialty items that are vitamins or organic products." She added, "The organic business is one of the fastest growing businesses at Grocery Outlet right now."

All of the brands that are carried at a Grocery Outlet are name brands. "There [are] no grocery outlet brands," Dennis said. Grocery Outlet sets the pricing and "we get the prices because our buyers [are experts] at buying what is called ‘opportunistically,’" he said.

Their buyers go after the items that other grocers eschew. For example, if a product has stopped being produced or packaging has changed, Grocery Outlet wants it.

"So if they’re changing the box on our product, we will go in and buy it. Because the major grocery stores will not want to buy it anymore, so we’ll buy it and we buy it at pennies on the dollar," Dennis said.

They also source products through overruns.

"If they make too much of something, they’ll do an ad or promo, and then Vons or whatever the grocery store will not sell it all, so we’ll go in and buy it. Basically, it’s an avenue for them to relieve themselves of the product and still make money. That’s how we get the majority of our pricing," Dennis said.

"We also have a good assortment of what we call ‘made-to-order,’ where we’ll go to a major manufacturer and ask them to make it specifically for Grocery Outlet and it will be under their brand name," Dennis said.

For customers worried about expired food, Dennis said that "some of the items are close to the expiration dates, but our business model allows us to sell them at a discounted price because the manufacturer is selling it to us at a discounted price. So, some of the items will have 3-month to 6-month shelf life, instead of 6-month to a year, and naturally the closer you get to the best buy date we’ll mark them down appropriately." Both Dennis and Sarah clarified that Grocery Outlet removes items when the ‘best-buy’ date has passed.

Dennis praised the stores’ "treasure hunt" attitude.

"You’re not always going to get the same item every day, you’re always going to get great values, you’re going to get great brand names and the opportunity to purchase things at extremely great values," he said.

Sarah added, "We get new flavors and new products every week [and] not the same old thing every time."

"People come in for one thing and leave with thirty. We still do it and we work there," they said.

Here is Dennis’s pitch: said that "Shop us first! We’re not always going to have the exact brand in that people want to buy. So, bring your shopping list to the store with the 50 or 60 items you want to buy? Get all your great deals and bargains from us and then whatever the specific brand or item you need to get from another supermarket, then go shop there!"

Both Outlets are scheduled to open on January 24, with "official" grand openings on January 26.

During Bishop’s grand opening, Sarah said there will be a wheel-a-bargain, where customers can spin the wheel, and they will also be giving away grocery bags and gift cards.

Mammoth’s Grocery Outlet is located across from Rite Aid on Old Mammoth Road.

Owner/Operator Bobby McGhee said that construction has gone well, but he is still in the process of hiring employees.

"Everybody is hiring right now, so hiring is a bit of a challenge," he said. "We are conducting interviews everyday." McGhee’s goal: to bring affordable groceries to Mammoth Lakes, with a focus on natural, organic, specialty, and healthy foods.

"Our model saves people 40-70% off of traditional grocery stores," McGhee said.

McGhee is excited about the fact that all Grocery Outlet stores are owned by people who live in the community.

"We [McGhee and his family] will be on the floor, in the store working every day."
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