LODGING BAN EXTENDED
Mammoth may not rent rooms until July
By Page

Ater a weekend which saw the California state government revise its standards for reopening into Stage 2, the Mono County Board of Supervisors approved an attestation letter on Tuesday, along with the required application from Public Health Officer Dr. Tom Boo and additional testimony from Mammoth Hospital, to expand the county’s opening.

Later that day, the application was posted to the California Department of Public Health’s page, an addition to a growing number of counties around the state who have provided attestation that they are ready to proceed with reopening.

Expanded Stage 2 reopening includes in-restaurant dining, destination retail like shopping malls, and schools with modification.

However, in Mammoth Lakes, the ban on short-term rentals has been extended through the end of June. Lodge owners had been gearing up to accept reservations as soon as June 1, but Dr. Boo halted potential visitors in their keyless ignition SUVs. Boo claimed the extended restriction on lodging was made in order to stay in accordance with Governor Gavin Newsom’s orders.

Still, this will certainly ruffle some local feathers. Michaela Vargas wrote a letter to Mammoth Lakes Town Council this week which appeared in the agenda packet, saying, “…the Board of Supervisors clearly acknowledged the critical danger that our town faces by not having tourism this summer. That is why the County Board of Supervisors last Thursday requested that Dr. Boo refrain from extending the short-term rental ban. Why is the Town of Mammoth Lakes acting against this?”

Normally, Council does not respond to comments on specific agenda items. Mayor Bill Sauser did take the time to say that the town is trying to follow Governor Newsom’s orders and these things can be adjusted if state orders loosen up.

The Mono County Board of Supervisors approved the attestation letter on May 21, allowing the county to move into Stage 2 reopening.

ON SHAKY GROUND
Covid further impacts tough financial picture for NIH
By Lunch

While no one (with the exception of the Northern Inyo Hospital District Board) knows exactly why Northern Inyo Hospital parted ways with former CEO Dr. Kevin Flanigan earlier this month, Wednesday’s meeting of the Northern Inyo Hospital Board of Directors certainly offered a few pointed clues.

Most notably, District finances are in terrible shape. Exhibit A. Standard and Poors recently downgraded NIHD’s bond rating from BB to B. Which may be an acceptable grade in school, but is deemed “sub-investment grade” in the real world.

Ouch.

Financial Consultant Vinay Behl walked the NIHD Board through the wreckage of its balance sheet during the Board’s regular meeting.

On the bright side, he believes there are several measures the District can adopt over the course of the next 90 days to right the ship.

While former CEO Flanigan may have boasted the initials MBA after his name, he apparently forgot the first rule of business during his tenure at NIH, which is to stay in balance sheet during the

Hey Scoob!

Saturday, May 23, 2020
FREE
Vol. 18, No. 21

What does the fox say
World’s greatest spy
Budget forecast = pain
Last Dance
Parade of ignorance
p. 12/
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AND HERES TO YOU, DR. ROBINSON

Part-time boards managing full-time CEOs. Its a very, very difficult and thankless task, if one commits to do the job well. And a real coin-toss if one chooses to serve on a board for the sake of it. Maybe youve got a really good CEO and you can simply coast. More likely, you have a flawed CEO (some good traits, some bad traits) and youve really got to pay attention to make sure Mr. Hyde doesnt consume Dr. Jekyll.

I applaud the NHID Board and staff for digging in when it needed to in investigating former CEO Dr. Kevin Flanigan. Because if theyd dallied and then Covid hit and Flanigan was still CEO - the District easily couldve plunged into bankruptcy. Thats where Flanigan had them steered was not his strong suit. The Board identified that it needed to change horses just in time.

My theory, and it is just a theory, is that it was body count that did Flanigan in. He became increasingly aggressive in his desire to frame the District exactly how he wanted it eliminating those who challenged him or competed with him for his leading role.

I personally think it galled Flanigan that Dr. Allison Robinsons contract paid her $350,000/year while he only made $325,000. I honestly think he went after her, sought to reduce her salary, so that he, the king, the CEO, would be the highest paid District honcho, as opposed to some star doctor.

Reminds me of the recent Last Dance, the 10-part documentary that recently aired on ESPN about Michael Jordan. Theres a talked-about clip where Bulls GM Jerry Krause insists that organizations win championships, not players, suggesting that superstars like Jordan can come and go, but it is masterminds like Krause who truly should be celebrated.

Hmm. Let’s see if we can invoke other examples to determine a trend. How have the Cleveland Cavaliers fared without LeBron James? How have the San Antonio Spurs fared without Tim Duncan? The list is endless.

I’m not the only pop psychologist who’s analyzed the Flanigan question. One of the more interesting takes on Flanigan comes from Pharmacist Frank Laiacona.

“Flanigan is very different type of leader. Not underhanded. But … I believe the District somehow has become confused and lost its traction, more concerned with the uncertainty surrounding potential Covid impacts. That’s where Flanigan had them steered was not his strong suit. The Board identified that it needed to change horses just in time.

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Mammoth Hospital’s clinics and outpatient services are OPEN and SAFE

The safety of our patients and staff continue to be top priority as services are resumed carefully. We are screening all patients on arrival and requiring masks and physical distancing inside our facilities. We have also expanded our telehealth services. If you need to visit us, you can be assured our strict safety protocols will keep you safe.

If you have an urgent medical concern, do not delay seeking treatment. Postponing care can cause a condition to worsen or become a preventable emergency. Our Emergency Department as well as our 12 outpatient clinics are OPEN and SAFE to visit.

If you have questions or concerns about any scheduled or non-scheduled appointment type, or would like more information about making or rescheduling an appointment, please call us at (760) 934-3311.

View our directory for a full list of providers, or learn more about open clinics and outpatient services at www.mammothhospital.com.
Let's start with the Pro Science letter:

**Dear Editor,**

I subscribe to 3 national newspapers so I am fully aware of the anti-science sentiments of some folks out there. I am shocked by their crazy notions that infectious disease doctors are somehow taking away our liberty when they issue warnings about reopening too soon or without adequate plans in place. I am reassured, however, by the polls that prove that the majority of people hold the scientists in high regard, much more than the politicians who are concerned about the economy only.

Nonetheless, I was shocked and appalled to read some of the comments in The Sheet last week that brought this issue home. While I am disappointed, I believe that these responses indicate the hardship and stress people are under. It is challenging to understand the legitimate uncertainty of this virus and putting the health of the public over economic well-being. These letter writers are friends and neighbors. None of them want their family members or co-workers to get sick or die. How do we convince them that the success we have is due to our united compliance with the mandates of Governor Newsom but that the virus is still ex-}

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Now, let's look at the Return TBID letter:

**Mr. Mayor,**

As I have participated in a few of the recent business community discussions, and as I stated in the last meeting, a very simple solution to put money back into the hands of the dying business community is to redistribute TBID funds back to the businesses who collected it. You can simply run numbers from a 3-6 month collection period and redistribute the same amount back to the participating businesses to assist in the survival of the business community.

This will alleviate the idea of offering loans that a business cannot afford to pay back or a grant from the Town. I strongly encourage Council and staff work aggressively together to do this now before more businesses close.

Sincerely,

**Jeanne Oakeshott**

**Swall Meadows**

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Finally, we have the TIHP Board Statement on Pharmacy:

**Dear Editor:**

My name is George Gholson and I currently serve as Secretary and then Chairman for the last two years. I was also Chairman of the Toiyabe Shoshone Tribe for 10 years and currently serve on the Tribal Council. Speaking for the collective Toiyabe Board, we want to assure our patients and the public that our highest priority is providing safe, quality health care for our patients.

The Toiyabe Board and management have taken seriously the complaints of protestors. We are taking everything under consideration and we welcome input from all of the nine communities Toiyabe serves from Bridgeport to Death Valley. The best way to communicate concerns is to write to our management; not to hold public protests during a deadly pandemic. We have a responsibility to protect our patients and staff, many of whom are Tribal citizens. Toiyabe’s staff is 54% Native American.

The community, the Board of Directors and the clinic have never faced a national pandemic and it has been very challenging for all of us. The entire time I have been on the board the main focus has always been on providing the best healthcare possible for our communities. We have been experiencing growing pains, which was expected with the new clinic. There are a number of issues being corrected that were present prior to this administration and have been occurring for several years. The current CEO inherited a lot of these issues and the board has directed her to make corrections.

The Board of Directors is frequently more LETTERS, page 5
updated about the pharmacy issues. THHP is taking corrective measure required by the State and the Federal Government concerning the pharmacy. We hear rumors about the staff and the Board, but we have and continue to make decisions based on facts, policy and documentation. The Board is a policy board and is not involved in the day-to-day operations. The Board is comprised of experienced tribal leaders, including two Tribal chairs, who would not allow Toiyabe to be mismanaged.

Toiyabe has transformed in recent years from a small clinic to a much larger clinic and with that growth, the cost of operating has increased. THHP went from paying $132,900 a year on leases to the Bishop Paiute Tribe to paying $660,000 a year for the new clinic, to the USDA with additional money for the ground lease to the Bishop Tribe. Changes have to be made in order for THHP to survive. These changes include tightening and enforcing policies to benefit our patients. The board is optimistic that THHP is moving in the right direction. I ask the public to be patient during these uncertain times.

Regarding the statements of staff terminated from the pharmacy, we wish to correct the record with facts. We value all our employees and termination was a last resort when the pharmacy staff walked off the job and did not return to work. With no one managing the pharmacy, Toiyabe Administration had to find qualified pharmacists to quickly step in; the pharmacy reopened the next day. Prior to walking off the job, pharmacy staff did not file grievances or follow procedures for lodging complaints.

An independent audit two years ago raised red flags and a second recent audit mandated corrective action. The audit is standard for the organization and was not targeted at the pharmacy. In fact, after speaking with the California Rural Indian Health Board and IHS, unlike what was stated by former employee, there had never been a pharmacy-specific audit by IHS or anyone in the last 20 years. We are disappointed that established grievance protocols were not followed to resolve conflicts.

Finally, we are asking everyone to please abide by the emergency public health orders issued by the State of California, Inyo County and your Tribal governments to stay at home and avoid public gatherings. These orders are to protect our communities and those at high-risk from exposure. A recent protest held by several people at Toiyabe’s Bishop clinic violated all emergency health orders and disrespected the safety of others. As a medical facility, we must ensure our patients and staff are not exposed by careless actions. Our staff serve on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis daily and must not be further jeopardized by groups defying emergency orders.

We appreciate your patience during the COVID-19 public health emergency; it has put some constraints on our operations and staff, but we continue to serve the public and protect the communities. We’re proud that during this pandemic, Toiyabe’s 176 employees are still working, some from home, to serve our patients on seven Indian reservations and two Native communities.

George Gholson, Chairman
THHP Board of Directors

Fishkill, California

Dear Editor,

I am writing you again with deep concern over the recent and ongoing management actions regarding Mill and Wilson Creeks in the north Mono Basin. The public deserves to know about some disturbing things I have observed this spring.

This past January, Southern California Edison, the Mono Lake Committee, and the US Forest Service gave a presentation to the Mono County Board of Supervisors that detailed plans for water management in the north Mono Basin this season.

This presentation, these parties claimed they were aware of the issues, and implied that they had everything under control. It was suggested that a balance was being sought between the resources. Forest Service District Ranger Gordon Martin spoke, and stated that the Forest Service would continue its longstanding practice of irrigating the DeChambeau Ranch, as well as stating quite clearly that the DeChambeau Ponds would continue to be managed for critical wildlife habitat.

I was skeptical. Last May (2019), during a record wet year, the lower portion of Wilson Creek suddenly went dry, and seven fish were found dead in the dry streambed.

Lower Wilson Creek was re-watered and then dried out again multiple times throughout last summer.

This spring, I have had a chance to observe this “plan” being implemented yet again, and it appears that this “management” has become even more destructive.

On May 7th, I first observed that SCE had put their “return ditch” into use which was bringing a significant amount of water from Wilson Creek back to Mill Creek. Then I drove to the DeChambeau area to see what effects this might be having downstream. The Forest Service had turned on its diversion to the DeChambeau Ranch. This made sense, as this is the time of year one would expect irrigation to be happening. I then saw that the lower channel of Wilson Creek was once again dry, and only a tiny trickle remained below the Forest Service diversion point.

Dried out once again! Almost exactly one year after the initial fish kill was discovered.

Since it was clear that the agencies had been making recent adjustments, I decided to go down to DeChambeau Ponds. About a month prior, in early April, my husband and I stopped by the ponds, and we were happy to see that they all had water and were being heavily used by ducks. We also saw that alarge cluster of Yellow-headed Blackbirds had started to establish nests on the reeds.

On May 7th, it was a very different scene. Several ponds were almost completely dry, with just a few puddles remaining. One of the ponds appeared to be much lower than the last time I had been there.

I am not a biologist, but I do know that the middle of May is a time when many birds are beginning to nest at the ponds and use the creeks for feeding and watering. For many decades now, the Forest Service has managed this important freshwater habitat, specifically for these nesting birds.

I recall District Ranger Gordon Martin publicly stating at the Board of Supervisors meeting in January, that “the Forest Service would continue to manage the ponds.”

I have never seen the ponds dry up like this, especially not in the spring, not even in serious drought years. Why is this happening now? Was all this just a mistake that was corrected the next day? I hoped so.

But on May 17th, I returned to the ponds and the creek. Nothing had been adjusted, and everything was getting worse.

I then stopped by the DeChambeau Ranch to see if at least some water was there. The Forest Service had the diversion open. Not a trace at the Ranch, or anywhere near as far as I can see. I want to be very clear that I do not place all blame on only the Forest Service for what is happening at Wilson Creek and the ponds. This is obviously connected to the overall “plan” that was presented by the Mono Lake Committee and Southern California Edison as well as the Forest Service in January. In fact, I have received information that came directly from District Ranger Gordon Martin in past weeks, that the Mono

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CLIFF DIVING IN MAMMOTH

By Hite

Transient occupancy tax (TOT) revenue has dropped off a cliff. Last year, the $32.0 million in TOT revenue collected was a record, and represented 66% of general fund revenue for 2018-2019. Sales tax revenue added another 9% to the general fund. During his presentation to Mammoth Town Council at its Zoom meeting Wednesday, Finance Director Rob Patterson said he’s contemplating a 45% drop off the record high in his 2020-2021 forecast. “We are using a TOT number of $11.2 million for [fiscal year 2020-21],” he said.

The $11.2 million number represents one of three projections Patterson and his team have made. The most optimistic projection is $12.5 million, the most pessimistic $9.3 million.

Between the lowered TOT forecast and an estimated $850,000 buzzcut in sales tax revenue projections, the Town is looking at a about $3.74 million revenue reduction compared to a pre-Covid staff presentation given on March 18. If it is confusing how the number is just $3.74 million, this is because Patterson traditionally uses conservative estimates for TOT. For example, in 2018-2019, the Town budgeted $13.75 million TOT revenue but received the aforementioned record of $20.2 million. The original TOT forecast for FY 2020-21 was $14.25 million and the revised estimate is $11.2 million.

Any surplus, as was the case last year, can be doled out at the direction of Council. This extra money can fund projects, be set aside for specific future allocations such as ‘creative housing solutions,’ or simply be put into reserve funds.

But now the Town is staring at a potential revenue deficit. Which means budgeted expenditures will get a closer look. Patterson’s initial projections show expenditures besting revenues by $3.6 million. Which means we’re as upside down as that house in Lee Vining.

The first thing Patterson did was show the nearly static labor costs. “There are no staff reductions in here. There are certainly increases in expenditures which we can’t control,” said Patterson explaining that the cost per employee is going up slightly.

The Patterson spent more than 30 minutes proposing budget cuts to close the gap.

“Cancelled summer recreation programs saved $124,000.

“Minor staff reductions saved $212,000.

“Altering a future capital account saved $133,000.

“Borrowing its own internal debt, which has no interest rate, from the vehicle replacement fund, can save $340,000.

“A 50% reduction in the comprehensive leave accrual program saved $114,000.

“Minor departmental budget reductions save $179,000.

“Not giving employees their annual 2.5% pay bump, and leaving salaries constant, saved $200,000.

“Using the transit reserve to fund this year’s transportation cost saved $129,000.

“The Gas Tax fund has $1.1 million in it and the staff recommended taking $500,000 of this money and putting it into the general fund.

The FAA CARES act gave towns across the country access to grants allowing them to operate airports. This means the previous allocation of $619,000 from the general fund can stay where it is.

“After all of these cuts, Patterson still needed to make up for a $506,000 budget deficit. Using $335,000 allocated toward special housing projects, $300,000 for the airport (FAA CARES act again), and $322,000 from last year’s savings, Patterson had done it. The budget was balanced. And no one had to experience pain.”

Notes

The $11.2 million TOT revenue projection is based on 30% of TOT revenue from last year for the first three months. Then 50% through the late fall months/early winter. And by next January/February it’s projected to be 60-70%.

Sure hope there’s no second wave…

Patterson mentioned there will be three checkpoints where projections may be amended. Checkpoint #1 is October 23, 2020 and the expected TOT amount is $1.2 million. Checkpoint #2 is January 22, 2021 and the expected TOT amount is $3.4 million. And Checkpoint #3 is April 23, 2021 and the expected TOT amount is $8.6 million. If we hit the checkpoint without hitting the number, more creative math will follow.

This year’s budgeted TOT represents 55% of the general fund revenue. Sales Tax represents 9%. And Property Tax is 15% of this revenue.

This is an initial budget. It will not be finalized until June 17, 2020. According to the presentation, “Staff is prepared to make additional adjustments based on performance through the year and trigger points of decision.”

WHAT DOES 25 YEARS OF COMPLIANCE GET YOU?

Mammoth Lakes Town Council had another agenda item dealing with an appeal of TOT/TBID late payment penalties and interest during the initial onset government reaction to COVID-19.

This time representatives of The Best Western Premier High Sierra Hotel in Mammoth appeared before Council making its case that Council should waive $7155.82 of extra fees due to late payment.

“I have raised certain constitutional objections to the TOT ordinance in general. And I am raising it here here only because … we have a taxpayer here that is a little bit different here,” said Frank Weiser, a Los Angeles based attorney representing Best Western.

“This is a taxpayer that has diligently paid the TOT on time, and has never been late.”

According to Weiser and Best Western there has never been a late payment, dating back to 1995.

Weiser said he was raising these objections as a defensive measure only. He has experience working similar cases and was comparing circumstances. A lawsuit is not necessarily being threatened.

Still, the Council felt threatened.

“This is being framed in the context of a bunch of legal citations. And I don’t feel any comfort in responding to that,” said Council Member John Wentworth.

Town Attorney Andrew Morris responded, “Because [the attorney for Best Western] has made a threat of litigation against the Town, you could take the appeal under submission and direct me to go back and do additional research.”

Mayor Bill Saiser felt there was a threat as well.

Representatives for Best Western attempted to plead their case one more time, essentially saying the circumstances that COVID-19 brought, during the month of March, made the deadline especially difficult to meet. They reiterated that litigation was not their goal.

Council did not know how to handle this. Mayor Pro-Tem Lynda Salcido mentioned the consistency of the current Council holding the parties responsible for late payments. Salcido made a motion upholding penalties and interest while deliberating further, with Morris, in a closed session.

The motion passed 4-0 with one abstention from Councilmember Cleland Hoff.

“Hite
Although the "water wars" of the early 20th century may be over, the issue of water transferral between the City of Los Angeles and the Owens Valley remains a constant thorn. Since 1982, resolving that debate and reaching an amicable agreement between Los Angeles and Owens Valley authorities has fallen upon the shoulders of the Los Angeles-Inyo County Standing Committee.

In recent years, the number of meetings per year has decreased between the two as California exited its deep drought period of 2012-2016. That doesn't mean, however, that both sides are consistently meeting in the middle.

The most recent convening of the Standing Committee took place on Friday, May 15.

During the 2019-2020 wet season, precipitation in the Eastern Sierra was just 54% of the average, which came after a wetter than normal season in 2018-2019. As a result, projected runoff in the Owens Valley is 299,600 acre feet or 74% of normal.

LADWP is hoping to get 188,400 acre feet from the Eastern Sierra as a whole, with a projected take from groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley projected at between 75,000-93,000 acre feet. LADWP reports that there is approximately 187,000 acre feet of groundwater available for pumping in the Owens Valley.

Clarence Martin, Aqueduct Manager for the city, noted that although runoff in the Owens is 3/4 of average this year, the valley would still receive its full allotment of water.

Martin reported that the city is aiming for daily usage of 104 gallons of water per person for each person in Los Angeles. According to Martin, the figure was 115 gallons per person in 2014 and 161 gallons per person in 2005.

Richard Harasick, Assistant General Manager of the Water System for LADWP, noted that current usage is 200,000 acre-feet less than it was in the 1980s, stating "we still hold our demand flat through the next 15 years through additional conservation."

Those conservation efforts include "real efforts" to capture stormwater and doubling the capacity of rainwater storage.

In addition, Harasick reported, LADWP is in the process of designing a system for recycling wastewater at the San Fernando Valley Water reclamation plant, which will reap thousands of additional acre-feet of water for usage in Los Angeles.

Aaron Steinwand, Director of the Inyo County Water Department, noted that the county had recommended that LADWP take 71,545 acre-feet of groundwater from the Owens Valley. Steinwand explained that Inyo County’s lower estimate stemmed from a disagreement about pumping levels for particular wells in the area.

"Those well fields," said Steinwand, "have either depressed water levels or areas of vegetation that chronically have lower cover than baseline ... or are converting from meadow to shrub land." Steinwand noted that converting meadow to shrub land is prohibited by the long-term water agreement.

Inyo County Supervisor Matt Kingsley asked why, considering the reduced runoff and progress made with lower usage, "why is the high range considerably higher than the last?"

Kingsley added that it had been awhile since LADWP had proposed to pump more than 90,000 acre-feet from the Owens Valley.

Harasick explained that the region is coming off two to three banner years for runoff with an added note from Martin that low runoff typically results in high pumping while high runoff has the opposite effect.

Teri Red Owl, executive director of the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission, inquired about how LA Mayor Eric Garcetti’s Green New Deal, which aims to reduced purchased water, would affect LA’s reliance on the Owens Valley.

Harasick responded, clarifying that Garcetti’s Green New Deal aims to cut imported water by 50%. He added that developing recycled water systems for the city is a targeted method for reducing reliance on water from the Owens Valley.

During the public comment section of the meeting, residents of both the Los Angeles area and the Owens Valley implored the Standing Committee to consider reducing pumping and mitigate damage to the environment. In addition, many asked that representatives of local tribes be consulted when making decisions about water management.

LA resident Tristan Duke hoped to "call attention to colonialist frontierism mentality [of Los Angeles]...the theory of infinite growth into this model is unsustainable."

The groundwater pumping issue was not an action taken so no action was taken.
NIH continued from page 1

business. And you can’t stay in business if you don’t collect for services rendered. Unfortunately, the Hospital’s choice of Athena Healthcare as its EHR (Electronic Health Record) provider a few years back has proven disastrous. “The Athena system has choked out accounts receivable process,” revealed Behl in his presentation. NIH has $21 million outstanding in unpaid invoices. Some of the bills due are over a year old. Some other financial stats which showed NIH is in a comparatively weak position versus other California Critical Access Hospitals (CAH).

NIH ratio of assets to liability 2.37

CAH average 2.87

NIH long-term debt to total assets 59% CAH average 39%

NIH debt service coverage ratio 1.27 CAH average 7.05

NIH’s salaries to net patient revenue ratio 54.7% CAH average 40.3%

As Andrew Stevens noted in a letter he sent to the NIH Board on April 4, “I started here in 2003 and we had approximately 260 employees, and we now have over 500, with little population growth in those 16 years … Since I left management in 2016, nursing management has swelled to over 14 positions from the 7 positions when I was there.”

Stevens letter was one of several others who were not competent to advise him in the selection of the vendor.”

The worst part? NIH paid Athena well over $1.5 million annually for a system which happened to double-book some revenues (nice glitch) and never quite made its numbers match.

“What [the system] shows as cash,” observed Behl, “is materially different than what might show at the bank.”

“We are highly leveraged”

The impact of coronavirus has exacerbated NIH’s burgeoning financial crisis. As Controller Genifer Owens stated Wednesday, hospital revenue was down 24% in March and 53% in April. In May, revenues are down 34% to date. And according to Behl’s presentation, the hospital absorbed a $650,000 loss in March.

Meanwhile, total cash and investments, which stood at nearly $26 million at the end of June, 2019, plummeted to $14 million as of March 31, 2020. One of the factors in this decline is due to much lower year-over-year in-patient numbers. This is where the money is, as Behl said in-patient reimbursement brings in about $8,500/day. At different times, Behl stated, “We are barely making ends meet,” and “We are highly leveraged.”

NIHD’s total long-term debt stands at $41–42 million. Servicing that debt costs about 3% of the Hospital’s annual $97 million in revenue.

Getting a handle on it

In the short-term, to arrest the District’s weakening balance sheet, the NIHD Board is bringing in a firm to help with accounts receivables, firing Athena in favor of a new provider (Cerner), taking out a multimillion dollar line of credit at Eastern Sierra Community Bank, and delaying funding its pension plan for up to 18 months.

Behl said funding the plan (which costs about $500,000/month) during the Covid crisis could literally wipe out the District’s cash balances completely. While the situation looks dire, Behl was fairly confident that emergency measures taken in the next three months could bring the District’s bond rating back up to BBB.

As for former CEO Kevin Flanigan, he received $325,000 upon his departure in a lump sum payment according to his separation agreement.
It’s problematic to say you can fish when public lands are closed.

-Abbie Thompson
Crowley Lake Fish Camp

COVIDONOMICS
continued from page 1
Supervisors chose to not extend the existing countywide lodging ban beyond May 31.

“This squarely puts Mono County in a position of not being more restrictive than what the state has ordained,” Acting County Administrative Officer Bob Lawton explained at Tuesday’s meeting.

As the County looks to continue to ease restrictions and be ready to open as soon as possible, members of the board expressed frustration with a perceived lack of movement by public land managers to reopen their gates and campgrounds.

“It’s frustrating to know that campgrounds around the state and other national forests are open (around the state).” Supervisor Jennifer Kreitz said on Tuesday, “The inconsistencies are glaring.” Kreitz also referenced other counties opening for short term rentals while Mono County has been unable to do so.

County Counsel Stacey Simon provided input that aside from Orange County, no other jurisdictions had approved short term rentals. Further, national forests have been instructed to remain closed.

Joshua Tree National Park was repeatedly cited as an example of a National Forest defying enforced closures. Why, asked Kreitz, have Inyo National Forest or Humboldt-Toiyabe not opened their campgrounds?

It was later revealed that Joshua Tree “had its hand forced” in the matter, as the amount of people illegally camping in the park had grown too great to manage while remaining closed.

Mammoth Fire Chief Frank Frievalt detailed that the national parks have been asked to proceed in a uniform manner, stating “They’ll try to follow the most restrictive of the group so at least at the forest level, they have uniformity in how they’re opening up.”

Advocates for re-opening cite examples of RVs and campers already in Mono County who have been camping illegally. Over the weekend, several illegal campfires were reported, with one posing a significant risk in the area of Conway fires were reported, with one posing a significant risk.

While parks like Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe have not opened their campgrounds, Mammoth Lakes Mayor John Wentworth, who’d planned a June 1 opening, told the Board, “I don’t see how you can fish when public lands are closed.

Supervisor Kreitz again expressed frustration with a perceived delay on the part of land managers, adding that there’s a sense that “local leadership has more authority than they are owning and there seems to be a shirking of responsibility.”

In response, Inyo National Forest District Ranger Philip DeSenze noted that the park’s delay in bringing on staff for guest preparation was in part to prioritizing “on-boarding” staff and training park firefighters.

In more Supervisor news: the board voted 3-2 to approve sending a letter to the Department of Fish and Wildlife requesting consideration of an immediate opening to the fishing season. Mammoth Lakes Mayor Bill Sauser and Town Councilmember John Wentworth both called in to advocate keeping the opener on June 1, citing the possibility of crowds descending on an unprepared Mammoth Lakes.

Others asked about where prospective fisherpeople will stay in light of existing bans on lodging.

After the board moved to approve petitions for an immediate opener, Abbie Thompson, operator of Crowley Lake Fish Camp, explained that she and other operators may be in a Catch 22 as they do not own the land on which they run their business.

Thompson, who’d planned a June 1 opener, told the Board, “I don’t see how I’m supposed to open and see thousands of people lined up at my gate … it’s problematic to say you can fish when public lands are closed.”

Mono County Testing Update as of 4 p.m, Thursday, May 21:
Tests Administered: 523 (+48)
Tests Negative: 439 (+17)
Positive Tests: 34 (+6)
Deaths: 1

Inyo County has not recorded a positive case in more than a month.
SHEET SURVEY

With the country slowly relaxing its stay-at-home orders...

The Sheet asked people on the street: Is it too early, just right, or too late to reopen?

“Just right.”
- Caelan Mash, Mammoth Lakes

“Just right. We got to open the economy.”
- Agustin Murguia, Mammoth Lakes

“Depends on the size of the place. For bigger cities it might be too early. But for small towns like ours, I think it is fine.”
- David Strauss, Mammoth Lakes

“Just right. We got to open up in a safe way.”
- Ceanne Morris, Mammoth Lakes

“Too soon.”
- Mark Zila, Mammoth Lakes

“Maybe too late. I think we need to open up because a lot of people are out of work. If there is a second wave then we will have to deal with it.”
- Omar Bravo, Mammoth Lakes

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One of the more elusive residents of the Eastern Sierra had a turn in the spotlight on Wednesday night as Inyo350 hosted a seminar through Zoom on the Eastern Sierra Red Fox. It provided a nice diversion for locals looking for a distraction from Covid-19 related news.

The presentation was led by Brian Hatfield, an environmental scientist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Bishop office since 2012. Hatfield serves as the lead coordinator for alpine mesocarnivore and Sierra Nevada Red Fox surveys in the Central and Southern Sierra Nevada, a job he has held for the past five years.

So what makes the fox so special? For one, the foxes only live in high altitude areas and are specifically suited to these environments. In addition, Sierra Nevada Red Fox populations have only been found in select areas; today they are only found in clusters near the Mono Creek site, which lies in the mountains to the northwest of Bishop, Fish and Wildlife workers broke the area into 10 distinct cells and placed cameras in passes as well as along cols, both of which are natural pathways for animals to follow.

Over the past four seasons, there have been 150 cameras placed in the area, more than 100 of which are expressly for survey purposes, at altitudes from 9,000-13,000 feet.

These cameras captured the usual suspects roaming the high Sierra: black bears, coyotes, grey foxes, badgers and mountain lions. They also turned up the presence of kit foxes, a significant detection. That changed when two foxes from Nevada made their way into the area the next year, resulting in 1-3 new litters each season for a population that had been suffering from in-breeding depression.

According to Hatfield, the population increase via genetic induction AKA a genetic rescue of the species is an extremely rare event to capture in the field.

In 2015, Fish and Wildlife embarked on a new project of searching for foxes in the regions south of Yosemite National Park. This consisted of setting up cameras in the fall, complete with lures, and revisiting them come springtime to check footage and freshen the lures. In the Mono Creek site, which lies in the mountains to the northwest of Bishop, Fish and Wildlife workers broke the area into 10 distinct cells and placed cameras in passes as well as along cols, both of which are natural pathways for animals to follow.

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The elusive Sierra Nevada Red Fox

in February 2018 of what Hatfield says are undoubtedly the elusive native fox, taken in a spot that is nearly 120 kilometers from the closest known population. The 2018 survey turned up 16 total detections on 5 camera stations, with scat analysis revealing the presence of three foxes in the area, two females and one male.

In a further twist, the male detected at Mono Creek in summer 2018 had been identified the previous year in Sonora Pass, illustrating that there is “clearly some level of connectivity with the Sonora pass population.”

But for all the answers the survey has revealed, it’s given way to many more questions: Is the population in Mono Creek a remnant of a prior group of foxes or are they all transplants from Sonora? How many of these foxes are there in the Mono Creek region? Is there continuous movement between the two populations? Only time and research will tell.

HATFIELD

Small Batch Craft Distillery, Brewery & Kitchen

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Place An Order Online Before 2pm & We will Deliver Between 3pm-5pm Everyday!

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**Questionable Behavior**

One staffer (and I’m trying not to identify staffers who may not be high enough up on the food chain to properly defend themselves and probably don’t want the attention anyway) was asked to run reports from as far back as 2016 for a Medical Clinic for Dr. Flanigan and Robin Cassidy. She ran the reports, “not knowing that this was to deem the provider not worth what she was making. This made me feel extremely used and sad that I supplied this information.”

From Bryan Harper: I have witnessed the ITS staff struggle for two and a half years filing complaint after complaint only to watch it [sic] be buried by Dr. Kevin S. Flanigan with no resolution causing morale to be at an all-time low …

Another example of unethical leadership is the handling of our former HR chief (whom The Sheet will identify as Evelyn Campos-Diaz).

Letters had gone out to the board members about allegations between Dr. Kevin S. Flanigan and a subordinate. The subordinate and Flanigan had me pick up all the managers’ and directors’ laptops under the pretense that I was doing security patches. Why may you ask? It was believed that our HR Chief had written the letter and it was requested that I bring in all devices so as not to single the HR Chief out. I was then instructed to search on her desktop and laptop for any potential letters or information. I found nothing because I looked for nothing. I am no one’s private investigator nor did I believe this to be ethical.

Speaking of Campos-Diaz, once Flanigan figured out how to get rid of her, he then held her up [her being exiled] to other staff as a cautionary tale.

Says one staffer, “On multiple occasions, Dr. Flanigan would refer to Kevin Dale and Evelyn Campos-Diaz as prime examples of what happens to people ‘if they don’t get the job done.”

**Financial liberties**

Board member Mary Mae Kilpatrick acknowledged that one area where Flanigan may have overstepped his bounds is in exceeding his spending authority.

Any expenditure of more than $40,000 requires Board approval, and yet Flanigan apparently exceeded that limit in his funneling of money to Pioneer Home Health. The first “loan” of $75,000 was made to PHH in 2017. The Sheet could find no record of this transaction in the Board minutes.

Nor could The Sheet find obvious records of subsequent payments.

Kevin S. Flanigan and a subordinate. The She had been quietly funnelled to PHH over the past three years to get them back on their feet.”

The Sheet has made a follow-up request to determine just how much money has been quietly funnelled to PHH over the past three years to keep it solvent.

Robin Cassidy

In February, the following appeared in our story which reported that Kevin Flanigan had made misrepresentations to the NIH Board in order to convince the Board to change medical records providers.

This same employee added, “The I.T. Director [Robin Cassidy] doesn’t know anything about I.T. She has no experience. No one’s ever figured out how she got her job.”

Ms. Cassidy objected to the characterization - a characterization made anonymously by a staffer.

Cassidy was named Northern Inyo’s I.T. Manager in 2000, and assumed the position again in 2012.

In 2006, Ms. Cassidy was employed as AEMR (Ambulatory Electronic Medical Record) Application Analyst by the John Muir Physician Network in Walnut Creek, California, a position she held for four years. She was one of the primary team members that defined work flows and developed the Cerner EMR for 24 primary care outpatient practices.

In 2010, Ms. Cassidy was promoted to Business Operations Manager at the John Muir Physician Network. Her duties included managing the daily operations of thirteen primary care practices.

She returned to the Eastern Sierra in 2012, where she was offered a position as I.T. Director at both Northern Inyo Hospital and Mammoth Hospital.

The point being, she may not have been popular, and the staff may have questioned her decision-making, but she certainly had the resume to qualify herself for the position. There’s still more in the vault. Stay tuned.
Parade of ignorance

Dear Editor,

Seldom have we seen such a parade of ignorance, selfishness and lack of empathy as displayed in some of the recent letters in your paper. Apart from completely nonsensical statements such as stating a “0.005% per capita” fatality rate (just think about that for a second), two stood out as the most egregious. As scientists who live in this community, we would like to address these.

In John Eastman’s letter, he asks why, if new cases are not ill enough to seek medical attention, it means that we have to delay opening. The answer is simple: because it shows that there is still transmission in our town, which can spread to others who could get very sick or die. He also spouts a whole lot of misleading or cherry-picked facts and figures, purporting to show that everyone except the elderly or sick should go back to life as normal. We will observe that: Pretty much all the data we have come back to life as normal. We will observe that: Pretty much all the data we have.

While the virus does disproportionately kill the older among us, it has demonstrated that it kills younger people as well, and we hear reports of new life-threatening complications in young people in New York. How many of our local community dying is Mr. Eastman willing to accept if we reopen too early?

We still don’t know about a long-term effects of the virus. There is increasing evidence of long-term organ damage in some cases, certainly not a “full recovery.”

Lastly, Mr. Eastman suggests that we hire a new County Health Director. We don’t know Dr. Boo, but we have seen what he has done: he took early action, directed the county medical response, got testing in place, promulgated sensible measures based on the best science, and did his best to protect the community while working with local leaders to factor in the inevitable economic damage that would be inflicted. From our perspective, we should be holding him up as an exemplar of sensible, reasoned, evidence-based leadership.

The second letter we would like to address is that of John Rogitz. He, too, seems willing to sacrifice the elderly to the “troubling flu” (what troubles us are people who think like this). Maybe he should ask his elderly relatives what they think? And then the use of “science” (in “scare quotes”) - in our experience, people who express themselves like this have a preconceived notion of how the world should work, and when people who know better (those pesky “scientists”) have evidence to the contrary, disparage them instead of assessing that evidence for themselves. If they’re so sure they know better, perhaps they should forgo all the things science has given us in the last 100 years for a while to see how they enjoy it. Unbiased, non-partisan science will lead us out of this pandemic. Let’s support the scientific community instead of maligning it.

We are keen as anyone to see things open up and to see people back at work, and enjoying all that we have to offer. We are not just willing to see our friends, neighbors, and family risk unnecessary exposure to a really nasty disease to achieve that. The current path and standards towards reopening seem based on solid science, and balance the risk/reward towards a really nasty disease to achieve that. Thank you to all the local officials who struggle with this balance, and please ignore the ignorant and uncaring.

Dallas & Alistair Veitch

Mammoth Lakes

Don’t let ‘em Inn

April 16, the Mono County Planning Commission held a public hearing for the Tioga Inn project. In these times of COVID, the hearing was presented via Zoom. Having followed the Tioga Inn project for some time and having attended the county’s previous meeting regarding the project in February, I tuned in from my home in June Lake.

During the hearing more than a hundred people from Mono County and beyond took their turns voicing their opinions and concerns regarding the project. The overwhelming majority of the people who spoke were Mono County residents, and most all of them expressed reservations about the project.

I was inspired listening to residents and visitors alike speak to the many flaws that plague the Tioga Inn. After a lengthy public comment period and a surprisingly short deliberation, the Planning Commission held a vote to approve or reject the project. With a nearly 50-1 opposition to proponent ratio through public comment, I thought no way can the Commission in good conscience give their blessing to this project in its current form.

I was wrong.

The Planning Commission willfully discounted the collective voice of Mono County residents and approved a deeply flawed plan that will exacerbate our housing crisis, hurt local businesses, and damage the valuable natural resources of the area.

As a renter, finding an affordable long-term rental is nearly impossible. The market is dominated by VRBOs and Airbnbs. The Tioga Inn will only exacerbate this shortage. While the project touted a 100-unit workforce housing development, it only partially covers the needs of the expected 150 future employees and their families. Further, the affordability of these units is unknown. Could we analyze if the Inn making minimum, or near minimum wage even afford to rent one of these units? For the employees who will not receive housing from the Inn either because of financial incapacity issues, where will they turn for a roof over their heads? Lee Vining? June Lake? Mammoth? It is unlikely that any of these communities can accommodate this influx.

The project would double the current population of Lee Vining. This will put immense strain on the community’s resources, school and hospital, police and fire, and public works. Both parents and school administrators say that Lee Vining schools are not capable of handling a large increase in student enrollment. The county has stated that they are neither staffed, nor equipped to serve a development this size of the scale. And the infrastructure needed to accommodate the increase in people, cars, and traffic is not there. The expense to expand services and infrastructure will fall burden to the taxpayers of Mono County, not the developer.

I am not against development. Thoughtful and well-planned development can lead to economic growth for Mono County. But to protect our natural resources, development should complement not detract from the beauty of the landscape, and they should have deep consideration for the impacts, positive and negative, for the communities around them. The plan for this project is half-baked, putting profit for a few over the community of Lee Vining, the environment, and Mono County as a whole. In June, the Board of Supervisors will review and vote on whether this project can move forward as is. I sincerely hope that ahead of the meeting they revisit all the public comments submitted in response to the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) and watch the April 16 Planning Commission hearing (the video is posted to the county’s webpage). Along with many other Mono County residents, I am asking the Board and the Tioga Inn to find a better plan that the community can support.

John Krueger

June Lake
**TOWN STUFF**

**Friday, May 22**
Sierra Star golf course opens up for the season. Tee times required. Local and State guidelines will be followed. Visit [https://www.mammothmountain.com/sierra-star-golf](https://www.mammothmountain.com/sierra-star-golf) or call 760.924.GOLF for tee times.

**Monday, May 25**
Memorial Day. Remember those who sacrificed for us.

**Tuesday, May 26**
Mono County Treasury Oversight Committee meets 9:30 a.m. over teleconference. For agenda and meeting: [https://monocounty.ca.gov/meetings](https://monocounty.ca.gov/meetings)

Inyo County Board of Supervisors meets starting 8:30 a.m. over teleconference. For Zoom link: visit [https://zoom.us/j/868254781](https://zoom.us/j/868254781). Agenda available at inyocounty.us

Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra (DSES) hosts Story Time with Cara and Jack. 4 p.m. This week: Cara and Jack will share a selection of books by Julia Donaldson, author of The Gruffalo and The Fish Who Cried Wolf. Zoom Link: [https://zoom.us/j/2417846813](https://zoom.us/j/2417846813)

**Wednesday, May 27**
FREE COVID-19 testing at the Public Health pop-up clinic in front of the Mammoth Food Bank from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Free testing, masks, hand sanitizer and flyers.

Inyo County hosts a weekly business to business webinar hosted by Asst. CAO Leslie Chapman. Time: 3 p.m. For details/link, visit [www.inyocounty.us](http://www.inyocounty.us)

**Thursday, May 28**
Mono County’s Covid-19 weekly community conversation. 5:30 p.m.

**Friday, May 29**
“Virtual” Art and Wine hosted by Marijke Jff. The demonstration is titled ‘Acrylic Dreamin of Bison’ and costs $15 for class only. After signup a secure Zoom link will be emailed to you. Supplies/ signup available at monoarts.org.

**Ongoing**
Mammoth Taxi Delivery brings you free local restaurant deliveries. Call for availability. 760.937.8294.

Vons offers two hours of shopping Monday-Friday from 7-9 a.m. for those shoppers who may be virus-vulnerable.

Mammoth Food Bank hours are 10-12 only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Fishmas is June 1, unless it’s not.

The U.S. Census is hiring. Immediate need for applicants to fill our Census Taker positions. No experience necessary; Paid training. Paid weekly: Flexible Schedule: $7.50 per mile driven! Please call: Vicki Lewis, Recruiter 661.447.7238 or email @ Victoria.lewis@2020census.gov for immediate registration.
ROGUE WAVES

By Casselman

A rogue wave is an unexpected maritime danger for ships and boats at sea. Rogue waves are not fully understood, but they have long damaged or sunk vessels of all sizes (the tallest known rogue wave was estimated a 115 feet high; the tallest precisely measured was 80 feet high).

Big waves that occur in storms, from earthquakes or volcanoes (tsunamis), or from other explainable causes, are not rogue waves.

It is not too soon, I think, to speculate about and discuss U.S. global strategic and security relationships during and after the pandemic “rogue wave” which is now occurring worldwide.

A world war debate is as old as “the halls of Montezuma” and “the shores of Tripoli” – that is, when and where to extend American power, and should we be the guardian or a policeman of the globe.

Two world wars, several regional wars, and numerous humanitarian rescue efforts have left contemporary American leaders weary and wary of putting our soldiers in harm’s way without “victory” or at least visible positive outcomes. Yet a savage 20th century instructed the Western democracies our willingness to take strategic passivity or avoidance costs.

That debate continues.

Many historians have pointed out that what really enabled the catastrophe of World War II was the global economic and political trauma of the Great Depression.

This further complicates the decision-making about when and where to reopen economies that have been shut down. It is not too soon, I think, to speculate about and discuss U.S. global strategic and security relationships during and after the pandemic “rogue wave” which is now occurring worldwide.

The debate continues.

Many historians have pointed out that what really enabled the catastrophe of World War II was the global economic and political trauma of the Great Depression.
The Town of Mammoth Lakes will receive sealed bids for the work shown on the plans entitled:

2020 PARKS ELECTRICAL UPDATE In the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546, to be awarded to the successful bidder, copies of which are available on the Town of Mammoth Lakes website at http://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.

Sealed proposals will be received until 2:00 PM on Thursday, May 28, 2020 at the Town of Mammoth Lakes, 366 E. 5th Street, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 to ensure timely receipt, by email at mdraper@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.

No telephone calls will be accepted. Written comments for inclusion in the record concerning the plans, specifications and the site of all work will be considered. The successful bidder will enter into the proposed contract if it be awarded.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any defects or irregularities in any proposal. The Town of Mammoth Lakes shall not be responsible for any proposal held by the Town of Mammoth Lakes which is not accepted.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes reserves the right to modify the plans, specifications and the site of all work at any time during the contract period.
THE GREATEST SPY WHO EVER LIVED?

By Lunch

“An Impeccable Spy”
Owen Matthews
Bloomsbury
351 p.

As the English author, journalist and former spy Frederick Forsyth is quoted as saying on the back of the book jacket, “The spies in history who can say from their graves, the information I supplied to my masters, for better or worse, altered the history of our planet, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Richard Sorge was in that group.”

Sorge, as anyone with an ounce of deductive reasoning may surmise, is the impeccable spy profiled in this compelling book by Owen Matthews. Well, at least pages 73-351 are compelling. The first 73 pages are pretty dry. So let me save you a few hours by compressing the first fifth of the book into a paragraph or two. Then you can skip directly to my masters, for better or worse, altered their graves, the information I supplied on empty talk of the heritage of the past or turned to anti-Semitism or Roman Catholicism.”

Then came the Bolshevik coup in Russia. Which convinced the impressionable and idealistic Sorge to become a communist.

Sorge cut his teeth in the spy game in Shanghai, which is where he met many of the future collaborators of the spy ring he formed in Tokyo.

His cover: A journalist, of course. A hard-drinking, old school version. And his drinking, womanizing, bravado and recklessness created the perfect cover.

“He created the impression of being a playboy, almost a wastrel, the very antithesis of a keen and dangerous spy.”

The key question which stood at the center of Sorge’s career - Japan, and whether its expansionist intentions lay to the south (China) or to the north (Russia). Which convinced the impressionable Stalinist, who penetrated the inner circles of Hitler’s betrayer, his western front – or whether such a move would invite a Japanese attack of his exposed flank.
SPY
continued from page 18
his Secret Police to commence the “Purges.” The police summarily arrested 1.5 million “suspects” and executed approximately 682,000. “Almost every Soviet officer who had ever visited Germany or worked with the Reichswehr was murdered.”

“In all, Soviet military intelligence had six different heads between 1937 and 1939, five of whom would be executed.” So on the eve of WWII, yes, Stalin pretty much eliminated his own top military talent.

And Stalin was convinced his intelligence apparatus was riddled with saboteurs. “Sorge was protected by his ignorance and isolation.” Every agent in Europe knew an order back to Moscow was a death sentence. Sorge didn’t obey the order to return, either by intuition or accident. Said he’d be delayed.

And by the time he could return, they told him don’t bother. But he was never really trusted again, regardless of the strength of his work, because he was considered an “unreturned” person.

So the irony was when Sorge (among many others in Russia’s intelligence network) told Stalin that Hitler was planning an attack. Stalin ignored the warnings. And his intelligence chief at the time (no dummy, having seen five of his predecessors executed), knew better than to contradict the boss.

It was only after the German invasion that Stalin, albeit reluctantly, heeded Sorge’s intelligence regarding Japan’s intentions. Japan, in essence, decided to wait-and-see regarding the success of the German offensive. If the Germans took Moscow – then they’d throw down. So Stalin knew there was no imminent threat from Japan and could freely move troops to face the Germans in the west.

By late 1941 when Sorge’s ring was discovered, it had already begun to crumble. Clausen, whose cover was that of a businessman, had succeeded so well in his business that he had largely renounced communism.

Meanwhile, Sorge sensed that the jig was almost up and just a week before his arrest, “had decided to wind up the Tokyo spy ring whether Centre liked it or not.”

But when things did fall apart, Sorge was brave and resolute. “He had courage, great courage, and a romantic’s sense of mission: when his colleagues were arrested he lay in bed drinking, waiting for the end.”

At his hanging, he instructed that his Leica camera and dictionaries be given to his executioners [for he did love Tokyo and its people] upon his death.

As his arms and legs were bound and the noose put around his neck, Sorge spoke three phrases in loud, clear Japanese. ‘Sakigun [the Red Army]! Kokusai Kyosanto [the Int’l Communist Party]! Soviet Kyosanto [the Soviet Communist Party]!’

And then the door opened beneath his feet and Sorge dropped into oblivion. A Japanese Governor who witnessed the execution said he’d never seen anyone act as nobly.

LETTERS
continued from page 5
Lake Committee (MLC) is “helping” the Forest Service manage flows to the ranch.

A non-profit “environmental” group with its own agenda is now “helping” a government agency manage its water right? Water which belongs to the public. And what kind of “help” is this? Help in ruining the DeChambeau Ponds in the middle of nesting season? Help in drying out Wilson Creek based on its own agenda in service of Mill Creek?

If the Forest Service wanted help destroying habitat around Mono Lake, you would think they’d be getting it from LADWP, not the MLC.

It is clear that the water management in north Mono Basin is not at all “balanced” or “thought out” but is in fact, astonishingly reckless. These recent actions are likely breaking several environmental laws, including the Migratory Bird Act. They are also violating the Forest Service’s own Scenic Area Management Plan, which is supposed to be the “guiding light” for management issues in the Mono Basin.

In the middle of this terrible pandemic, we need to protect and preserve our beautiful natural resources more than ever. This must be stopped.

Hillary Hansen Jones
Lee Vining

Recent photograph of a dried-up DeChambeau pond.

PHOTO: HANSEN

RECREAR RESPONSABLEMENTE

No te reúnas en grupos

No comparta equipo: pelotas, bicicletas, bates, discos, comida o agua

Mantenga distancia física de 6 pies o más

6’ o más

Cúbrase la boca y la nariz al toser o estornudar con un pañuelo desechable o el codo

¡ALOJÉSE EN CASA SI ESTA ENFERMO!

LÁVATE LAS MANOS CON FRECUENCIA

¡No olvides tu máscara o tu rostro!

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CONDADO DE MONO
centro de Tierra de recursos

¡No olvides tu máscara o tu rostro!

Mantenga distancia física de 6 pies o más

¡No te reúnas en grupos

LTE SIENTES ENFERMO?
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