**KING OF THE JUNE-GLE**

Tiger Bar reopens after temporary shutdown for Covid violations

**By Hite**

The Tiger Bar in June Lake was temporarily closed on June 27 due to a lack of compliance regarding COVID-19 protocols.

The order came from Mono County Health Officer Thomas Boo.

“It is very hard to social distance in a bar. I can’t be watching what happens 24/7,” said Tiger Bar owner Jill Wallentine.

“What I think happened is people got more drinks in them and my bartenders weren’t enforcing it.”

“It does feel like Mono County used us as an example,” Wallentine added.

Tiger Bar was shut down due to a number of anonymous complaints that were lodged with Mono County. “In the case of the Tiger Bar, it started some weeks ago with complaints about crowding/lack of distancing and failure of staff to wear face coverings,” said Boo in an email to The Sheet.

According to Boo, Louis Molina, Director of Environmental Health, went to Tiger Bar and informed management of the protocols. Tiger Bar confirmed it would comply. Then another complaint came in. “[This] prompted my Friday evening visit. I did not speak with management during my visit, I simply observed and confirmed the violations. Then we had a Saturday morning Zoom meeting with county attorneys to decide what to do. The Sheriff’s Department served the closure order later that afternoon.”

Wallentine told The Sheet, “I can’t be there all the time. When I leave, I don’t know exactly what happens.”

After multiple conversations with members of the June Lake Community, there were some questions about who complained. One person, who wished to remain anonymous, complained. One person, who wished to remain anonymous, wanted to be a writer. But I didn’t see KENDRA, page 2.

**ONE FISH, TWO FISH, RED FISH, DEAD FISH**

Fish hatcheries report own version of Covid; stocking threatened

**By Page**

A recent bacterial outbreak at fish hatcheries in the Eastern Sierra and Southern California has the potential to devastate fish populations around the state.

The bacteria, identified as lactococcus garvieae, was found to be making fish ill at the Mojave River hatchery and has also been detected at the Black Rock Hatchery in Independence and the Fish Springs Hatchery in Big Pine. The findings were confirmed on June 25.

The Hot Creek Hatchery in Mammoth Lakes was quarantined as a suspected fourth site of the bacteria but was later found to be clean.

According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, L. garvieae has never been seen in California before. Symptoms of the bacteria in fish include bulging eyes, lethargic or erratic swimming, darkening skin, swollen abdomens and increased mortality. Infected fish can also be asymptomatic, depending on factors like water temperature and stress.

Sound familiar? Note: fish-human transmission of the bacteria is extremely rare.

Stocking from the affected facilities has been halted while staff attempts to treat the fish and prevent bacteria spread. Once fish have recovered and the bacteria is no longer a threat to the environment, stocking can resume.

Treatment includes lowering the water temperature and adding chemicals. The bacteria is no longer present when the water temperature is lowered and the fish are treated.

Treatment includes lowering the water temperature and adding chemicals. The bacteria is no longer present when the water temperature is lowered and the fish are treated.
KENDRA continued from page 1

know what I wanted to write about.”

Her “a-ha!” moment came when she attended a lecture by the writer Ian Frazier. Frazier, a regular contributor at the New Yorker magazine, was discussing his book “The Great Plains.”

Which introduced Atleework to the “literary non-fiction” genre. “A place can be a character,” says Atleework. And given the nature of the Owens Valley, with its history of water wars and natural disasters, “There’s no shortage of plot around here,” she says with a twinkle.

The book starts with a description of the 2015 Round Fire which burned 42 structures in Swall Meadows.

The fire did spare Kendra’s childhood home. It also serves as an introduction to the land. To the drought of 2012-2016. And a jumping off point to discuss the history of the valley, not only the history with the city of Los Angeles, but the wider history of Native disenfranchise-

ment.

Running parallel to that narrative is Atleework’s personal narrative, the death of her mother at age 16, and how the remaining members of that nuclear family (Kendra, siblings Kaela and Anthony, and father Robert) were at first shattered, and then slowly reassembled, in fits and starts, into a new whole.

And while the Owens Valley part is meticulously researched and can be appreciated across the full spectrum (from the novice to the avid local history buff) it’s the stories of family that make the book.

Work, Atlee and the collected Atleeworks are a colorful, stubborn, badass crew. From Kaela hitchhiking across Paraguay to Anthony’s battles with authority to Robert’s near-fatal hot air ballooning escapade, this a bunch that tests limits.

But the baddest ass of all was Kendra’s mother Jan, who died of cancer when the children were 16, 14 and 11.

From Jan’s stint teaching in Lee Vining: “When storms closed the highway, she [Jan] skied 17 miles through a canyon over fresh avalanche debris to feed the class hamsters.”

Or there’s the great vignette from Jan’s childhood: “She crept out at night and did not tell her parents where she was going, saying ‘Trust me,’ until they followed her to a drug rehab facility. When they called the place panicked, they learned that she volunteered on the late shift, answering the crisis line.”

Or from Mono County Search and Rescue, where Jan volunteered to be buried alive with a breathing tube so that others could practice looking for bodies. The book is brought to a satisfying conclusion as Atleework comes to terms with her mother’s death, the reconstituted family dynamic, and her relationship with a man who’s been dead eighty years, L.A. Aqueduct engineer William Mulholland.

During the writing of the book, “I had a long and contentious relationship with William Mulholland. But as I continued to research, my view of Mulhol-

land became more nuanced. I inherited a disgruntled feeling about the valley’s history, but then … William Mulholland just got so much more complex,” says Kendra.

Great book. Easily vaults to top three books I’ve read in the past twenty years produced by local authors. The other two are Log of a Snow Survey by Patrick Armstrong and The Fatal Affair in Monte Diablo Canyon by Jim Reed. And she may very well be #1.

Interdependence Day

The betting lines are already up.

Some think we’ll be shut back down within a week. Others give it two.

I’m not a control freak. And I’m not perfect about the mask. It’s especially difficult in a restaurant setting where the server is constantly coming and going and one is eating, etc. There’s a lot of juggling required. Sometimes the words get ahead of the mask adjustment. Mistakes are inevitable. But I’ve always got one around my neck. I’m generally cautious. I want to do the right thing.

The maintaining distance comes fairly naturally - a newspaper publisher doesn’t like getting too close to anybody anyway.

But a few observations.

1. Why does it surprise anyone that this country can’t handle the self-disci-

pline required by quarantine, can’t work as a team for common benefit? We have the temperament of adolescent children. And all the fortitude of a paper straw.

2. Folks can’t seem to understand that the mask-wearing is for other people. Preventing you from infecting others. Not wearing a mask means you don’t give a shit about anyone but yourself.

Honesty, what this likely means is that a renewed wave is coming and a shutdown perhaps imminent. This would prevent future guests from enjoying the area, and prevent local businesses from staying open in any meaningful, profitable way. But I suppose by then, all the people who created the problem will be long gone. Their vacations will be over. And they don’t really give a damn about the next guy, the next family.

You know, I’ve never liked the tribalism. I like tourists. They’re generally friendly. And they help butter my bread.

But damnit, if you don’t cover up, you’re the enemy. And don’t be surprised if you’re treated as such.

Stephen Kalish called The Sheet mentioning that he was up in the Rock Creek area this week on a hike with his wife to Ruby Lake. In the morning, he said everything was normal. People were wearing masks and the parking lot, which is always a little tight, was at least manageable.

On the return from Ruby, after 11 a.m., Kalish claimed he passed around 150 people and only 15% were wearing masks.

No one had the decency to step off the trail to let he and Rosemary pass. On the return from Ruby, after 11 a.m., Kalish claimed he passed around 150 people and only 15% were wearing masks.

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Do no harm

Dear Editor,

One of the greatest assets in the Mammoth Lakes area is the bike and hike trail from Horseshoe Lake, around the other lakes, down into and around the town. For all those involved in putting that together, thank you!!!

I am a long time local road cyclist that never has had a negative experience riding this trail until today. To my horror and surprise, the U.S. Forest Service has cut down and killed a large portion of the forest in the Lakes Basin.

What remains are numerous piles of cut up trees, tree stumps everywhere, with what seems like more stumps than trees. The trees fortunate to survive the mass killing make the area look like a tree farm rather than the natural, wild forest it used to be.

I have been in the service industry locally for close to 40 years, and what I have found most wonderful about conversations with our international guest is that they say the hiking in the Sierra is the best in the world. When asked why, they respond unanimously saying the Sierra is still natural, unmanaged, uncut, so different then the other over-managed forests they have hiked and seen around the world.

I have heard the argument that they must thin the forest to prevent wild fires, but that seems terribly incorrect. The most damaging fire in Mono County was the Swall Meadows fire with 40 homes being destroyed in an area with very few trees. The terrible Paradise fire in northern California they say hit them so fast because there were no trees to slow it down due to previous fires and management.

People come here for the trees. A solution for human-caused climate change is trees which remove fossil fuel waste from the air.

In a forest that has had millions of trees die off due to a lack of water, water needed to produce sap to keep the native beetles in balance; does it make any sense to think that we would manage the forest by killing it too? Cutting the trees down is killing the forest, isn’t it?

It is mind-boggling to me that mankind’s ego believes without our management of nature, nature could not survive, when truly the only thing out of control on this planet in need of management is ourselves.

Please stop killing the trees, Forest Service. Just let them be.

Michael Ahles
Mammoth Lakes

Put it in reverse

Dear Mammoth Lakes Town Council/Mono Board of County Supervisors:

In light of the extreme spiking of the Covid-19 virus throughout California (as well as the rest of this country), we urge you to reverse the opening that has begun in Mammoth Lakes and Mono County. Many of our residents are high-risk people, and their safety is at stake. Because the virus is so unpredictable, even those not considered “high-risk” could become extremely ill with life altering conditions that never completely clear.

This reversal should be done before the 4th of July. It is estimated Los Angeles County currently has 1 in 70 people who are infectious. These same people are flooding into Mono County. Which wouldn’t be so bad if they followed the rules and wore masks.

But they do not wear masks. In truth, no one enforces either physical/social distancing or mask wearing. Many will place a mask that only covers their mouth, which is almost worthless. Tourists become belligerent when requested to put on their masks or lift them up from their chin.

Yesterday morning, one of the night managers at Vons relayed the following story. A few days ago, there was an altercation between a masked local and an unmasked tourist. When the local asked the tourist to please mask up, the tourist’s response was to threaten to pull a gun.

The Town of Taos recently adopted the following set of guidelines. We might want to consider something similar. As a fellow resort town, they’ve experienced much the same set of issues.

The Taos Council considers passed an amendment to a civil emergency proclamation on Tuesday, June 30.

The amendment addresses non-compliance of tourists and employees with public health orders to social distance and wear masks.

Among its provisions:

A. The wearing of face coverings when in public or interacting with the public or in a place where a person may interact with the public, deliberately or not, all persons including employees, customers, residents, and tourists over the age of 5, shall be required to wear face coverings.

B. Social distancing (maintaining a distance in all directions of a minimum of 6 feet) shall be maintained by all persons when outside of your home, temporary or permanent residence. All businesses, offices, organizations, museums, movie theaters, galleries, spas, gymnasiums, offices, health facilities, any and all commercial activities, whether for-profit or non-profit, shall provide such physical and informational measures as required to maintain social distancing between all persons.

C. Staff is directed, through the Town Manager, to produce necessary informational mechanisms so as to alert businesses, the public and tourists as to these requirements and shall develop a system of reporting and enforcement so as to ensure their implementation in consultation with the Town Code Officer, the Chief of Police and the Town Attorney.

D. Violations of this order shall be considered a petty misdemeanor, consistent with the ‘Town Code and laws of the state of New Mexico.

Item D is crucial. Without teeth, no edict, law, or proclamation is worth the paper it’s written on.

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LOCAL BRIEFS

$20 million housing grant

“The California Department of Housing and Community Development is pleased to announce Pacific West Communities, Inc. and the Town of Mammoth Lakes have been awarded an Infrastructure Grant (IIG) Program of 2019 Small Jurisdiction award in the amount of $20,601,216.”

This award is a significant step forward in the Town’s efforts to develop affordable housing on The Parcel. These funds can be used for a wide-variety of uses that will accelerate the realization of the community’s vision of the 25-acre parcel purchased by the Town in 2018,” stated Grady Dutton, Public Works Director.

A quick summary from Housing and Community Development (HCD) states To be eligible for funding, a Capital Improvement Project must be an integral part of, or necessary for the development of either a Qualifying Infill Project or housing designated within a Qualifying Infill Area. Eligible costs include the construction, rehabilitation, demolition, relocation, preservation, and acquisition of infrastructure. IIG is grant assistance, available as gap funding to infrastructure improvements required for specific residential or mixed-use infill development.

Mammoth’s Town Council will determine the planned use of the $20.6 million IIG award later this summer.

COVID-19 Check-in

California had its highest single day Coronavirus case count on Wednesday, July 1. The total number of new cases totaled 9,746.

The steadily rising seven day average prompted Governor Gavin Newsom, in a Tuesday press conference, to impose harsher regulations in 19 different counties.

The 19 counties represent over 70% of California’s population.

The restrictions are in place for three weeks and will affect a wide range of businesses including bars, restaurants, wineries, zoos, and museums.

Inyo County was not on this list of 19 counties but has experienced a slight surge. On June 15 the total number of positive cases was 24. Now that number is 33. 22 have recovered. 10 are pending.

And there has been one death.

According to a June 30 Inyo County press release, of the new cases, three were related to locals who were infected from visitors from out of the area. Two of the cases came from a party or a get-together. And three of the new cases were related to locals traveling and bringing COVID back with them.

Mono County has had one new positive COVID-19 case bringing the total to 41 positive with the one death still on record.

Bridgeport retreats from parade

As of this Tuesday, Bridgeport’s Fourth of July parade has been switched to a virtual parade due to COVID—but it’s not just another Zoom meeting.

Ran Cleland Hoff’s “virtual parade” will feature anyone who wants to participate, taking pictures of their own celebrations in Bridgeport and posting those pictures on social media under the hashtag #bridgeport4thofjuly2020. “We want to see you eating at our local restaurants, shopping at our local stores, hanging out and celebrating with friends, any floats you may have, and houses or businesses that are decorated,” reads the Bridgeport website. “Let’s share why Bridgeport has one of the best 4th of July [celebrations].” Street vendors and fireworks are still happening.

SAUSER, REA WILL RUN FOR COUNCIL

Nomination papers for Mammoth Lakes Town Council are available in less than two weeks. One incumbent has already committed to running again while another remains on the fence.

Mayor Bill Sausser told The Sheet, “It is currently my plan to run again.” Then The Sheet asked what could possibly dissuade him from running and Sausser responded, “I honestly can’t think of a scenario at this point. But I am old enough to know that anything can happen.”

Sausser kept it short and sweet. As always.

Cleland Hoff’s situation is less straightforward. Hoff told The Sheet that COVID-19 has, “changed the landscape of politics so much,” and her future as a politician has become less clear as a result.

Hoff appreciates all that she has learned and said if she senses that the community needs her for another term, she will run. For now, Hoff is, “up in the air.”

If Hoff does run, both she and Sausser will have a challenger.

Sarah Rea, who currently works at Mammoth Hospital as the Administrative Assistant to CEO Tom Parker, confirmed that she is planning on running in the upcoming election.

When asked to provide one sentence that described why, Rea responded, “I am running for Mammoth’s Town Council because I have been in the workforce here for a decade and I believe we need someone to represent all of us.

For more information on Sarah Rea’s campaign, visit votesarahrea.com

Regarding the election, the following information comes courtesy of Mammoth Lakes.

A Municipal Election will be held in the Town of Mammoth Lakes on Tuesday, November 3, 2020 for the purpose of electing two members to the Town Council. The term of office for each seat is four years. Councilmembers are paid $735 per month.

Candidates must be registered voters and reside within the Town. Nomination Papers will be available from the Town Clerk by appointment starting on Monday, July 13, 2020. The deadline for filing of Nomination Papers is 5 p.m. on Friday, August 7, 2020.

If nomination papers for an incumbent officer (either Bill Sausser or Cleland Hoff) of the Town are not filed by August 7, 2020, the voters shall have until August 12, 2020 to nominate candidates other than the incumbents.

Citizens interested in running for a seat can contact Town Clerk Jamie Gray at 760.965.3602 for further information.
Monds. County supes delay decision on Tioga Inn

By Page and Trefry

A fter a victory at the Mono County Planning Commission, by way of unanimous approval, the fate of the Tioga Inn would finally be known come the end of June.

The supposed last steps of Dennis Domaille’s Tioga Inn development project, 27 years in the making, took place at the Mono County Board of Supervisor’s special hearing on June 29 and 30.

The end result: punted to the middle of July for a final decision.

After 15 hours of public hearing, Q&A’s, and deliberation, the board opted to hold off on making decision until the process could be fully completed at another time.

Monday and Tuesday’s public hearing rehearsed much of the same information that was presented to the Planning Commission in April (see last week’s edition for a recap), with some changes added after the conclusion of that vote as a result of public input on the matter.

Some of these changes included a new phase plan that would have 70 units of employee housing available at the time of hiring employees, stabilizing and replanting disturbed soil to limit dust and encourage regrowth, and establishing a trail connector between Tioga Inn and Lee Vining.

According to consultant Sandra Baumer, both Caltrans and Southern California Edison have expressed a willingness to make that path a reality and in doing so reduce pedestrian danger on SR120 and Highway 89.

Prior to opening the public hearing, the Supervisors were permitted to ask their own questions of Domaille, Bauer and Gerry LeFrancois, a land use and transportation planner with Mono County.

Supervisor Bob Gardner, who represents Lee Vining on the Board, went first and asked by far the most questions of any of the present supervisors.

He inquired about landslide and flooding potential on the site, the latter of which Domaille dismissed as highly unlikely given the surrounding terrain.

Gardner also pushed Domaille about how the project would affect the rural nature of the area, asking, “Is the creation of 100 units of housing not substantially changing the rural area? That seems to be a concern.”

Domaille responded that, in spite of the new housing, the town and surrounding area would still maintain a rural designation according to state law.

In response to a later question about why Domaille hadn’t sought county approval on existing housing structures on the site, and why should be be then expected to follow rules for the new development, Domaille told the board, “If this project is denied and there’ll be no housing, I’d probably be more inclined to sell it to a guy that doesn’t care about housing.”

Supervisor Fred Stump expressed concern that the project hinged too directly on grant funding to proceed and that without it, the project would be dead in the water.

“For me, there’s a little bit of a stack of dominos that one has to fall to start the rest of the track,” Stump said.

Mono County Community Development Director Wendy Sugimura answered that grant funding doesn’t necessarily impact the project directly as it becomes an economic decision for the owner on whether or not to proceed.

Sugimura added that there are additional benefits related to grant funding, like mandated affordable housing, that would allow for the project to be even more beneficial to the community.

After Board questions wrapped up, Vice Chair Jennifer Kreitz opened the public hearing portion of the meeting and invited Eastern Sierra Unified School District (ESUSD) superintendent Heidi Torix to voice her concerns first. Those concerns were related to the impact that the housing development would have on the small school district.

Torix highlighted three key points: financial impact, safety related to student travel, and student-staff impacts in the classroom.

ESUSD, as a basic aid district, is primarily funded by tax dollars. More students, Torix argued, means less money spent for each child. In addition, the projected increase in the student body would require the district to hire at least two new teachers, a cost not covered by developer fees from local projects, that would add an additional $240,000-360,000 to an already formidable budget deficit. New students would also result in a less optimal student-teacher ratio across the district.

The transportation issue, as Torix noted, is due to the lack of safe pedestrian pathways into town and the fact that the school nor Tioga Inn would be obligated to provide transportation to and from school.

After Torix, Caelen McQuilken, a recent graduate of Lee Vining High School, stepped to the podium to emphasize the importance of small class sizes at LVHS and close-knit community of Lee Vining as a whole.

Paul McFarland stressed the need for a safe path between the Tioga Inn and Lee Vining, explaining “I’ve scraped pedestrians and cyclists off the pavement. once you do that, you become an advocate for safety.”

McFarland also alluded to a lack of transparency between the developer and the community, noting, “If you had a project in your town that potentially tripled the population at one time, wouldn’t you want transparency?”

Manuel Santillan took a different stance on the project. “If more entities in Lee Vining keep fighting against housing, Lee Vining will become a tourist attraction. A ghost town, like Bodie.”

“Some people don’t like changes, they don’t like to get out of their comfort zone,” Santillan said, “But doing nothing to keep this town running, that’s different.”

Domaille was allowed to respond to public comment before the meeting wrapped up for the day.

In response to concerns about the schools, Domaille said, “You heard Heidi say that people move to Lee Vining area because schools are good, I’ve had wonderful employees come out of there. However, Lee Vining High School fails a lot of students.”

Domaille brought up numerous examples of people pulling their kids out of Lee Vining schools simply because the school couldn’t provide what they needed, be it athletics or a special education program.

“What kind of a deal is it when you’ve gotta take your cousin to the prom?” Domaille asked.

As for transparency, Domaille cited a community meeting regarding the Tioga Inn project that he hadn’t been invited to nor informed about until after it had concluded. “It’s gotta kinda be a two way street,” Domaile said.

Domaille indicated that regardless of the outcome of the Inn at the hands of the Supervisors, he would be fighting its 27-year burden on another, potentially his daughter, if things worked out.

Said Domaille: “Lee Vining can come to life again, that’s my dream. I’m not gonna be the one to do it. Something is going to happen with that property, in the near future, and I want it to be the right thing.”

see PUNTED, page 6
The Board reconvened on Tuesday for deliberations that were almost as lengthy. Staff and supervisors went through the project documents to discuss the impacts of the project and the changes that had been proposed during public comment. The supervisors’ approximate positions quickly became clear. Supervisors Fred Stump and Bob Gardner had the most concerns about the project, while John Peters seemed mostly neutral, and Jennifer Kreitz (a strong proponent of affordable housing) appeared to be an advocate.

Supervisor Kreitz mentioned that the Tioga Inn hotel and restaurant (already irrevocably approved in 1993) would likely have larger light-pollution and visual impacts than the proposed workforce housing. With the hotel and restaurant off the table, however, Supervisor Kreitz said “the housing is unfortunately taking such a beating… because it’s the only thing we can talk about.”

During the five-plus hours of deliberations, many changes were made to the project. As Supervisor Stump said, “the more we go on here, the less I feel I am ready to vote on this because of all the changes that are happening.”

Perhaps most significantly, a new design alternative was put forward during public comment, combining two of the options that were already approved. But supervisors Stump and Gardner were hesitant to make a decision on it without such visual representation.

A concern often shared by Lee Vining residents is that the developer will get approval and build the housing, bringing hundreds of new people to Lee Vining, without ever building the accompanying hotel and restaurant to give jobs to those people. So, the project will be rigidly phased. Only 30 units (and a daycare facility for their residents) can be built in Phase 1 right away. The next 40 units in Phase 2 can be started only when the walls of the hotel and restaurant start to go up. Finally, Phase 3 can be built when the housing built in Phases 1 and 2 reaches 80% occupancy. The housing units that would be visible from South Tufa would all be in Phase 3, so if Phase 3 is never built, those visual impacts would never materialize.

As for the additional population added by the Tioga Inn workforce housing: average household size in Mono County is about 2.6, so multiply that by 100 units (at full build-out in the final phase) and the population added to Lee Vining will be between 200 and 300. It is correct to say that the project could triple the population of Lee Vining, but it is a ballpark estimate, and the increase will be over the course of many years, since the housing is phased.

The majority of the housing is not intended to be officially affordable housing, which comes with both grants and restrictions, but there are 3-4 deed-restricted affordable units as required by Mono County Housing Mitigation ordinances. Domaille said he might pursue affordable housing grants, and that option is left open, but if he can’t get a grant the project is unlikely to be developed as affordable housing. (It will still be workforce housing in that it is intended for the workforce, but it will not be regulated the way affordable housing is.)

Another perceived problem with the project: fire-safety impacts. The Lee Vining Volunteer Fire Department has said it would struggle to protect such a large development, and claimed that they were not adequately consulted during the process. “We thought we were addressing their concerns and that they felt the same way… it turned out that wasn’t the case, and we deeply regret that,” said Sugimura, noting that meetings were conducted with the fire department.

The current proposal still lacks a fire escape route directly onto 395, which would have to cross other properties (some owned by the LADWP, which is known to be difficult to work with). Domaille does not own the property all the way to 395, so the project can’t be required to develop the escape route. Nor is another escape route required by Caltrans. Both the current exit points exit onto Highway 120, inside a canyon that could burn quickly.

There is more optimism about developing a safe pedestrian trail to connect the project with Lee Vining: John Peters went as far as saying, “we should make this a priority for the county whether or not anything else is built.”

After a lunch break, Supervisor Gardner made a motion to deny the project, and for a moment it looked like Domaille could be out of luck, since two votes against the project would kill it. But nobody seconded Gardner’s motion, and discussion of the project continued.

The board seemed more interested in modifying the project than denying it, and they ultimately decided to hold another special meeting (including public comment) on July 20. When the visual renderings for the modified cluster alternative can be created, those will also be given to the Planning Commission for approval.

None of this extra process and outreach is legally required; the modified hybrid cluster alternative is a combination of two different design alternatives that had already been approved. But supervisors stressed the importance of getting the process right—overlooking public meetings and all—as opposed to just getting it done. “The lack of collaboration [by the applicant] beyond what was required shows in a lot of the problems of this project,” Supervisor Gardner said.
Jen McGuire is the last one standing. She is the sole remaining employee at the Tri-County Fairgrounds, which has been hammered by the pandemic. Mule Days? Canceled. High School Rodeo Finals? Canceled. Tri-County Fair for Labor Day Weekend? “We don’t know yet,” said McGuire on Tuesday, as a volunteer drove past with a loader full of branches and clippings. “Two weeks ago, I was very hopeful. Over the past few weeks [seeing the rise in Covid cases, both statewide and locally], that hope has diminished.” “If there’s a way to do it small or modified, I’ll do that,” she added.

And if you want proof of McGuire’s ability to improvise and make things happen, look no further than the recent Junior Livestock show which took place at the Fairgrounds. It was staged in small groups. There was a sanitizing schedule. Everyone wore masks. Temperatures were taken at the gate. It was not open to the public, and in fact, to minimize congestion, only one parent was allowed to be present per exhibitor.

However, the event was live-streamed so that extended family could also participate. It was the only Livestock show in the state that was “live.”

Every other Fairgrounds did it exclusively via Zoom. Likewise, McGuire is thinking of creative ways to hold summer events which adhere to health guidelines.

One such idea would be a “Tailgate Concert Series,” which could be held in the back pasture, and where patrons would be asked to stay within their own designated parking areas.

Along similar lines, there would also be a potential for hosting drive-in movies.

One of the reasons McGuire is keen on the Tailgate series is because she has a name headliner for the Fair (for the sleuths amongst you, this artist sold five million copies of her debut solo album in 1992) and she’d like to figure out how to keep the engagement.

But the toughest part about this year, and handling the pandemic, is that it has been such a momentum-killer for an organization that has thrived under McGuire’s leadership. In 2018, the Fairgrounds had approximately $800,000 in revenue. The forecast for 2020 had been $1.5 to $1.8 million.

Ticket sales for last year’s Fair were literally double the historical average. Now? The only part of the Fairgrounds business that’s tracking well is the campground and RV park.

It doesn’t help that the State hasn’t helped with any relief funding, and that the Fairgrounds isn’t eligible for a lot of the relief programs like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) that many businesses have tapped.

But here’s how you can help your local Fairgrounds. Visit tricountyfair.com and either offer to volunteer, or offer to donate.

“I’m thankful for our small community that cares so much,” said McGuire, who likened the Fairgrounds to a de facto community center. Bishop Lions Club, 4-H, various non-profits … all of them rely on the Fairgrounds and its facilities.
Mammoth Lakes Recreation and the Town of Mammoth Lakes agreed to a short-term contract Wednesday as Town Council considers a potential longer-term deal.

The contract between MLR and TOML officially ended on June 30. Council was originally considering not re-signing the contract in light of the budget crunch pertaining to COVID-19, but MLR has a scope of services that would not be easily handed off to another party.

MLR Director Matt McClain summarized the agreement made on Wednesday July 1 best when he said, “[MLR] believes that this interim agreement provides both parties with an opportunity to more clearly ascertain what our relationship might look like going forward while continuing to service the communities needs as it pertains to Measure R and U.”

David Page, Treasurer for MLR, also gave a brief statement, “Though it may have not delivered [in a way] that was dreamed of... MLR has actually established, at very little cost to taxpayers, highly effective mechanisms for an expertise in the strategic allocation of Measures R and U which was the point from the beginning.”

Councilman Kirk Stapp kept his comments short and sweet, “This is difficult. I think our Parks and Rec department does a great job and this should be folded into it.”

Mayor Bill Sauser: “For my comments, it was a tough meeting for me to get through last night. I felt like I was actually insulted during the meeting. And I did take it personally. I have never been treated like that in a meeting previously. I was disappointed that the board of MLR was unwilling to look at using those reserve funds to fund us... That being said, all along I have said I don’t want to kill this baby. We need to reduce it in size until we are all back on our feet again.”

Background

Sauser was referencing a June 30 MLR special meeting in which he had a disagreement with McClain. The conversation got contentious when McClain attempted to point out Sauser contradicting himself regarding whether or not the town should employ MLR Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Coordinator Matthew Paruolo.

“in speaking with the Town Attorney and the Town Manager I think that the Town is better off having [Paruolo] as a government employee,” said Sauser.

“One thing I think our board needs to understand. All of these concerns that we are talking about were put in front of the Town back on February 7, 2018. And you (Sauser) specifically said that Matt [Paruolo] should not be an employee of the Town. That is on record and anyone can go back and watch it on Granicus,” said McClain in response to Sauser. He called this specific statement by Sauser “disingenuous.”

Both Page and MLR board member Colin Fernie attempted to steer the conversation back on track. But Sauser felt he had been disrespected and wanted to respond.

“I was just told by someone that they went back and looked at my vote. If you look at all of my votes, you will find that I am educatable [sic]. If a new set of facts come along, and I switch [my opinion] because I think it is for the best of this town, I will do so. I feel I was just personally attacked therefore I need to answer that attack. I will now mute myself,” said Sauser.

Sauser muted himself and turned off his camera for nearly all of the remainder of the meeting.
T

The strange saga of the Mammoth Lakes Tourism Board’s At-Large seat, contested for by Pat Foster and Barbara Maynard came to a conclu-
sion at Wednesday’s meeting.

A debate over bylaw interpretation pre-
vented the board from electing one of the
candidates in June. After a review by the
board’s bylaws committee, it put together
a statement read by Secretary Jeremy
Goico to the rest of the board.

The statement responded to the two
points of contention surrounding Foster’s
nomination: 1) Applicants for the At-
Large seat must hold a business license
in Mammoth Lakes and 2) Applicants
must live in the “Mammoth Lakes area”.

Foster is President of Hot Creek Avia-
tion and a resident of Bishop.

Goico reported that Foster currently
owns a 21% interest in Hot Creek Avia-
tion, with expectations that he will buy
additional 4% over the next four years.

Goico also confirmed that Hot Creek is in
good standing with its business license
and while Foster’s name doesn’t appear
on the business license, that would not
be expected for someone with 21% own-
ership.

Goico argued that Foster’s role as act-
ing president and his daily presence on
site at the airport were enough to satisfy
the business license requirement.

As for Foster’s residency, Goico
explained that the bylaw requires the
At-Large member to “reside within the
Mammoth lakes area, and shall have a
substantial business interest in town” as
well as a “working knowledge of the tour-
ism industry.”

In response, Goico reported that the
bylaws committee felt that the increased
regionalization of the area meant that
Bishop could be included in the “Mam-
moth Lakes area.”

Goico gave a number of examples
including the airport transition to Bishop,
the subsequent transportation network
between Bishop and Mammoth Lakes,
collaboration between both towns’
Chambers of Commerce, and the large
workforce that travels between the two
towns daily.

The board voted overwhelmingly to ap-
prove Pat Foster to the vacant seat, with
the lone dissenting vote coming from
Treasurer Rhonda Duggan, who had
previously advocated for Maynard on the
grounds that Foster was ineligible.

The revelation that Maynard had been
told in May that she wouldn’t receive
the nomination was not brought up,
although Board Chair John Morris stated
that the vote was to choose between Fos-
ter and Maynard.

The Numbers are in
MLT Executive Director John Urdi gave
a rundown on the organization’s food
bank, which wrapped operations on
Friday, June 26. The food bank ran for 14
weeks and is estimated to have fed more
than 37,000 during that time.

Urdi reported that 43% of food bank
recipients are housekeepers, 22% were
restaurant workers/staff and the remain-
ing 35% were spread out over a number
of other industries.

The food bank’s final bill was $285,000;
that cost solely accounts for food and
supplies as everyone working at the food
bank was a volunteer and the space in
the Mammoth Promenade was donated
by Paul Budder.

$210,000 of those dollars came from
outside donations with MLT picking up
the rest of the slack.

The food bank had more than 185
volunteers, contributing nearly 3,400
hours. Urdi related the feats of so-called
“super volunteers” like Mammoth Lakes
Laundromat owner Marc Margulies, who
repeatedly drove the company truck
down to Bishop to load up pallets of food
donations from IMACA.

MLT ceded operation of the food bank
to IMACA, which will run a monthly
distribution service out of the back of the
same location in the Promenade.

The next distribution date is July 28.

Board member Michael Ledesma
called the food bank the “most well ex-
cuted endeavor I’ve ever been a part of”,
adding that he felt sad when the opera-
tion wrapped up but noted that “Obvi-
ously, the goal the entire time was not to
have a food bank.”

In other news: the board voted unani-
mously to increase the limit on paid time
off accrual for Mammoth Lakes Tourism
employees.

The previous limit was set at 80 hours;
many staff members had accrued an ex-
cess of 100-120 hours of paid time off as
a result of Covid-19. Those excess hours
would be voided under the previous
agreement.

Board Chair Morris noted that Urdi,
not staff, had been the one to bring the
issue before the board, adding that some
staff members stood to lose more than
sixty hours of accrued overtime if the
limit was not increased.

Storage Gate
Lynda Salcido brought up the issue of
MLT’s storage space located in the airport
industrial park.

According to Mr. Urdi, MLT has had the
storage unit for 4-5 years and its original
purpose was housing retail and trade-
show items. The cost of the facility was
$4,500/year. MLT plans to move out and
sell off excess items by the end of July.

Urdi reported that there have been “oc-
casions where employees needed space”
and have stowed their own items in the
locker. In Urdi’s case, the item in question
was a car, moved there when the hanger
it had been kept in was sold.

“Urdi also apparently stored a motor-
cycle as well, but this was not mentioned
Wednesday.”

“I didn’t see the harm or foul in moving
it in there,” Urdi said, adding that he had
offered to pay out his own pocket for the
months that the vehicle was stored there.

Morris refused the gesture but noted
“It’s important since we’re dealing with
public funds in our operations to ensure
that we’re careful using any MLT facilities
with anything that might be considered
personal use.”

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REAL ESTATE

BACK TO THE RESORT OF DESTINY?

By Paul Oster

Q: Where do you see Mammoth and the Mammoth real estate market going from here?
A: Mammoth is anticipating a busy summer. The change from lockdown to the crowds of the past week seems like an invasion. The reality is this could be good news or bad news. The lodging industry and the tourism people have confirmed strong demand, barring any hiccups. Hopefully we get to the next stages of reopening and beyond and everybody stays healthy. It will be different in some respects, but the mountains and the forests are still the same. And we’ll have to have fun without “events.”

The science-minded types are observing the concept of “emergent behavior.” It is what emerges from the conditions in the environment. The conditions have changed dramatically. It is somewhat unpredictable at this point, and subject to more change. Mammoth and the local real estate market are going to be affected by a multitude of conditions in the environment. One of the most profound is the changed attitudes of our guests, customers and clients who reside in Southern California. How these changed attitudes will impact Mammoth are a little uncertain, but it is fascinating to think about them. Let’s look at some of these emerging conditions.

We are already seeing people who have had interest in Mammoth real estate being “pushed off the fence.” The past four months have changed their psyches in a multitude of ways. For some, or many, waiting around for a “better deal” or that perfect property no longer makes any sense. Or waiting, period. Their personal values and appreciation for quality-of-life have been altered. These are very individual decisions and can be messy. But we are already seeing the impact on the local market. Many people have new motivations.

The move towards and greater acceptance of work-from-home and telecommuting is a condition that may have a serious effect on Mammoth and the local market. Mammoth’s broadband service upgrades make it extremely viable. Earlier in the decade it would have been impossible. But we can thank the Digital 395 project and Suddenlink’s major investment in the local infrastructure. It isn’t perfect (nor cheap) but no Internet service is. It works well for many who need lots of bandwidth. The demand for this service is growing exponentially.

Another significant and accelerating demographic trend is the migration towards less congested areas including suburbia, rural areas and attractive small towns. Mammoth is like all three. There were plenty of second homeowners hunkered down here in Mammoth Lakes the past few months. Others came and went but stayed for extended periods. For non-owners, there was and is strong demand for extended summer and fall rentals. Some are here now. Others are coming. And if the virus isn’t contained in the city or civil unrest flares-up again, the demand is likely to increase. Barring disaster (bad fire season, earthquake, etc.), Mammoth and the Eastern Sierra are destined to be an eventual location for this migration.

Another emerging condition; Mammoth may not be the perfect place to live 12 months out of the year, especially for older people (myself included after 39 winters here). The winters can be brutal, and long. But it is rather perfect for many months out of the year. My real estate experience has shown me that there is interest in, demand for, and an underlying desire to have what I refer to as “duality” - homes in different locations, and not necessarily one in a large city (anymore). It is more like having two second homes.

Mammoth is the perfect place for one. And there are many options for a second or third home. Even within driving distance; the desert, the beach, Mexico, etc. They can certainly be modest homes and/or properties available for short term rental (STR). Many residents in Southern California have substantial equity in their city homes. That purchasing power can afford some interesting and exciting options. This duality trend may grow significantly for those who now want out of metropolitan life, especially for those retired or able to work-from-home.

Mammoth as some sort of destination resort has another advantage. In the foreseeable future, “drive to” resorts are going to be very popular. Drive-to also means drive-away. The autonomy of being able to come or go, or go here-and-there, has become especially valuable. We saw this after 9/11. This condition may compromise the air service plans our local communities have worked so see DESTINY, page 11
hard for, but it may actually increase business. And for now, more than ever, people are going to be seeking fresh air, open space and plenty of vitamin D that doesn’t come out of a bottle.

All of these emerging conditions will certainly impact Mammoth’s future. In late 1991 I wrote a real estate column for the Mammoth Times (The Sheet was more than a decade away from existing) titled “Destination Resort or Resort of Destiny.” At the time the general economy was bad. And several years of drought had made it worse here locally. Real snow-making was just being invented. Summer business was almost non-existent. The Mammoth community was beat-up. But the glimmer of hope was the private and public planning of the North Village and a gondola into town. And aspirations for other resort-related amenities. It gave the recently incorporated town hope for the future (bed tax revenues were a small fraction of what they are today). But the purpose of the column was to remind people of the tremendous inherent qualities of the Mammoth region. And these are what will always attract people to the area; to recreate, to re-create, and to remove themselves from the stresses of metropolitan life. Fancy hotels and amenities are nice, but the incredible natural environment is the draw. The irony today is that we spend millions of dollars marketing to these people, almost like a hamster wheel. The lead from that 1991 column was “We’re looking for something that has already found us.”

We might be back to this. If we dig into the micro-economics of Mammoth’s future, the hospitality-related businesses including lodging, restaurants, retail, salons, etc. are hurting. Without diminishing the negative impacts caused by the lockdown, the timing was substantially during a normally slow period of tourism here in Mammoth. It could have been worse. Hopefully a big summer and fall can allow the businesses to heal. Mammoth business owners are a resilient bunch. They have to be. There will be inevitable failures (and retirements). But that is nothing new to Mammoth either.

There are important soon-to-be answered questions about the local economy. First, Will capital flow into or out of the Mammoth area, or just remain stagnant? The emerging conditions may suggest that capital, especially private capital, will flow into town. Recent real estate activity would indicate this. Mammoth had a very strong economy up until a few months ago. The Town had record tax revenues in 2019. Commercial vacancies were probably at-all-time lows. We may not have a “V” shaped recovery in the short run but most of the local economy should be able to rebound. But if we lose businesses will there be anybody willing to replace them?

Larger capital is another question. In the past 12 months there were several presentations by potential hotel developers. Can any of these projects go forward in this new environment? We’ll see. And how long will Alterra delay capital improvements on Mammoth Mountain? The local geothermal plant is moving on a major expansion. Ormat has commitments to provide electricity to customers in the Bay Area and the grid at-large. The emerging conditions may bring surprising new investment. Time will tell.

The pressing question for the local real estate market is: Will supply (on-market inventory) exceed the buyer’s demand and purchases? Or will supply exceed demand at some point in the near future (there are swirling vultures who believe so)? Right now, inventory numbers are almost exactly equal to this time last year. There have been no major moves by STR (short-term rental) owners to dump properties. There have been a handful but no major rush for the exits. Did they panic sell too soon? Rental demand looks very positive for the summer and even fall. The STR algorithms are pushing up rental rates. Many STR owners also captured multi-month leases for stability. There was strong demand for this in the past 60 days. Again, all of this is barring any future hiccups. One micro-trend is that buyers will be looking for larger properties than they once anticipated. Second homeowner extended-stays and “hunkering down” are now part of the thought process.

They need room for the home office and the Peloton. Private garages may become even more valuable. Existing owners may be looking to move-up to larger properties, especially if they were here for the lockdown.

And what about the threat for inflation or even hyper-inflation? Believers of either will want to be in hard assets like real estate, especially in perceived “safe” communities. At today’s very low interest rates, this might be a reasonable hedge. There is no doubt some are thinking this way.

We’re seeing plenty of new emerging and converging conditions. And some have been in the background of this market for decades. Mammoth’s odd destiny is about to be played-out in new directions. Meanwhile, the ski industry is already anticipating how they will operate next winter. And the ski runs are already one place where face masks have great acceptance. Happy 4th of July! And please support our local business community.

Paul Oster is the Broker/Owner of RE/MAX of Mammoth (celebrating 30 years). For other timely real estate information you can go to www.MammothRealEstateBlog.com. For legal, accounting, or construction advice, please seek out the appropriate professional.
WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING?
Spike Lee's films are just as relevant today as they were 31 years ago

By Page 3

1 years to the week, Spike Lee’s Do the Right Thing was released to American audiences. Vivid, brash, and poignant, the film depicts a slice of life within the Brooklyn, New York, neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Lee’s story takes place over the course of a single day, the hottest of the summer, as residents of the neighborhood navigate both the hate and the simmering racial tensions that run throughout the neighborhood.

At the center: Mookie, played by Lee, works as a pizza deliveryman for Sal’s Pizzeria, owned and operated by Sal (Danny Aiello) and his sons Pino (John Turturro) and Vito (Richard Edson), Italian-Americans in an increasingly black neighborhood.

A dispute breaks out over Sal’s Wall of Fame, which features Italian-American celebrities and musicians. Buggin Out (Giancarlo Esposito of Breaking Bad fame) protests that the wall should feature black celebrities; Sal asserts that as he owns the business, he decides who he buys more batteries and fires it right back up.

As the heat rises throughout the day, too do tempers; characters lambaste the camera with racial and ethnic insults and argue about the “right thing.” Within the anger, there are moments of obvious irony that highlight the hypocrisy of racist thought: when asked about his favorite celebrities, Pino names black musicians and athletes while holding racist beliefs about Mookie and other black neighborhood residents.

Lee’s style of filmmaking deals largely in broad strokes, from cinematography to dialogue to directing. He casts aside subtlety in favor of direct messages. His characters speak in plain sentences, easily acceptable and infinitely understandable.

The same philosophy is reflected in the sets, costumes, and color palettes of Do The Right Thing. Colors pop off the screen everywhere, loud and vibrant. In Lee’s Bed-Stuy, subdued characters and subtlety are simply not a part of everyday life. Radio Raheem’s jukebox, constantly blasting Public Enemy’s “Fight the Power” overwhelms other character and dominates scenes featuring Raheem. As soon as it loses power, he buys more batteries and fires it right back up.

At the same time, within those broad strokes, Lee makes it clear that the world he sees is not black and white. There are no clear or good characters; the audience’s interpretation of how each character acts dictates how they are viewed. Raheem’s blaring jukebox may be seen by some as annoyance, unnecessary noise that disrupts the lives of others. Others may see Raheem’s presence and music as standing up for black Americans and speaking out against a society that subjugates them, a relentless force that refuses to be silenced.

The film returned to a national prominence due to the parallels between Raheem’s death at the end of the film and George Floyd’s death at the hands of Minneapolis police officers. Raheem is put in a chokehold by a police officer and ultimately dies as a result; the police load his body into a waiting car and drive off without a word. Likewise Floyd was killed after an officer kept a knee pressed into the back his neck for nearly nine minutes.

In Lee’s film, the irate crowd proceeds to destroy Sal’s Pizzeria after Mookie throws a trash can through the window; in the process, anger is diverted away from Sal, Pino, and Vito, and towards the physical building of the pizzeria, effectively saving their lives.

The title, taken from an exchange in which Da Mayor, a local drunk, tells Mookie to “Do the right thing,” speaks to the more ambiguous world that Lee has created. What was the “right thing” to do at any point? How is the determination of the “the right thing” colored by one’s own opinions, biases, and prejudices? And why would the destruction of property be viewed with more contempt than Radio Raheem’s death?

Da 5 Bloodz

In mid-June, Lee released his latest film, Da 5 Bloodz, on Netflix in the midst of nationwide protests against police brutality.

This time, Lee follows a group of black Vietnam War veterans as they return to Vietnam to recover the remains of their squad leader and a hidden cache of gold.

As movie plots go, it isn’t the most complex. But complexity isn’t the point. The veterans speak candidly about their experience as black soldiers, both in Vietnam and after returning home, and contextualize that experience within the Civil Rights movement of the era.

The veterans, Paul, Otis, Eddie, and Melvin, return to a country that still bears the scars and trauma of war. They later meet a group dedicated to removing unexploded mines from the Vietnam countryside, a very present threat for citizens.

And they bear with them their own scars, traumas, and legacies, both from the war and from the racism and prejudice they face at home.

Paul (Delroy Lindo) struggles the most out of the group, haunted by memories of Norman “Stormin Norm” Holloway, the group’s now deceased leader, and upset by the presence of his son, David. Paul’s bitterness for a world that has inflicted so much pain on him makes him wary and distrustful of his former comrades and that bitterness makes him lash out at those who would try to help him.

In flashback scenes, Lee opted to have...
actors play their younger selves without any de-aging makeup or special effects; the result is jarring and strange. But in doing so, Lee depicts the memories as the older men remember and relive them. Placing them in the scene as opposed to their younger selves underscores the pain of those memories and how the men relive them in their heads.

The film is scored by longtime Lee collaborator Terence Blanchard and prominently features music from the era; One scene evokes the opening sequence of another Vietnam movie, Apocalypse Now. Most prominent is music from Marvin Gaye’s 1971 album, What’s Going On. The music matches the mood and tone of the film, evoking a nostalgia for an era that was rife with unrest and violence. It’s an effective, straightforward, and unflinching choice that plays extremely well.

Again, Lee's style consists of broader gestures, strokes, themes. Characters say what’s on their minds and state the obvious; Lee once again opts for urgency over subtlety.

And it remains beyond black and white. The contempt that the Americans, particularly Paul, feel towards the Vietnamese is reflected right back at them. Characters dispute who “owns” the stolen gold fifty years later as well as debate the effects the war had on the Vietnamese people.

That legacy of trauma is integral to the movie and the message of Lee’s films. The soldiers of Da 5 Bloodz never stopped fighting for their lives when they came home, it simply became a new war. Just as he did 31 years ago with Do The Right Thing, Lee’s message seems perfectly suited for the turbulent present. His writing remains fresh, thought-provoking and urgent; this is true today of Do The Right Thing.

While both films take up different aspects of what it is to be black in America, they capture moments and experiences that resonate throughout decades and serve as lessons for the future.
Visitors seek to escape the threat of COVID

By Ben Trefry

ow that Mono County is open for tourism, you can hardly blame millions of city dwellers for wanting to visit after months of lockdown. This news is good news for businesses, but it concerns some locals, such as one online commenter who decried the “corona-infected tourists” refusing to wear masks in Mono County businesses.

Leo Galindo, who works at the Mono Market in Lee Vining, said that this assessment may be at least partly accurate: some tourists, indeed, refuse to wear masks. In Galindo’s words, “they don’t like to read the [mask required] signs, like 20 signs, outside the store.” The Mono Market kicks out people for not wearing masks, and generally it isn’t too much of a hassle, but Galindo has seen two or three cases where people “think they know their rights, [such as] they refuse to wear masks on their kids because they’re minors, and they think you can’t force minors to wear masks.” But the majority of shoppers seem to be fine with masking up.

At other businesses, there have been more issues. Last weekend, the Mono County Public Health Department shut down a bar in June Lake for “persistent non-compliance” with COVID regulations such as employees wearing masks and distancing customers. (After submitting a plan to comply, it has been allowed to reopen.)

A few miles up the hill at Tioga Pass, entry into Yosemite is now limited to roughly 50% of average visitation before COVID. People wanting to drive into the park (even for day use) must obtain reservations beforehand.

On the first day of each month, 80% of the reservations for the following month are made available. For example, on July 1, 80% of the reservations for August will be made available. The other 20% are available two days in advance—so while you can theoretically reserve just two days before your trip, your chances are better if you reserve over a month in advance. No advance reservation is necessary to enter the park by foot, bicycle, YARTS bus, or even horseback.

Galindo said that lots of people who come into the store are on their way to Yosemite, some with reservations, some without. Apparently, some just show up expecting the park to be open as normal. Most of the tourists come from places like the Bay Area, but there have been a few international visitors.

The Sheet talked to Nick Lazenik and Alex Shchur, who were charging their plug-in hybrid at the Gus Hess Park EV charger (in Lee Vining) just before sundown. From Portland, Oregon, they were visiting the Eastern Sierra for the first time—pretty much on a whim. “Hi, some lake on Google Maps, let’s go there,” Lazenik said. Lazenik and Shchur also wanted to go to Yosemite, but like many others, they had problems with the National Park Service website when they tried to reserve a day use permit (it either showed the reservations as “not released yet” or “sold out”, never available). They were still able to drive through the park, since the ranger at the western gate allowed them to drive over Tioga Pass rather than forcing them to take a three-hour detour.

Outside Yosemite, outdoor recreation is also a bit different this year. On the trail, many people can be seen wearing masks. Recently, another hiker reprimanded Trefry for not wearing one; she claimed that they are required at all times, even outdoors. (According to Yosemite guidelines, masks only need to be worn when people on the trail cannot stay six feet apart.) To be fair, there do seem to be a lot of people out on the trail this year, often passing much closer than six feet.

The only way to escape from COVID, then, is to go deeper into the backcountry than the day-hikers venture. There are still people out there, but far fewer, and it’s much easier to avoid them. On a recent backpacking trip, Trefry avoided most of them, but did talk to a few, including Will Plaxico, a Redwood City resident. When asked how it felt to escape society by backpacking, Plaxico simply responded, “Fantastic.” After a momentary pause, he elaborated, “We have it pretty easy [in Redwood City]; we would have been out here sooner if we lived in the [inner city].”

Ian Smith, from Orange County, enjoyed being forced to decouple from the news cycle (there is no cell reception in most of the backcountry). “24-hour news is one of the worst things that ever happened,” he said. “I’m scared of Elon Musk’s Starlink project [bringing connectivity to the backcountry].” Smith says he spent a lot of time hiking in the Sequoia National Forest during the lockdown; only with the reopening did he venture further north to the Eastern Sierra.

Laznik felt Mono County was far less risky for COVID than where he lives ("because there are ten times less people"), but didn’t expect to fully avoid the virus. “Yes, we are taking precautions, but statistically it’s almost impossible to avoid; 80% will get it [eventually],” he said.

Lakes Basin

In Mammoth Lakes, tourists and second homeowners are out in force. The Lakes Basin reopening last week mean packed trails and parking lots.

The Sheet spoke to several tourists on Thursday.

Originally from Europe, Tim Maculins is staying at the Austria Hof lodge and likes to hike and appreciate nature. He calls himself a “traveler.” He drives from place to place, walking, hiking, eating; as all travelers do. Maculins is enjoying his stay in Mammoth, but will be returning to his home in San Francisco for Fourth of July.

Chris and Kristen James, of Echo Park, LA were riding their bikes while their kids sleep through the afternoon. The couple owns a house here in Mammoth and are staying for two weeks. “We aren’t leaving until our kids get to hang out with [their friends from Mammoth],” said Kristen.

Ned Borglin from San Francisco fishes with a friend. “I come up here every year. In the summer and to ski,” he said. Borglin is camping at Coldwater Springs Campground.

Fishing with his family at Twin Lakes, Jordan Joyce came in from L.A. last Sunday and is heading out on July 3. “[Mammoth] is a beautiful place,” he said.

- Jasper Page
**TOWN STUFF**

Saturday, July 4/
In Mammoth...
Happening: Freedom March, Footloose Freedom Mile (register online, honor system) and Chamber of Commerce Business Scavenger Hunt

Bishop: Remote viewing fireworks show, face your chairs east

Not Happening...
Fourth of July Fireworks, Lions Club Pancake Breakfast, POPs in the Park, Town Parade, and Arts Festival, Bridgeport Parade

Felici Trio Porch Livestream @ noon, July 4. Watch online at www.twitch.tv/mammothchannel or on Mammoth Channel 12

July 4-5/
Mono County Free Fishing Day. Fishing licenses are waived throughout the country although other regulations and report cards are required.

July 11 - 12,
Chipper Week End in June Lake is held at the June Mountain parking lot.

July 11
Plein Air Series: Pastels with Randall Smith. Learn to capture the landscape as you observe in pastel with the expert guidance Randall Smith. Meet at Horseshoe Lake @ 8 a.m. Limited to 12 people, break for lunch at noon.

**TOWN STUFF**

Ongoing:
Wave Rave Summer Skate Camps. Registration opens on July 9 @ 8 a.m. 3 sessions available through the end of July/beginning of August. Register at: https://apm.activecommunities.com/mammothrecreation/Activity_Search

The Cast Off is open on Tuesday and Saturdays only due to Covid-19 restrictions. No book drop offs when closed. We’re overwhelmed with donations at this time.

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

As of May 26, most Mono County Library locations will offer pre-arranged pick ups for library materials. You only need a library card and an internet connection. Visit monocolibraries.org for a link to a video tutorial using the online catalog.

Devil’s Creek Distillery in Mammoth Lakes is offering tastings daily, by appointment only. Call 760-279-3670 to schedule your tasting

Summer Reading Program with Mono County Libraries - June 22 – Aug 1. Read. Investigate. Discover. Dig Deeper! The 2020 Summer Reading Program has been designed to encourage your kids to learn and grow by digging deeper. Register by emailing participants name, age, and local library to cdevine@monocoe.org.

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Mammoth Spa Creations is looking for an accountant to join its team. We currently have an immediate opening for a spa Maintenance Technician position, and we are also hiring an Office Assistant. These are Full Time Positions (Monday through Friday).

These positions offer vacation accrual, benefits and paid holidays. Experience is preferred, but not required. Heavy lifting is required. Call 760-914-7433 ext. 117 to get in touch with the store located at 1401 Tavern Road Mammoth Lakes for more information and to pick up applications. Resumes can be e-mailed to mammothspa@aol.com.

Help Wanted

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

Staff Accountant B - $29,060
Payroll Clerk B - DOE
Retail Manager ML - $25,000
Retail Cashier ML - $15,000
Parking Lot Attendant B - $14 - $16
MCWD Civil Eng. ML - $32,10 - 42,62
MCWD Const. Worker ML - $20 - 22
General Laborers ML - $15 - $20
Call Us Today: 760-924-0523 or 760-873-8599 Complete job list at: www.sierraemployment.com/joblist.com

The Alpenhof Lodge is accepting applications for full-time & part-time, year round and seasonal positions. Applicants must be able to work weekends and holidays. Front desk, day and evening positions, as well as housekeeping positions. Please apply in person at 6800 Minaret Rd, Mammoth.

We are looking for a Janitor for the summer season and have a few full and part-time job openings for retail sales positions. Work generally goes through September or October with a couple year-round positions possible. Our primary business is Fly fishing, but we need a few folks with conventional fishing knowledge. Great opportunity to learn from our team of professional guides and improve your skills while getting paid. Stop by, give us a call or send a message if you are interested. 760-914-1476 info@thetreutwittier.com

Convict Lake Resort is searching for reliable, hard-working team who can thrive in a fast-paced environment and be a team player. We are a beach restaurant and banquet facility located in the beautiful Sierra foothills. We are looking for an enthusiastic individual to fill the position of Food and Beverage Coordinator.

Convict Lake Resort is currently hiring for the following positions:

- Server
- Food and Beverage Coordinator
- Lab Tech
- Maintenance Person

Call Tioga Gas Mart at 760-934-6920 or stop by 1914 Minaret Road, Mammoth Lakes to inquire. 760-934-3800 ext. 202.

Vacasa is hiring full and part-time housekeepers to work in Mammoth Lakes. compensation starts at $11/hr and goes up to $28/hr in summer. Please apply at vacasa.com/careers.

Mammoth Fire Protection District is in need of a Grant Writer! WMFP seeks an individual with desire and experience to pursue several upcoming grant opportunities. USDA Rural Facilities Grant, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Grant, California Rural Fire Protection Grant and Supportive Housing Grant. For more information and to apply, please contact us. Facebook page “White Mountain Fire Protection District” or call 760-933-2252.

For Rent

2 BDR/1BA unfurnished ML apt. Ground floor. Huge kitchen. Deck. No garage - two use only. Please call Sarah at 760-934-8732.

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Notice of Public Hearing

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 9:05 a.m., and continuing until finished, at the Town Council Chambers, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes Planning & Economic Development Commission will conduct an application hearing and an application request for the following:

Application Request for the Lakeview Townhomes: Tentative Tract Map (TTM) 19-001, Use Permit (UPA) 19-001, Tentative Bud Map (DBM) 19-001, and Variance (VAR) 19-001.

The project is for a new 6-unit multi-family residential Planned Unit Development (PUD). A Use Permit and Tentative Tract Map (TTM) and Variance are required for planned unit developments and condominium uses located within the North Village Specific Plan (NVSP). A Variance is requested to allow, for a 20% reduction to the north side yard setback (8 feet instead of 10 feet) and a 40% reduction to the rear (east) setback (6 feet instead of 10 feet). The setback requirements are in order to preserve two significant Jeffrey Pine trees and to provide a 24 foot wide driveway easement through the property.

CEQA Determination: Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the project is categorically exempt as an In-Fill Development Project, CEQA Guidelines Section 15332.

The proposed project is located within the area covered by the North Village Specific Plan (NVSP), Implementing Ordinance No. 859 of the Town of Mammoth Lakes, as amended. The NVSP was adopted on April 29, 1993. Pursuant to the NVSP, the project is subject to CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(c)(3) mandates that the determinations of CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(c)(3) are based on a presumption that the project is consistent with the purposes of the NVSP. Subsequent to the adoption of the NVSP, the project is subject to review by the Planning Commission and the Town Council. To date, the project has not been reviewed by the Planning Commission. Any CEQA determination is conditioned upon the approval of the project by the Planning Commission and the Town Council. All persons having an interest in the proposed application are encouraged to attend the hearing and present information to the Planning Commission and the Town Council.

PUBLIC NOTICES

FISH continued from page 1

water temperatures, reducing stress related to crowding, antibiotic medication and special diet.

CDFW estimates that the Mojave River Hatchery contains around 800,000 rainbow trout. Ten of the sixteen groups that represent the majority of Mojave’s fish have been infected.

Early evaluations at Black Rock and Fish Springs suggests that most other groups may be free of disease.

So what happens if the fish are euthanized?

CDFW reports that rainbow trout can take between 10 months and two years to reach a catchable size.

In the meantime, the fish available would effectively be wild trout, more wild and coy than hatchery fish. This makes for a harder catch; not impossible but difficult for inexperienced fishermen.

There are additional fears that a lack of easily catchable fish would drive fishermen to overfish traditional catch and release spots like the Upper Owens river.

By Black Rock and Fish Springs are likely to not receive any plants this year.

Making up the plants from non-infective hatcheries would be a time consuming and costly project to undertake. Covid-19 travel restrictions would further hamper the process.

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PUBLIC NOTICES
HORRORSCOPES
By Clouds McCloud

Cancer: Life has been pretty stressful recently. With the plague, the economic downturn, earthquakes, no professional sports to distract us and a crazy redhead who can barely read running the country, life isn’t exactly smooth sailing right now. That’s why it’s good to celebrate your birthday by remembering to take things less seriously and laugh more often. Fellow Cancerian, Jim Gaffigan, can help: “Can you imagine the pressure on a brain surgeon? At no point during their day can they say, ‘Hey, it ain’t brain surgery.’”

Leo: Libras tend to be big fans of Leos. One big reason is because Leos bring out the best in Libras. Raising up others of just about any sign is a skill most Leos possess. So as you enter the final stretch of this birth year, try to focus on raising up others. Your reward is likely to receive some nice words of wisdom from Jef- ferson.

Virgo: Bees play an extremely important role in the world. Pollinators help to create at least one third of the food we eat and half of all raw materials we use. They also help make flowers bloom. But Clouds would like you to remember that Emerson was right, “The things that are really for thee will gravitate towards thee.” And that the flower doesn’t beg for the bee. It will bloom. But Clouds would like you to remember that Emerson was right, “The things that are really for thee will gravitate towards thee.”

Libra: For some folks, life seems like a constant battle. We’re not talking about battles over things that are ultimately useless, like trying to make everyone agree with you or to get Gorgis to play the piano. We’ve all got to learn to pick our battles better, remembering that it’s never a good idea to pick too many.

Scorpio: Some people believe that Independence Day should actually be on July 2nd since that’s the day the Continental Congress actually voted for independence. John Adams was one these people. The 2nd President was also a typical Scorpio and trusted his own opinion above all others, even if that made him butt heads with, well, just about everyone. But he did say this, “To be good and to do good is all we have to do.”

Sagittarius: Thomas Jefferson was just 33 years old when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. Since 33 is one of your lucky numbers, your words of wisdom will come from Jeff- ferson. A) “Always take hold of things by the smooth handle.” B) “I am a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.” C) “In matters of style and spunk, as he commented in his large signature, “There! His Majesty can now read my name without glasses!” Being feisty and frugal, like most of you of this sign, helped Hancock gain much success, but he also passed along this advice, “A chip on the shoulder is too heavy a piece of baggage to carry through life.”

Pisces: To celebrate life as an American, how about doing more things that make you happy to be one? Here are some professional suggestions. Never focus on what’s missing. Never be afraid of change. Never forget the importance of “Me Time.” Never let bad thoughts linger. Never forget to smile. Never forget you deserve to be loved, with and without your clothes on.

Aries: Your words of wisdom come from a fellow Aries who lived life to the fullest and never took anything too seriously—like any good member of this sign—actor and WWII vet, Carl Reiner. 1) “Everybody wants to laugh. ... They need to laugh.” 2) “You can get the best out of people if they’re happy and not worried or frightened that they’re going to make a mistake.” 3) “Those people who have a sense of humor get through life more comfortably than those who don’t.”

Taurus: Regardless of what the President believes, it’s important to apologize for, and own, your mistakes. It makes you feel better, allows you to learn from them and wins the respect of others. But you never have to apologize for loving too much, for saying “no,” for your imperfections, for telling the truth, for protecting yourself or for wanting to spoon.

Gemini: During this warm time of the year, it’s nice to listen to warm and positive music. That’s why your life’s soundtrack should be featuring fellow Gemini, Jack Johnson right now. Track 1) “In times like these and times like those, what will be will be and so it goes.” Track 2) “Our dreams are so related though they’re often underestimated.” Track 3) “Who’s to say what’s impossible … And each new day I can feel a change in every-thing.”
**SHEET SURVEY**

With Independence Day this weekend ...

The Sheet asked people on the street: What are you doing to celebrate the Fourth?

“Go home to my family.”
- Sharon Colwell, Riverside

“Camp at Lake Mary.”
- Colin Hornett, Venice Beach

“Working.”
- Lindsay Palmentari, Ontario

“Heading back to San Diego”
- Brian Smith, San Diego

“Have a picnic!”
- Allison Collins, Westlake Village

“Catch the fireworks from home”
- Alicia Colwell, Riverside

“Camp at Twin Lakes.”
- Robert Bligh, LA

“Going camping in Texas.”
- Rebecca Yzagurri, Mammoth

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- Rebecca Yzagurri, Mammoth
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CALL TO SCHEDULE A PRIVATE TOUR.

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