EMBRACE THE “SUCK”
A visit to the Mountain Warfare Training Center
By Page

The Sierra Nevada can be an intimidating place to settle. The combination of altitude, isolation, and extreme weather remove any possibility that it might be easy, creating an environment that for many is entirely undesirable.

Unless the people in question are Marines.

Where others might see a difficult situation, the Marine Corps sees a golden opportunity, which is precisely why the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC) is located here on the Eastside, in the mountains between Bridgeport and Walker.

We want our Marines to get pounded by inclement weather,” Colonel Kevin Hutchins, Commanding Officer at MCMWTC, told a group of community leaders assembled in the training center’s auditorium on Wednesday morning.

To put it another way: “We’ve created an island of isolation where we can torture Marines without the scrutiny of the public,” Col. Hutchinson explained, drawing a laugh from the civilians and Marines in the auditorium.

The civilian group’s visit to the base is one of two times that the Mountain Warfare Training Center welcomes visitors during the year. All those invited to visit on Wednesday have established relationships with the Training Center whether it be through veterans groups, donations, or volunteer work.

After the battle of Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War, during which the Marine Corps sustained more than 7,000 non-battle casualties as a result of cold weather, there was a desperate need to incorporate mountain training into the usage of smoke grenades.

Inyo County hosted two scoping meetings for Bishop Airport
By Hite

Inyo County, Clint Quilter, told the Sheet that improvements to date started with an FAA airport improvement program (AIP) grant to do multiple repair/rehabilitation projects.

Such projects are typically 90% funded by the feds.

Then the Airport improved it’s diagonal runway with money from the Infrastructure Stimulus Project totaling $7.8 million. The Fed paid all of this and Bishop’s was one of two California airports, the other being Santa Rosa, to receive money from this program.

Last week, Inyo County hosted scoping meetings which were, for the most part uneventful. However, certain public comments sparked questions, with Brent Truax, the Managing Director at the Sierra Nevada Resort who served eight years on the board of MLT (Mammoth Lakes Tourism) asking the airport representatives if the timeline for the opening was actually reasonable.

Truax told the Sheet, “The business ramifications (of a deadline not reached) could come back on the other side.” Truax noted that environmental studies (NEPA/CEQA) typically take an average of 50 months to complete. Obviously, if there are no complications with the preliminary environmental assessment, this timeline is way shorter.

Clint Quilter told the Sheet Inyo County wasn’t looking to give itself an extra cushion just to make sure they would meet a deadline. Quilter said he’s working closely with the FAA and all parties believe October is viable as a tentative opening date.
ROUND TWO

If you talk to folks about the Ikon Pass and its blackout dates, you’ll certainly attract a wide range of opinion.

The second series of this season’s pass blackout dates occurred over Martin Luther King weekend.

For hotels, reports Owen Page, business was good; Sierra Nevada Resort, Alpenhof, and the Village Lodge all reported being sold-out on the weekend in question. “We were slammed at the front desk,” said Louie Allen at the Village Lodge.

Robert Schaubmayer, owner of Alpenhof and Petra’s, said that the hotel was booked through the weekend but noted some “oddball nights” between Clocktower and Petra’s where business was solid but nothing extraordinary.

Schaubmayer noticed a tangible difference between MLK weekend and the following weekend, January 25-27, estimating a 35% increase in the crowd at Petra’s and Clocktower from one weekend to the next.

Alexis Rausec at Stellar Brew also commented on the difference between the two weekends, noting that Stellar Brew was slow until the Monday after the blackout weekend while the following weekend was substantially busier. Rausec also explained that the rush hadn’t been expected, which can create resource issues if demand outstrips supplies.

On the retail side, “It wasn’t the busiest MLK weekend we’ve had,” said Suzanne Strunk at Kittredge Sports. “This past weekend was way busier.” Strunk attributed the slow pace to many IKON holders already having their own gear; beginner/casual skiers may not yet have a need to purchase any gear.

And “people are counting their pennies,” said Strunk, referencing pricing changes at Mammoth as another possible deterrent.

According to Lara Kaylor at Mammoth Lakes Tourism, the occupancy rate in Mammoth Lakes for MLK weekend was 76%, with the highest rates occurring on Saturday and Sunday nights.

“We’ve heard from businesses that it’s still really steady business coming in,” said Kaylor. Kaylor also reported that inbound flights to Mammoth Yosemite during MLK weekend were between 54%-63% full while outbound flights were between 61%-71% full. The Denver service was only 31% full for inbound flights and 45% full for outbound flights. United was forced to cancel all flights on January 16 due to inclement weather.

“Blackout dates are helping level it out so [businesses] are not getting crushed and employees aren’t being wiped out,” Kaylor told the Sheet.

Joani Lynch, Mammoth Mountain’s V.P. of Marketing and Sales, elaborated on the “leveling” theme in a phone conversation Thursday. She said if you look at the three-week period bookending MLK weekend, you’ll see that the total numbers are about even, and that in terms of total skier visits, Mammoth is running ahead of last year.

But because of the business being dispersed, you don’t have that crush of people at any one time.

Mammoth Lakes Tourism Executive Director John Urda also cited the numbers. He said December TOT revenue came in at $116,000 ahead of last year and that TBDI revenue categories (retail, restaurant, TOT) were up numbers.

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Mammoth Lakes Tourism Executive Director John Urda also cited the numbers. He said December TOT revenue came in at $116,000 ahead of last year and that TBDI revenue categories (retail, restaurant, TOT) were up across the board.

Matt Hammer of Black Velvet Coffee thinks the blackout date policy actually helps his business, because he can only serve so many people at a time and doesn’t really have the capacity or labor to provide good customer service when it’s completely packed.

Others in the food and beverage business are not so sanguine.

One sent a long text to me which stated, “The previous article you wrote about the blackout dates ... did not reflect the real story of how detrimental Mammoth’s business practices are for local business ... local vendors have confirmed this is the worst winter we’ve had in more than a decade.”

This person cited Mammoth’s day ski pass rates and food prices as crippling and causing people to stay away.

And yet, the numbers from Lynch and Urda don’t reflect that.

Perhaps - and this is guesswork - when you have such a disruption in the business model, it creates a recalibration, and maybe even a different set of winners.

Looking forward, there’s one final series of blackout dates to brace over President’s weekend in mid-February. It is interesting that Mammoth just sent out a marketing blast offering two days skiing over President’s Weekend for $199. That’s a clear signal that they’re still looking for the magic formula. If everything were roses, they wouldn’t be discounting President’s Weekend.

Further research required.

As for me, I skied three days of powder at Mt. Bachelor outside Bend, Oregon last weekend. And that three-out-of-five ticket cost me $264, or $88/day.

And the salesperson at the ticket window told me I could have bought that same three-out-of-five ticket preseason for $150.

And the beers at the lodge were “only” seven bucks.

Here’s a fun fact for you. Did you realize that Mammoth’s Airport Engineer/Consultant Reinard W. Brandley is 96 years old? And that in the cost breakdowns, his time is charged at $300/hour?

My guess is that it used to be $450/hour but they had to discount it on account of the nap.

I know what you’re thinking. Ageist jerk. But when you have a set-up like that, you’ve got to convert it into something ...

PEOPLE DOWNHILL HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY

SHOW COURTESY 
TO OTHERS

It is your responsibility to avoid people downhill from you. Be prepared for sudden changes in their speed or direction. Show courtesy by shouting out what side you are passing them on.

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The following letter was sent to Northern Inyo Hospital CEO Kevin Flanagan concerning NIH’s most recent physician departure.

Stuart Big

Hello Dr. Flanagan,

I want to write you a quick note regarding Dr. [Stuart] Souders’ departure from NIH.

I feel it is important to recognize Dr. Souders for his contributions to our community, patients, staff and most of all his commitment to quality patient care.

Dr. Souders arrived at NIH in the spring of 2009 as a locum tenens and has now been part of the NIH team for over ten years.

Upon his arrival, he immediately began improving our level of patient care by educating the mammography technologists on improved positioning techniques. He sent us to conferences and ensured we remained current in the world of breast imaging.

With support from administration, Dr. Souders had Louise Miller, a well-known mammography technologist and educator come to NIH to teach us optimal positioning techniques on site. We have had many state inspectors comment in disbelief regarding the fact that he calls each patient personally regarding their biopsy results. Dr. Souders brings in books for patients who have recently been diagnosed with breast cancer to help empower them as they begin an overwhelming journey.

He has even made personal stops to deliver books on his way back home to patients who live in Independence and Lone Pine. On more occasions than I can count, Dr. Souders has either stayed late or added additional days of work to perform biopsies for patients who were particularly anxious or lived out of the area.

As part of his commitment to our staff, he has invested an enormous amount of time in personally educating the technologists with whom he works. He always emphasizes a team mentality, which enables us to question one another and as a result, we have grown together toward a common passion for quality patient care. Any critiques or suggestions from Dr. Souders are always met with attention because it is always honest and his intentions are to improve patient outcomes. He encourages us to challenge him, in the process making one another better and instilling confidence in his technologists.

It is valuable for patients to observe a technologist who is confident and knowledgeable in their work and serves as a mechanism for increased patient satisfaction.

Dr. Souders is an advocate for our patients and insists we have the best imaging equipment available; as a result we have automated breast ultrasound, 3D mammography and breast MRI. We perform biopsies that are done under MRI, ultrasound and x-ray guidance via our stereotactic machine. We are able to perform wire localizations, a procedure necessary for patients who are undergoing a lumpectomy as well as sentinel node exams under nuclear medicine to determine if breast cancer has metastasized to the lymph nodes.

From the beginning, Dr. Souders has been persistent about hiring a patient navigator, a role designed to help patients get the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding their health care.

When Dr. Harness came aboard at the recommendation of Dr. Souders, the position of a navigator was presented to administration, gained approval and has served as a resource for patients not only where breast cancer is concerned but for all patients hospital-wide. The addition of Dr. Harness, an oncoplastic breast surgeon and Rosie Graves, our patient navigator has been essential to our growing breast imaging program and Dr. Souders served as the catalyst for both.

To be honest, as a technologist I was less than thrilled when my director asked years ago if I would be willing to obtain a mammography license. I did so, only because it was asked of me. Because of Dr. Souders, I grew to love mammography and now have an understanding of how important it truly is.

One in eight women are diagnosed with breast cancer and it completely changes their lives forever. I’ve worked with many different doctors during my fourteen years at NIH and none have been so committed to improving services. Dr. Souders’ reputation as a trusted physician has allowed our patients to receive care with the greatest confidence and remain local for much of their treatment and follow-up care.

I cannot express enough gratitude for all he has done for our hospital, community and most of all his dedication to our patients. It is my hope that after Dr. Souders leaves, our current radiology-group will continue the mammography practice with the same standard of excellence, and services that have been integrated will continue to be provided to the community.

Sincerely,

Katie Galvin

The following letter was submitted to Inyo Forest Supervisor Tammy Randall-Parker regarding proposed rule changes on the John Muir Trail.

No Exit

Dear Tammy:

As I am sure you are aware, there is a lot of angst and confusion concerning the wording changes on the fs.usda.gov website, specifically with respect to JMT (John Muir Trail) hiking rules. Taken

see LETTERS, page 4
literally, the wording would indicate that JMT hikers must hike the ~220 miles of trail without exiting the wilderness for a resupply unless they obtain a new permit for each resupply exit. I’m certain that this is not the intent of the wording. Rather than speculate, I’d appreciate an official, non-ambiguous definition.

Before writing this letter, I spent a significant amount of time reading through the Record of Decision (ROD) that you signed on October 21, 2019, as well as the associated EIP and Land Management Plan. I could find no connection between those documents and the changes that are indicated on the website. However, I did find documentation that recognizes the economic importance of PCT (Pacific Crest Trail) hiker resupply activities on the businesses and communities of the Eastern Sierra (pages 555-556 of the EIP). Since the JMT and PCT are coincident from Crabtree Meadows to Red’s Meadow, it is reasonable to extend their economic relationship to JMT hikers.

A high percentage of our summer customer base is PCT and JMT hikers. As currently worded, the website threat is to PCT and JMT hikers. However, I did find documentation that recognizes the economic importance of PCT (Pacific Crest Trail) hiker resupply activities on the businesses and communities of the Eastern Sierra (pages 555-556 of the EIP). Since the JMT and PCT are coincident from Crabtree Meadows to Red’s Meadow, it is reasonable to extend their economic relationship to JMT hikers.

Whether it was meant to or not, the take-away from the Saturday, January 18 front page story in the Sheet, “Buyer Beware” was: Due to past fires here and catastrophic fires in California, don’t even think about buying, selling, or living in Swall Meadows because you won’t be able to afford or even get home insurance. Every community in the Eastern Sierra is categorized in a WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) which is a zone of transition between wildland and human development, i.e., where houses and wildland vegetation intermingle. All communities in a WUI are at risk of catastrophic wildfire of which we in California are acutely aware.

Swall Meadows does as much, if not more, that most communities to mitigate this risk. The first fire hydrant in Swall Meadows was installed in 1984 and there are currently 24 functioning hydrants. Where there aren’t hydrants (upper Swall), there are 21 underground or surface water storage tanks each with a capacity of 2500 gallons. Water is available to fight fires on every street in the community. The Wheeler Crest Fire Protection District (WCFPPD), located in the center of the neighborhood, operates three engines and a water tender with a hold capacity of 3,000 gallons. There are 18 experienced members of the department and it is led by a chief who has over 30 years of firefighting experience. Every few years the department is tested and receives an ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating which insurance companies use to aid them in determining property insurance costs. The worst rating that can be received is a 10, with a 1 being the best. WCFPPD’s rating is a 3, the same as Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District.

Furthermore, Swall Meadows has Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council (WCF-SC) that has been in existence for over 10 years. It has successfully applied for and managed Cal Fire grant funds in excess of $350,000 for the sole purpose of making Swall Meadows more fire safe. Equipment purchases and such campaigns as chipper days, dead tree removal, fuel break maintenance, and roadside clearance are the norm. These projects are in addition to the Cal Fire and Inyo National Forest ongoing fuel reduction and fuel break maintenance activities.

Successful WCFSF fundraisers have enabled the purchase of to-code reflective address signs for every home in the neighborhood, funded chipper days, produced 5 Fact Sheets (Emergency Water Storage, Fire-wise Weed Management, Address Markers & Street Signs, Outdoor Burning, Emergency Evacuation Procedures), and conducted numerous workshops (Herbicide Control, Defensible Space, and Weed Walks). The Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council and the people who live here have set the bar high as an example of how a community can proactively and greatly improve its chances of weathering a catastrophic wildfire.

In the past two years 2 homes have been sold/purchased, and 1 vacant lot has been sold/purchased. Since the Round Fire of five years ago, 20+ homes have been rebuilt and 4 new homes have been built. Two homes are currently under contract to be sold. Swall Meadow is a wonderful place to live. To the best of our ability, every member of this community works hard and contributes to making it as fire safe as can be.

Douglas Hundley
Mt. Williamson Motel

Tough to Swall-ow

Dear Editor,

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Donald and Michael Day
Swall Meadows

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**LOCAL NEWS**

**SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH**

By Hite

The Mono County Behavioral Health Department (MCBH) will host two events titled “Suicide Awareness for Everyone: A Community Healing.” The first one is in English on Wednesday, February 5, and the second is in Spanish on Thursday, February 6. Both presentations will be at the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center Auditorium at 6 p.m.

The impetus, according to Robin Roberts, Director of MCBH, is that “We’ve had 4-5 suicides since last November. In addition, there have been two other deaths that were climbing related and a death from Hantavirus.” In a small community, deaths likely affect a larger percentage of the population and lead to a nearly town-wide grieving process, Roberts explained. “We mobilized and asked ourselves ‘can we do more?’” Roberts said. “So, last Friday (January 24), Ingrid Braun, Stacy Corless, and I decided to put something together.”

Roberts added, “We are also talking to other counties to find out what is working for them.”

One of the many goals of the events is to limit the stigma associated with mental health issues and different coping mechanisms. “It’s okay to not know what to do,” said Stacy Corless, District Five Supervisor and a member of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board. “We need to talk about reducing the stigma, and be able to talk about mental health.”

“Suicides can be contagious and we wanted to reach out to the community,” said Mono County Sheriff Ingrid Braun, also a member of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board. “The recent suicide spike is an anomaly according to Braun, “It is uncommon to have this many suicides in this time frame.” And Roberts agreed, noting, “We haven’t had this many suicides in such a short time since I’ve been here.” Roberts has been in Mono County for 12 years.

In 2016, National Geographic published an article titled, ‘Here’s why Ski Towns Are Seeing More Suicides’ which dove into the multitude of difficulties that mountain communities face. The gist of the article: it is psychologically difficult to live in places like the Eastern Sierra, no matter who you are.

Some of those difficulties include: decreased serotonin levels, the transient population and difficulty establishing meaningful relationships, high living costs, and the feeling of sadness in a naturally beautiful area. All can exacerbate underlying struggles.

Roberts was hesitant to trust all the science presented in the article but did say, “Those of us that live here full time have to work hard to develop friendships. You can find good relationships but many people move away.” Mountain towns attract people who enjoy being alone but being in a naturally beautiful area. All can exacerbate underlying struggles.

Roberts added, “ Everybody is welcome. Come and check out out. There is power in community healing. Group therapy can make people comfortable to come as they are.”

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**JAN 31 – FEB 1**

Land Rover U.S. Grand Prix
Mammoth Mountain

**JAN 31 – FEB 2**

4 Plays: 4 Days
Edison Theatre

**FEB 1**

Allan Bard Memorial 20K
Classic XC Race
Tamarack XC Ski Center

**FEB 2**

Woolly’s Saturday Parade
The Village at Mammoth

**FEB 4-9**

U.S. Revolution Tour
Mammoth Mountain

FOR INFORMATION, DETAILS & TICKETS:
visitMammoth.com/events

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**Age-adjusted U.S. suicide rate, 1981-2016**

The U.S. suicide rate. A comparison: Five suicides in the span of a year would give Mono County an age-adjusted Suicide rate of 35 suicides per 100,000 people.
Team 1 were tournament champions, competing from Inyo and Mono Counties in the 25th Annual Ken Baker Schools Basketball Program. It was a full day event hosted by the BUHS Girls Basketball program, with 12 different teams competing from Inyo and Mono Counties.

The Home Street Middle School Boys Team 1 were tournament champions, with Mammoth Middle School A Team coming in second. Big Pine was the champion of the B division and Home Street was named the champion of the C division. Other boys teams competing in this year’s tournament included Owens Valley, Lone Pine, and Big Pine. Girls teams from Home Street, Lone Pine, Big Pine, and Mammoth competed as well.

All-Tournament Team selections included: Ty Arcularius – Home Street, Emma Gonzales – Owens Valley, Matt Petroni – Mammoth, Kash Maurice – Home Street, Will Mairs – Big Pine, Frankie Ramirez – Mammoth, Richie Talavera – Home Street, Dev Bhakta – Lone Pine and this year’s tournament MVP from Home Street and C.J. Carrington from Big Pine. The girls All-Tournament selections included: Nicole Smythe – Mammoth, Miley Spratt – Big Pine, Bradee Momberg from Home Street, and Mia Casada – Lone Pine. The MVP for the girls was Baleigh Momberg from Bishop Union High School for the use of their facilities.

The plan to get more housing built is multi-pronged. Partner with public agencies like IMACA. Update zoning codes for mixed-use. And provide money via a revolving loan fund to incentivize the restoration of vacant properties.

Another initiative Griffiths is interested in is the creation of a Small Business Development Center to give not only a hand to start-ups, but to help existing businesses thrive.

"It's important with big boxes [like Kmart] going away to cultivate the mom-and-pops," said Griffiths.

The initiative will consist of a partnership between Cerro Cosa, the Small Business Administration, Sierra Business Council, the City of Bishop and Inyo County and will open an office as well as provide resources and training. If Griffiths is reelected, he might point out that his representation comes with the added benefit that he is active in CSAC (California State Association of Counties) and sits on the Executive Board. This gives Inyo County some exposure at the state level. As Griffiths observes, "Sacramento needs to recognize rural communities [in its decision-making] and not give us mandates we can’t possibly fulfill.”

Election Day is Tuesday, March 3. A profile of Griffiths’ challenger, Heather Lind will appear next week.
LONE PINE HOSTS INITIAL GATEWAY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP
By Maddux

More than 50 community members attended the first of six gateway workshops at the Lone Pine Statham Hall on January 16, with five more workshops to follow in the communities of Mammoth Lakes, Lee Vining, Walker, Bridgeport and Bishop.

The first hour of the workshop was to introduce the program and its goal, with the last two-hours devoted to addressing challenges and opportunities found in the Eastern Sierra—with the public offering input.

The overall purpose: To “look at the Eastern Sierra as a region and identifying our common interests that will benefit all of us,” said John Wentworth, Board President of Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA).

According to Chelsea Taylor of MLTPA, there are eight areas where partners (Alpine County, City of Bishop, Inyo County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, and the United States Forest Service) will aspire to cooperate:

- Permitting facilitation and cleanup (i.e. use permits, film permits, other agreements)
- Maintenance and staffing of visitor centers
- Existing “hard infrastructure” including bathrooms, pavement maintenance, water, sewer, other buildings
- Existing “soft infrastructure” including trail maintenance, signage, campground service
- New soft and hard infrastructure as described above
- New trails and facility planning and construction
- County town recreational infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and new projects; identification and work program development
- Project planning including environmental review

During the presentation, Taylor said the purpose of the workshops is to “gather community input about recreation programs and infrastructure that will inform sustainable recreation projects for this area and will also inform a sustainable recreation strategy for the Eastern Sierra region.”

Wentworth said initial money from Proposition 68 received by Mammoth Lakes ($618,000) was awarded because the partnership existed. The money will help fund projects and write grants. Several ideas expressed by the public within the individual groups of eight tables, included: education, water flow on the Owens, accessibility (inclusive), kiosk (facility, limiting, RV length), partnerships, shared value among users, overuse of trailheads, misuse/abuse of land by visitors, lack of infrastructure in high use areas, revise policy, waste (human and fishing line), recognize environmental cost/concerns related to tourism, manage social media information, capture over-tourism, outfitted facilities with the need to be renovated or decommissioned (campground parking).

As an example of how this would work, consider the Alabama Hills Stewardship Ranger Program. They envisioned potential partnerships with BLM, ESIA, and AHSG. Their idea is to have paid personnel with enforcement by providing a facility, education and self-funding programs. The facility would have a kiosk, compost toilet, picnic/shade area, interpretation and education, as well as signage. The education would include social media, interpretative and cultural information. The self-funding program would include restoration destination (vacation/tourist), use fees such as registration and shuttle service.

Future workshops will be held on March 26 in Mammoth Lakes (Southern Mono County), May 21 in Lee Vining (Central Mono County), July 16 in Walker (Northern Mono & Alpine counties), September 17 in Bridgeport (Central Mono County), and on November 19, the last workshop will be held in Bishop (Northern Inyo County).
By Page

On Friday, January 10, a small group gathered outside of the Mammoth Lakes Library. After a moment, the side door opened and Christopher Platt, Mono County library director, popped out and beckoned the group inside.

At 8 a.m., it was a librarian’s dream, completely silent throughout the building, and the group that Platt had ushered inside walked through, exchanging pleasantries with one another as they ascended the staircase and filed into a small room on the second floor, arranging themselves around the table within.

What shadowy cabal could be meeting at this early hour at a building not yet open to the public?

The answer: Mammoth Lakes Tourism’s special events allocation committee (cabal definition dependent upon one’s opinion).

Their goal: interview applicants to determine the distribution of $210,000 in funding for events in 2020.

The committee includes Caroline Casey (MLT special events director), Stu Brown (Parks and Recreation Director for the Town of Mammoth Lakes), John Morris (Director of Operations at Snowcreek), Mike Coco (Liberty Bar and Thai’d Up owner), Laurel Martin (Recreation Commissioner), and Talene Shahanian (Mammoth Hospital Foundation Manager).

Next week’s Mammoth Lakes Tourism board meeting on February 5 (1 p.m.) marks the announcement of these allocations, the conclusion of a process that began in early November. As part of that process, MLT asked each of 25 applicants to meet with members of the allocations committee for a thirty minute session aimed at answering any questions the committee might have prior to deciding allocations.

The total ask from applicants: $344,000.

Meaning: Many are inevitably going home with less than they bargained for.

Last year, MLT awarded $125,000 to 20 events in Mammoth Lakes.

A new feature this year involved assigning applications an overall point score influenced by criteria MLT established for prioritizing events, including time of year, marketing area, ticketing/upset options, and number of visitors.

Also new to the process: 25% of any allocation from special events funding must go to marketing, with a follow-up meeting after the event for a rundown of how things went.

In all, MLT conducted a total of 21 interviews spread across four days (some individuals had applied for more than one event). The Sheet sat in on 16 of those 21 meetings in an attempt to better understand the committee’s process and learn more about the events, old standards and newcomers, taking place in Mammoth Lakes in 2020.

There was a noticeable difference in interviews for first-time events as opposed to more familiar ones. For newly proposed events, members of the allocations committee mostly listened to applicants present on their events, asking mainly clarifying questions. More established events were more closely scrutinized by the committee, with most interviews beginning with a question from a committee member about results from the prior year or potential changes for the new year.

The method makes sense: older events have more data, and organizers, greater knowledge of what works and what doesn’t. Newer events simply haven’t had the chance to give it a go and learn from past experience.

Kevin Green, Mammoth Lakes Yoga Festival organizer, was asked about effective marketing channels right off the bat with further follow-up questions related to venue availability and event expansion.

Green answered that he was still sorting it out, as ideal venues such as Hayden Cabin weren’t available at the right time; he proposed potentially hosting a yoga session on the Snowcreek golf course as a possible solution.

By contrast, Dave Sheek, organizer for a gravel bike race titled Mammoth Tuff, walked the committee through a presentation he had prepared that included information about the industry, race course, permitting process, and potential economic impact. At the time of the meeting, Sheek was still waiting to receive permits for the race.

The only question came from Brown, who inquired about e-bike opportunities at Tuff. Sheek answered that it depends on road conditions/route.

For larger events, Casey offered to use newly rented technology called LiveGauge which uses a sensor that picks up on nearby cell phones and assigns them a trackable ID. It allows organizers the ability to see exact visitor metrics for their events as well as movement within the event area while keeping identities private. Casey explained that the technology’s primary use will be for tracking visitor metrics in The Village starting this June.

The Multi-Use Facility (MUF) or Community Recreation Center (CRC) depending upon your love of acronyms was pitched throughout the interview process as a possible venue for events.

In theory, the MUF won’t exist until summer 2021, so not much headway was made beyond proposing potential uses.

Mark Deeds, representing Mammoth Rocks and Taste of The Sierra, expressed reservations with the new point system.

“I noticed that the direction being sent down is to recognize events that have a ticket. I get it ... we can’t do that for Mammoth Rocks,” Deeds explained.

He grew frustrated with the committee at times, stating “I don’t want this group to think that we’re not exploring every option.”

Marianne O’Connor and Kendra Knight, applicants for Independence Days and Music N’ Moonshine, informed the committee that Jazz by the Creek wouldn’t be happening in 2020; according to O’Connor, “The District Ranger (Gordon Martin) does not feel that jazz has anything to do with the history of Hayden Cabin.”

“If it was folk music, he might go for it,” O’Connor said.

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**GRiffiths**

“Good for Bishop, Good for Inyo County”

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★ Improving Juvenile Justice & Foster Care

★ Bringing Commercial Air Service to Bishop

Supporting Small Business & Veteran Services

Developing Workforce Housing

★ Fairly Represents ALL Constituents

Paid for by the Committee to Re-Elect Jeff Griffiths 2020

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Restore 24/7 Coverage

Prevent Further Service Cuts

Expand Defensible Space Initiatives

Election day: March 3, 2020

Mammoth Lake Firefighters Need Your Vote

Vote YES on Measure F! Paid for by Friends of Measure F Mammoth Lakes
Marines' training regimen. When efforts to establish a mountain base at Big Bear and San Jacinto were insufficient, leadership turned its attention to the Sierra, focusing on the isolation and "utterly miserable" conditions that the mountains offered.

In 1951, the MCMWTC was established near Bridgeport to train replacement troops headed to Korea and has since become, in the words of Col. Hutchinson, "a national treasure."

"If you can fight here," said Col. Hutchinson, "you can fight and win anywhere."

At present, two battalions call the Training Center home, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines (3/8), and 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines (3/6), both based out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Getting to the camp at Grouse Meadow from the base at Pickel Meadow means a forty-minute trip on a snowcat covering 2,200 vertical feet; battalions training at MCMWTC make the trek on foot, carrying 75-100 pound packs and taking anywhere between two and a half to eighteen hours.

The community leaders' visit was timed to take in the battalions as they transitioned from the heated 15-person tents in the open at Grouse Meadow to much smaller four-person shelters dug into the snow, known as "Survival Night."

At Grouse Meadow, Hutchinson read an excerpt from Blood and Thunder by Hampton Sides, which chronicles the "conquest" of the American West. The passage Hutchinson chose centered on the trials that John C. Fremont's group of soldiers faced in the nearby mountains.

From the meadow, Hutchinson pointed out Lost Cannon Peak, where Fremont and company ditched a howitzer that they'd been lugging with them since the Midwest.

Hutchinson focused on the resilience demonstrated by Fremont's company in overcoming their perilous situation, a spirit that drives the training at MCMWTC.

After a brief tour of the camp at Grouse Meadow, with the opportunity to peer inside the fifteen-man tents and meet the 3/6 and 3/8 Marines, the civilian group cleared the snow road leading into camp to allow the battalions to march to a training session led by base instructors. In the coming weeks, they will play the role of opposing forces in training exercises.

Listening to the base's commanding officers describe the conditions at MCMWTC and seeing them firsthand begs an obvious question: Why put yourself through this snowy hell?

It takes a unique individual to thrive in these circumstances, someone who can grin and bear it, laugh at adversity, and embrace the "suck" of the situation. That combination forms the essence of the Marines training and working at MCMWTC, on full display Wednesday.

Col. Hutchinson became emotional describing the history of the Corps, his love for it, and his duty to preserving the Marine's military prowess and legacy; he, along with the others who spoke with and to the civilian group were never far from a smile or joke about the difficult conditions at the Training Center.

Throughout the visit, that dedication and humor were readily apparent.

Following lunch, the assembled civilians took in a demonstration of a Marine Corps fire team in action. At the signal of Master Sergeant Ricardo Villanueva, the four-man group broke from the trees in a diamond formation, and at another direction, turned as one and began firing and advancing on an objective to their right.

Watching the fire team in action reinforced an understanding of Marines' lethality; even in two to four feet of snow, they advanced as one, laying down cover fire for each other as they moved forward in sync. In a matter of about thirty seconds, the team covered the required distance, "one of the most intricate orchestrations of violence you will ever see," as Col. Hutchinson noted.

In the late afternoon light, 3/6 Marines could be seen digging in for Survival Night along the roadside as the snowcats returned to the base, a final reminder of the Training Center's goals before departure. A quick visit to the Legacy Hut and Px marked the end of the day.

The experience wasn't something that can be entirely understood from an outsider's perspective: much of the training and mentality at MCMWTF goes against what would be deemed natural by many. But that's the point, Col. Hutchinson repeatedly stressed the importance of teaching Marines to do unnatural things and, as one officer noted, "Marines aren't ordinary people."
Currently Mammoth Lakes Tourism subsidizes planes flying into Mammoth-Yosemite airport that don’t draw enough passengers with TBID dollars up to $1.5 million. Mammoth Mountain subsidizes anything above that.

The Executive Director of Mammoth Lakes Tourism, John Urdi, told the Sheet the subsidy in Bishop will be similar to the current structure.

“The core to it is the TBID which will be for people flying into Mammoth Lakes,” and the dollar amount will be a “similar cap to where we are now.”

Quilter reiterated this sentiment, “They (the flights) are going to require subsidies, but the largest portion of that will come from TBID (in Mammoth).”

TBID subsidies can cover tourism coming into Mammoth Lakes specifically. Locals flying home and tourists going to other places will not affect the subsidy amount.

For the tourists going other places, Urdi said, “We will conduct surveys down at the airport and find out the percentage of passengers coming to Mammoth.” Urdi used an example of a TBID cap of $1 million and said if 80% of the total passengers were tourists coming into Mammoth then it would be an $800,000 subsidy.

For now, the airport will be using passenger estimates from people who flew commercial into Mammoth-Yosemite. There should be a marginal shift in the percentage breakdown if the destination is Bishop. Quilter noted it wouldn’t be drastic but there might be more people going to a non-Mammoth destination, possibly more people going to Mt. Whitney portal or some other Eastern Sierra destination. The numbers should stay relatively similar.

So where does the subsidy come from if it is a tourist going somewhere that isn’t Mammoth Lakes? Quilter told the Sheet, “We have money budgeted in a variety of departments. Discretionary dollars are available, but we have to figure out who else is going to be contributing (to the subsidy).”

Inyo County is also talking with the City of Bishop but no money has been officially designated as part of a ‘commercial travel subsidy fund.’
ELECTION

NATURALLY INVESTED

Drew Phelps, Democrat for 26th Assembly District, comes to Inyo County this Saturday

By Maddux

On Saturday, February 1, Drew Phelps, 25, candidate for California’s 26th Assembly District will host three meet-and-greets with Inyo County residents. The first will be held at the Pupfish Café in Bishop at 9 a.m.; the second at noon at the Jill Kinmont Boothe School on Grandview Road. And the third at 3 p.m. at the Lone Pine Smokehouse in Lone Pine.

Phelps will speak “on a variety of everyday ‘bread and butter’ issues that affect us all—problems with water reliability, access to healthcare, and workforce training for quality jobs,” he said. At the same time, Phelps clarified his candidacy will offer Inyo County residents the chance to vote for someone “who will be a strong advocate on these issues by being more responsive and effective than our current Assembly member [Devin Mathis], who is absent in Inyo. Above all, I offer an opportunity to bring Inyo’s voice to Sacramento,” said Phelps.

Phelps’ previous visit to Inyo County was on December 1, 2019, when he met with the communities of Bishop, Big Pine, Independence and Lone Pine. This will be Phelps’ second, but far from last visit to Inyo County, he said via a phone list of opportunities. For example, when he visited and had events in December, only one or two folks had ever spoken to my opponent and, since being elected, he’s never held an event to hear the issues in Inyo,” said Phelps.

Phelps is a Democrat, who has also worked with Republicans, such as Assembly Minority Leader, Connie Conway and Former Senator Andy Vidak. The groups he wants to represent are not exactly specific, because he is “engaging with a lot of different folks, from a lot of different backgrounds [and] representing everybody, and making sure we all have a voice,” said Phelps.

Drew Phelps is a 4th generation Californian from Tulare, where he was born and raised. His grandfather became Mayor of Tulare in the 1950s, and Phelps’ candidacy follows in the family tradition of community service.

“We are naturally invested,” said Phelps. “I knocked on my first door for a city council candidate when I was 11 years old and have been interested ever since. I’ve always found service to be incredibly rewarding and, in running for office, I’m looking to put my policy experience to work in service of the people of our district,” said Phelps.

Tulare, by the way, is a mid-size town, surrounded by farmland with a regional population of 70,000. Phelps has worked for 3 years as a senior policy analyst for Granville Homes, a local homebuilder, where he also does work on land use. He has a B.A. in Political Studies from Pitzer College and a M.A. in American Politics from Claremont Graduate University.

His father is an 8th grade science teacher, and his mother is a dentist. Phelps added that his sister is currently finishing her senior year at Santa Clara University and is applying to law schools. Phelps keeps quite busy, but when he has free time, he is a big sports fan of Dodgers baseball and Lakers basketball. Phelps also grew up hiking in the Sequoia National Park and Kings Canyon, which is his “love to get out and enjoy some trails,” he said.

Phelps and members of his team visit Inyo County every few months and sometimes more than once a month, he said. “Attendees can expect a lively discussion with plenty of opportunity to ask questions,” said Phelps about Saturday’s meeting with citizens of Inyo County.
Mammoth High School Ski and Snowboard Team hosted its first CNISSF South 2 Division Qualifiers races this week. The team is robust, fielding 45 total athletes, and is looking to win the California/Nevada State Championship title for the fifth year in a row.

On January 30 and January 31, Mammoth Mountain played host to the first state qualifiers.

The way the qualifiers work is complicated. The three teams in the division each get three competitors in each type of race (giant slalom or slalom). Then the top nine from the people not already qualified will make it. Hypothetically one team could send up to 12 participants in one event if they had the nine best results not counting each team’s top three.

The way the top three and the top nine are determined is the best two results from any race. For example, Kendall Lach got a DNF and then she raced a 1:13.7 so now she has one qualifying score for state.

Speaking of Lach, she and Aidan LeFrancois were the girls and boys overall individual champions in California/Nevada. Lach, a senior, and LeFrancois, a junior, are looking to defend their individual titles this year.

Below are the top five results for the Giant Slalom for Ski and Snowboard:

**SKI RESULTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Time (2 runs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Isla Lackey</td>
<td>1:19.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Madison Jayne</td>
<td>1:20.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Keely Podosin</td>
<td>1:21.72</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Laurel Wright</td>
<td>1:22.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Kendall Speiler</td>
<td>1:24.4</td>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Time (2 runs)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Kendall Lach</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Isla Lackey</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Madison Jayne</td>
<td>1:16.13</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Laurel Wright</td>
<td>1:18.14</td>
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<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Keely Podosin</td>
<td>1:18.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Mitchell Parson</td>
<td>1:16.69</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Aidan LeFrancois</td>
<td>1:17.31</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Renay Wolfe</td>
<td>1:17.46</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>Spencer Reid</td>
<td>1:19.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Sean Walker</td>
<td>1:21.07</td>
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**BOYS RACE 1**

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Mitchell Parson</td>
<td>1:10.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Beny Wolfe</td>
<td>1:12.59</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Aidan LeFrancois</td>
<td>1:13.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Bodie McMillan</td>
<td>1:16.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Sean Walker</td>
<td>1:16.71</td>
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**BOYS RACE 2**

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<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Mitchell Parson</td>
<td>1:09.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Benny Wolfe</td>
<td>1:12.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Aidan LeFrancois</td>
<td>1:13.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Bodie McMillan</td>
<td>1:16.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Sean Walker</td>
<td>1:16.71</td>
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**SNOWBOARD RESULTS**

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<td>1</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Winter Walker</td>
<td>1:44.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Hannah Goodwin</td>
<td>1:50.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rim</td>
<td>Sophia Aberg</td>
<td>1:53.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rim</td>
<td>Sierra Lepour</td>
<td>1:56.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rim</td>
<td>Taryn Pilkenzon</td>
<td>1:58.15</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
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<th>Time (2 runs)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Winter Walker</td>
<td>1:41.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Hannah Goodwin</td>
<td>1:42.63</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>Kalei Moore</td>
<td>1:50.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rim</td>
<td>Sophia Condon</td>
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<td>Rim</td>
<td>Sophia Aberg</td>
<td>1:51.79</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>Caden Lanphere</td>
<td>1:33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>Zevin Crockett</td>
<td>1:35.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>Josh Aubrey</td>
<td>1:35.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>Thos del Giudice</td>
<td>1:36.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rim</td>
<td>Ethan Carlson</td>
<td>1:38.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above: Spencer Reid of Bishop. Reid finished in fourth place in the first race and sixth in the second.

Below left: Kendall Speiler, of Mammoth, cruises into a fifth and sixth place finish.

Below right: Ruby Walker skies her way into two eighth place finishes.

Bottom picture: Kendall Lach, the reigning girls individual ski champion, races for a DNF and then a first place finish.
On January 24, 2020, at approximately 2:46 p.m., 21-year old Hillary Duckey of Big Pine was driving eastbound on SR-168 just east of Death Valley Road in a 2008 Nissan Sentra. According to the California Highway patrol report, Duckey allowed the vehicle to drift off the roadway onto the south dirt shoulder, where the vehicle overturned multiple times. Personnel from the Big Pine Volunteer Fire Department, Inyo County Sheriff’s Department, Symon’s Ambulance, and Bishop CHP responded to the scene. Both Duckey and her passenger were transported to Northern Inyo Hospital for non-life threatening injuries. Following a DUI investigation, Hillary Ducky was arrested on suspicion of Felony DUI.

This collision is still under investigation by Bishop CHP.

Mammoth Lakes Men’s Recreational Hockey league hit the ice on Tuesday night with the June Lake Loopers (black) taking on the Moose-Knuckles (white). The Knuckles downed the Loopers 7-1 to remain in first place with 6 wins. The Loopers sit in second place with 4 wins. Top: Logan Georgeson carries the puck; Above: Pat Cosmano (white) battles Ryan March.
BARS & MUSIC

Happy Hour/
The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill.
Happy hour 3-6 p.m. 2/1 The Bellays, 2/2 Super bowl party More info: See ad p. 11

Austria Hof Happy Hour
4-6:30 p.m. Sun-Thurs/4-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour
Mon-Fri. Happy Hour from 4-6 p.m.

Morrison’s Happy Hour 5-6 p.m.
Monday through Thursday in the bar.
Mammoth Rock ‘N’ Bowl
Mon-Thurs 9:30 p.m. Thurs. DJ 10 p.m.

Clocktower Cellar Happy Hour: 4-7 p.m.
daily $6 dollar menu items, drink specials. More info: see ad p. 9

Petra’s happy hour. 5-7 p.m. Signature cocktails, special menu. More info: see ad p. 9

Roberto’s Happy Hour: 4-6 p.m. daily.
The Public House Local Mondays (all local beers $5 a pint).

Famous Slocums Happy Hour
Weekdays: 4-6 p.m. Saturday 4-5:30 p.m More info: See ad p. 5

T-Bar Social Club in June Lake.
Giovanni’s Happy Hour daily 4-6 p.m.
L.g. pizza & pitcher of beer – free wings.

Shelter Distilling Open 11am -11pm
Daily Happy Hour: 3-5 p.m. Sunday through Thursday/Half Off All Drinks

Bleu Handcrafted Foods Daily Happy Hour
5-6 p.m. $5 Beer, Wine and Small Plates.

Devils Creek Distillery tasting room
3-6 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Dive Bar Open daily Happy Hour
3-6 p.m.

Black Velvet Coffee happy hour 4-6.
Wine tastings on Wednesdays.

Rainiers daily happy hour 4-6 p.m.
All night happy hour on Thursday.

Bleu’s Taverna 4-6 p.m. Happy hour every day 4-6 p.m. with special menu at the bar.

Lakanuki happy hour 3-6 p.m. daily.
Mammoth Tavern Happy hour 4-5:30 p.m.
Half off draft beer, well drinks and wine. App specials

Mammoth Brewing/The Eatery
Super Bowl Party, Grand Prize-2, Four
BARS & MUSIC

Karaoke @ Lakanuki with host Jesse Steele.
Time: 9 p.m.

Monday, February 3/
Bowling n’ Beats @ Mammoth Rock N’ Bowl.
Time: 9:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 6/
Latin Night @ Mammoth Rock N’ Bowl.
Time: 9 p.m.

TOWN STUFF

January 31-February 1/
Skier & Snowboard Grand Prix @ Mammoth Main Park.

January 31-February 2
Four Plays, Four Days @ Edison Theater continues. A weekend of staged readings at the Edison featuring sensational contemporary plays. Info: see sidebar next page.

Friday, January 31/
Dance party @ Bishop Senior Center with free swing lessons. Info: Time: 7 p.m. All welcome. Info: 760.258.6753

Saturday, February 1/
CS Studios Community Arts Center Grand Opening Party @ 210 S. Warren St.

Allan Bard Memorial 20K XC Ski Race @ Tamarack XC Ski Race.

Mammoth’s terrain and halfpipe at Mammoth Main Park. Watch world-class competitors give their all on Mammoth’s terrain and halfpipe at this nationally televised event. Athletes compete for a chance at a $400k prize. Info: see sidebar pg. 15

January 31-February 2
Meet the Candidate: Drew Phelps @ Bishop Senior Center. All are welcome! Time: 2 p.m.

March 1-3, 2020
Barker and Steiner @ Bishop Rock N’ Bowl.

Monday, February 3/
Bowling n’ Beats @ Mammoth Rock N’ Bowl.
Time: 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 4/
Bingo @ Bishop Senior Center. All are welcome! Time: 6-8 p.m.

Meet the Candidate: Drew Phelps running for state assembly. 9 a.m. @ Pupfish Cafe. Noon: Town hall @ Jill Kinmont Boehm Studio, 3 p.m: Town hall @ Lone Pine Smokehouse.

Heather Lind (candidate for Inyo Supervisor, Dist. 2) meet-and-greet @ the Fairgrounds in Bishop. 2 p.m.

The Bishop Bronco football program end of season awards presentation.
Location: Bishop Twin Theater. Time: 11 a.m. Celebrate your CIF champs one more time!
Snowboard and Freeski Grand Prix

Plan a return trip to Mammoth for the Land Rover U.S. Snowboard and Freeski Grand Prix. World-class skiers and snowboarders will compete in the Unbound Main Park and 22-foot halfpipe in slopestyle and halfpipe events. Check out this nationally televised contest up close with prime viewing from Main Lodge. The Grand Prix runs from January 26 to February 1.

June Lake Loop Legacy of History and Fishing

June Lake Loop Legacy of History and Fishing

At the Monday, February 3rd meeting of the Mono Basin Historical Society, Cal Trout’s Eric Huber will present an illustrated talk about June Lake’s rich legacy of fishing recreation, the natural history of White-bark Pines and what that has to do with fishing, and the history of Lower rush creek natural resource protections. The short business meeting begins with a potluck dinner at 6 PM, and the program at 7 PM at the Inyo Vining Community Center on Mattly Avenue. All are welcome. The Mono Basin Historical Society is a non-profit organization; visit our webpage at www.monobasinhistory.org.

Revolution Tour

The Revolution Tour is coming to Mammoth Mountain this February! Revolution has promised to be a progressive venue for top junior riders to take to the competitive stage in Halfpipe, Slopestyle, and Big Air.

Designed as a stepping-stone for athletes to make the transition from the grassroots events to the elite level, the tour will showcase top amateur riders competing in the Unbound Main Park and famed Super Duper Pipe.

Focusing on riders ages 13-19, the Revolution series pre qualifies riders in each competition before opening registration to any athlete. Overall series winners may earn an invite to be part of the U.S. Grand Prix, Junior Worlds, the U.S. Open, USA Ski National teams, as well as participate in Project Gold camps. The series runs from February 4-9. A full schedule of events, registration, and additional info can be found at mammothmountain.com

Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep field trips

Free Field Trips- Open to the Public Pre-Registration required!

Winter to early spring is the best time of year for viewing endangered Sierra bighorn before they retreat to higher elevations. These animals are difficult to see and there are only about 600 in the world, all in the Sierra Nevada. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation provide free public field trips to view Sierra bighorn. Tentative dates for 2020 are February 3, March 2, and April 18.

Meet at 9:00 AM in the Bishop

TOWN STUFF

Sunday, February 2/

The Bishop Area Climbing Rangers will offer Climber Coffee every Sunday to discuss current events, safety messages, sustainable recreation, leave no trace, and more!

Sierra Club Snowshoe. 9 a.m. 3 p.m. Contact 760.795.5050 for more information.

IKON pass holder early ups @ Mammoth Mountain. One hour of exclusive lift access on select trails starting at 7:30 a.m. followed by a complimentary breakfast at McCoy station at 8 a.m.

Monday, February 3/

@ Owens Valley Radio Observatory Tours. @ OVO. Time: 1-2 p.m. Come see the “Big Ears” up close and learn all about the observatory. Info: call Dr. Mark Hodges at 760.938.2075 ext. 109. Mammoth Lakes Housing Board meets. 6 p.m. Suite Z. Minaret Mall.

Tuesday, February 4/

@ Mono County Board of Supervisors meets at the Mono County Courthouse, Bridgeport. Time: 9 a.m.

@ Inyo County Board of Supervisors meets at the Council Chambers in Independence. Time: 8:30 a.m. Mono Fish and Wildlife Commission meets at the June Lake Community Center. Time: 9-10 a.m.

Wednesday, February 5/

@ Bridgeport Elementary PTO meets at the Bridgeport Elementary School. Time: 5-7 p.m.

@ Inyo County Poetry Out Loud @ Inyo Council for the Arts. Join us for a compelling night of spoken word and cheer on our Inyo County competitors! This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history. Time: 6-7 p.m.

AT THE MOVIES

Movies Playing This Week 01/31 to 02/06

Friday

7 p.m. Sat - Mon 2 p.m. 7 p.m. Tues - Thurs 7 p.m.

4:45 p.m. 7:15 p.m. Sat - Mon 2:30 p.m. 5 p.m. 7:30 p.m. Tues - Thurs 4:45 p.m. 7:15 p.m.

4:30 p.m. Sat - Mon 4:40 p.m. Tues - Thurs 4:30 p.m.

THE WALLRUS

*WITNESS ANNIHILATING LAME REPUBLICAN UKRAINE STORY

CDPW parking lot, 787 N. Main St. (Cornerwood Grove Shopping Center, behind El Pollo Loco). Be dressed for the weather and in sturdy footwear. Sun protection is highly recommended. Bring birding optics or scopes if you have them. We will carpool from the office as much as possible, and vehicles that can be driven off pavement are preferred but not required. Field trips are usually concluded by noon, and typically involve very little walking.

Email pre-registration to asksbnsb@wildlife.ca.gov or call Cody Massing at 760.873.3360. Pre-registration is required as space is limited and field trips are weather and bighorn dependent.

TOWN STUFF

Mammoth Lakes Town Council meets. 6 p.m. Suite Z. Minaret Mall.

Mammoth Lakes Tourism Board meets. 1 p.m. Suite Z. Minaret Mall.

Thursday, February 6/

@ Northern Mono County Hospice Board meets at the Walker Community Center. Time: 5-6 p.m.

Avalanche Awareness Event + Screening @ T-Bar Social Club. An avalanche awareness event featuring a discussion on our current snowpack from the ESAC forecast team as well as a showing of Chris Benchetler’s “Fire on the Mountain” and a newly released behind the scenes piece. Time: 6 p.m.

Save The Last Dance @ the USFS Auditorium, Mammoth Lakes. Join award-winning nature photographer and author Noppadol Paatong for a presentation on his work documenting the sage grouse. Time: 7 p.m. Tickets are $15, 18 and under get in free. Part of ESIA’s Winter Adventure Series.

February 6-23/

Sylvia plays at the Edison Theatre. The story of a man, his wife, and a dog that threatens to split them up. Directed by Shira Dubrovner, performances are Thursdays-Saturdays at 7 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m.

February 5-6/

Mammoth Lakes Suicide Awareness healing events @ Mammoth Lakes USFS Welcome Center. Time: 6 p.m. both nights.

Story Time at Mono County Libraries. February 5 @ Mammoth Lakes Library, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

February 6 @ Lee Vining Library, 11:15 a.m.-noon, and @ Bridgeport Library, 1-2 p.m.

Free Tax Help February-April 15th

It’s that time of year again. The AARP Foundation Tax Aide programs in Bishop and Mammoth using IRS-certified volunteers prepare federal and state returns online without charge to low and moderate income residents.

In Bishop at the NIH Birch Street Annex, appointments are available Tuesday afternoons, Friday afternoons and Saturdays. To schedule an appointment, call 760.937.1397.

In Mammoth at the Mammoth Lakes Library, appointments are available Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. To schedule an appointment, call 760.934.5674. Spanish speaking assistance is available and walk-ins are welcome.

We encourage all taxpayers to file early even if they potentially owe money as those payments are not due until April 15th, regardless of when they file their tax return.

Sylvia

Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre (MLRT) is pleased to announce the longest engagement of A.R. Gurney’s insightful comedy Sylvia, with a whole new cast of Eastern Sierra locals.

Shira Dubrovner directs and Sylvia is played by Mammoth’s own Leslie Redman, who most recently appeared at MLRT in the Night of Broadway and as Rosa in Summer and Smoke.

In addition to Redman, local talent includes Layne Durocher (Playhouse 395’s Mamma Mia) of Bishop as Greg, Victoria Farber (Suite Surrender) of Mammoth as Kate, and Alex Erazd (SCT’s Almost Maine) of Bishop as Tom, Phyllis and Leslie.

Where: Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre

When: Opens February 6 and runs for three weekends, Thursday through Saturday at 7:00 PM and Sundays at 4:00 PM.

For more information or to purchase tickets visit MammothLakesRepertory-Theatre.org.

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OPEN SITUATION.

Town of Mammoth Lakes

Temporary Snow Removal Operators
$23.76 - $27.50/hr, CDL required

Recreation Intern - Assistant Gymnastics Coach $13.00 - $13.33/hr

Recreation Supervisor $18.52 - $24.06, full benefits package

Public Works Maintenance Worker $11.52 - $12.60, plus competitive benefits package

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY, VISIT WWW.TOWNOFMAMMOTHBLAKES.CA.GOV OR CALL (760) 965-3604.

Mammouth Taxi is accepting resumes for experienced drivers with great customer service and clean driving records. We are also looking for a part-time office staff for the right person with great organizational skills and customer service background. Please inquire with Scottie at 760-914-7433, www.mammouth-taxi.com.

Vacasa is hiring full and part-time housekeepers in June Lake with pay starting at $16/hour. Apply at vacasa.com/careers.

Elixir Superfood & Juice is hiring a Service/ Aireon from our main store. We offer delicious shift meals and a fun and energetic environment. If you think you might like to work with us online at www.elixirjoy.com/careers.

White Mountain Fire Protection District is hiring a Grant Writer! WMFPD is currently seeking an individual with desire and experience that can focus on several upcoming grant opportunities for our district and community. USDA Rural Facilities Grant Assistance is needed. Will train, serious candidates only. Please email resume to info@hiltoncreekcsd.com.

Tonik is seeking PT/FT help. Fun. Place to work, especially if you’re into clothes and fashion. Stop by the store on Old Mammoth Road for an application. 760-924-7727.
CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO RULE 411 WILDLAND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT BUILDING CODES FOR LAND AND URBAN INTERFACES AND THE SMOKE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Governing Board of the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District will conduct a public hearing for the purpose of receiving the District's Smoke Management Program and to District Rule 411 WILDLAND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT BUILDING CODE FOR LAND AND URBAN INTERFACES, at a place called the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, 157 Short Street, Bishop, CA 93514. Comments may be received by contacting the District. Written comments on the program and rule amendments should be sent to Anna Logan, Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer, Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, 157 Short Street, Bishop, CA 93514. Comments may also be submitted by e-mail to aslogan@gbaapcd.org. Comments received by Wednesday, February 10, 2020, will be included in the staff report. Comments received after that day and before the public hearing will be summarized by staff and presented to the Board. A copy of the minutes of the meeting may also be made at the public hearing.

The public hearing will conclude at a regular meeting of the District Governing Board to be held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 5, 2020, at the Mono County Supervisors Chamber (2nd Floor), 157 Short Street, Bishop, CA 93514. Written comments received by Wednesday, February 10, 2020, will be included in the staff report. Comments received after that day and before the public hearing will be summarized by staff and presented to the Board. A copy of the minutes of the meeting may also be made at the public hearing.

The public hearing on the District’s total annual budgets is set for 10:00 a.m. Written comments are invited, and should be addressed to Phillip L. Kilduff, Air Pollution Control Officer, Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, 157 Short Street, Bishop, CA 93514. Written comments received by Wednesday, February 10, 2020, will be included in the staff report sent to the Governing Board members. Comments may be made during the meeting by contacting the Mono County District Court, 206 North Division Street, Bishop, CA 93514.

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Davina Wiitala, a longtime member of Mammoth’s Snowcat crew, died last week. She was 34.

Wiitala, who was born in San Diego County, was the eldest of six siblings. When she was 12, her father David moved the family to Big Creek (near Shaver Lake, northeast of Fresno). Big Creek is a small town with a population of 300 or so. It was in this environment where she spent her formative years roaming the mountains.

At the earliest opportunity, Davina got a job driving Snowcats at nearby China Peak Mountain Resort. As her father says, a ski accident suffered by Davina’s sister Demaree (as a result of the resort trying to save money by cutting corners in its safety protocol) led Davina to be very particular and perfectionist when it came to her job. Her father said she was the type who showed up for work regardless if she was sick or not, and befriending a person from a small town, Davina had a gift for knowing how to do things, fix things. She was resourceful.

And driving Snowcats was a job she loved. “Once she started,” said her father David, “we knew she’d do it for life.” Greg Sorenson was her Supervisor at Mammoth Mountain during her 12-13 year stint at MMSA. He lauded her “awesome work ethic. She was very committed to the job. Very professional. Very thorough. Always had the safety of the guest in mind… she enjoyed it. She loved it. And she did a darn good job…"

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Her personal life was more complicated. As her father David said, she was a bit of a searcher, and had a penchant for looking for love in all the wrong places, or perhaps, more accurately, for looking for love in impossible places.

There was a move to Alaska a few years ago with one boyfriend with the promise of a new life, maybe opening up a restaurant. It didn’t pan out.

There were other relationships that were abusive. She was profoundly affected by the death of an old boyfriend named Reed Lowry, who took his own life last summer. The two had met as Snowcat operators at Mammoth. According to her father David, Reed had had a chance to become a supervisor but turned it down. When Davina took the job, Reed then left for June Mountain because he was annoyed with himself for missing the signs.

Yet the two kept in touch. Reed eventually moved to Tahoe. And took his own life a week before a scheduled visit by Davina last June that left her devastated.

Her sister Delaney, who works as a supervisor at Mammoth Memories in the Village at Mammoth, said this caused her sister to withdraw. “She seemed a lot more down over the past six months,” said Delaney.

Dirk Addis met Davina when she first moved to Mammoth. They worked the gondola together circa 2006 and were friends ever since. “I loved her quirkiness,” said Dirk, “And she knew the trans/queer side of me even before I came out. I was comfortable revealing it to her, and it was easy to be me around her without [fear of] expectation or judgment.”

Peter Hodges is the father of Davina’s daughter Willow, who is a first grader at Lee Vining Elementary. He describes her as “Endlessly gutsy and brutally honest.” Qualities that the larger world isn’t always eager to appreciate.

The two shared custody of their daughter, who rode in Mom’s Snowcat for Night of Lights the past couple of years. And Mom exercised her visitation, even when she was living out of her car, declining offers of help/a roof from Hodges’ wife Amanda.

She was stubborn, for sure. A properly Finnish trait. And a hippie. And a tomboy. And a dreamer. As Hodges said, “She didn’t necessarily have her head in reality [all the time].”

What did sister Delaney admire most about Davina? “She took things head-on. When she had a choice to make, she’d make it.”

Davina made her last Facebook post on Tuesday, January 21 at 8 p.m. She said she was feeling calm with Reed Lowry at Hole in the Wall, and wrote, “As above, so below.” And then took her own life at the Twin Lakes bridge.

There was a move to Alaska a few weeks prior where Davina had said sort of off-the-cuff, “Maybe it’s time for me to go see Reed again.”

And it slipped past without Dirk grasping the greater signifiance. “I’m usually more empathetic than that and pick up on stuff like that.”

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Davina was preceded in death by her mother Dee Dee, who died in 2017. She is survived by her father David and siblings Danae (Ken) Wiitala-Muller, Davis, Delaney, Demaree and Dakota.

Dakota posted the following on Davina’s Facebook page following her death. “Sister. You were my oldest friend. Not in age but in that in my worst times when I was a teenager Davina was the only one there for me to give good advice. Davina never let me down, not once. It didn’t matter if it was a good or bad day. A celebration of life will be held in Mammoth at a future date to be determined.”

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NFL

JUST ONE CHEESEBURGER
By Hartley

The Super Bowl, as we all know, has very little to do with football and a lot to do with everything else.

One of its greatest contributions over the past few years has been introducing the “prop bet” to the cultural mainstream.

A prop bet is a side bet which may or may not have anything to do with the actual sport of football. For example, you can bet on how long it will take to sing the national anthem. Or on what color Gatorade they’ll pour on the winning coach. You can even bet on whether or not a player in Super Bowl LIV will get arrested following the game (the odds are about 8-1).

Hopefully, prop bets can keep you distracted enough from the worst part of Super Bowl week, which is Forty Niners CB Richard Sherman getting so much television time. It is completely unbearable. He went to Stanford, you know? Like that makes you smart. I am black, you know … so I can play basketball. Like that makes you smart. I am black, you know? He is better than Garoppolo and smarter than Lamar Jackson, but he is a great runner.

Special teams edge: Chiefs. They have more projects-fast people on their team than the San Quentin Rec League.

Coaching edge: Even. A part of me worries if Andy Reid will screw it up. But his is a resume that merits a title. I think he’s gonna get it here.

X-Factor: Mahomes. He is that good. He is better than Garoppolo and smarter than Garoppolo - who is probably holed up in a room with a porn star right now.

Bottom line: Chiefs win by 6. Andy Reid will eat a cheeseburger... during the game. After the game is over. He is gonna get one cheeseburger and go to bed to celebrate. Does anyone really think he ate ONE CHEESEBURGER? Come on, man. That’s like me saying I had one bourbon and barbecued. Right. One cheeseburger ...

The Giants are not gonna be good for a long time. They are a zoo where former coaches go to graze out the remainder of their days. Not only did they hire former Cowboy HC Jason Garrett as offensive coordinator, but then they hired former Browns Coach Freddie Kitchens as ...

Tight Ends coach. What a fall from grace.

Freddie Kitchens getting a job anywhere is comical to me. Cletus Kitchens has no right having a job other than as Andy Reid’s stunt double to take on the 2 for $6 Whopper meal challenge.

Raiders QB Derek Carr says he is tired of all the rumors regarding the Raiders wanting a new QB. Well Derek the only way to stop that is by playing worth a damn.

Coronavirus. From China? How is that not a Mexican virus? Why isn’t it something you get from putting a bad lime in a Corona beer? You want to know what the real coronavirus is? Its a disease known very well to my home in Western Washington. Its a condition where the clouds and gray dismal atmosphere in the Northwest eats away all possibility of sunshine, casting a dark, dreary presence over the whole area. It tries to eliminate all happiness and joy by forcing people to stay inside, or to only go outside if wearing layers of plaid, hoodies and camouflage. The coronavirus is not new. I have lived it for over 20 years. The only cure for the coronavirus … the antidote … is WILD TURKEY 101.
NEW CREEKHOUSE RESIDENCES ARE AVAILABLE!
Luxury Mountain Retreats with Alpine Golf Course and Athletic Club at Mammoth Mountain.

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