The Parcel project, proposed off the Shady Rest Parcel in Mammoth Lakes and designed to provide workforce housing, is moving forward as planned. Seriously. According to the latest update from Pacific Companies, the development contract for the parcel, shovel can hit the dirt as early as May of next year.

At the regular meeting of the Mammoth Lakes Town Council on Wednesday, September 16, the Pacific group gave its presentation to Town Staff.

For anyone that hasn’t kept up with the Parcel project: In late 2017, the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) agreed to purchase the 25-acre Shady Rest Parcel in the middle of town for $6.5 million.

The goal was to provide workforce housing to the TOML. Through a variety of unit types, the Parcel could service workers making under 120% of the area median income (AMI). Some units will be deed restricted for workers at a lower AMI threshold, with no units available for anyone in the TOML.

Then came public workshops, community engagement and a lot of time defining the scope of the project. In the end, the Parcel will be built in phases (six to be exact), with the end result of up to 450+ units of affordable housing available by completion.

But affordable housing is not necessarily affordable - at least to build. At a Parcel workshop in late 2019, a contracted analyst named, Iman Novin, President of Novin Corporation, gave a development cost estimate of about $450,000 a unit, which the Town did not have the funds for. The gap has been partly filled. During June of this year, the Parcel group and the TOML got notice that they had received a grant from the California Department of Housing and Community Development. The Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) program of 2019 awarded the TOML $20.6 million.

“It is unprecedented for a rural community to get this level of financing, so that was a big step in the right direction and we’re looking forward to leveraging those funds,” said Shellen Rodriguez, Project Manager and CEO of SMR Development, which is assisting Pacific as the project lead.

At Wednesday’s meeting, Council was tasked with authorizing any development plans associated with the new IIG money.

Grady Dutton, former Mammoth Public Works Director who has taken on the role of “Project Manager” for the Parcel, started the discussion, “There is nothing in the grant that specifically tells us what to use the money for in terms of ‘pave this street’ or ‘do that parking structure.’

The Town has not actually received this money yet, and although it was not paramount, the Parcel team was seeking authorization to execute the plan as soon as the money came in. Council authorized the plans set forth by the consultants and now, the future looks something like this:

October-December: PEDC master plan meetings as well as initial CEQA analysis
January-February 2021: Town Council hearings, CEQA completion, Mono County Financing due
March 2021: submit financing applications for phase 1
May/June 2021: initial construction of Phase 1.

This would put the completion date of phase 1 sometime in 2023, although this is obviously subject to change. The Master Plan, once reviewed by PEDC and the TOML, will be finalized.

Time to Get Out the Paddles?
Concerns about the Creek Fire increase

Smoke from the Creek Fire continued to inundate the Eastern Sierra all week, creating yellow skies and hazardous air conditions for everyone, not just those with pre-existing conditions.

The air quality has, quite literally, been off the charts. At 9 a.m. Thursday morning, the Air Quality Index in Mammoth Lakes was 1525 for PM10 and 742 for PM2.5. The AQI index measures 0-500, any number higher than that is considered "beyond the AQI." Bishop’s conditions were measured to be the same as Mammoth Lakes while Bridgeport and the Mono Lake area were only slightly below 500 on the AQI.

The smoke from the California wildfires has been reported as far away as the Netherlands and Hamburg, Germany. The Creek Fire, which began over Labor Day weekend, has burned more than 240,000 acres of land, mostly in the Sierra National Forest between Madera and Fresno counties. Officials stated that 11,000 people on the west side of the Sierra have been evacuated. 806 structures have been burned so far with an estimated 9,500 currently threatened.

It is currently the 10th largest wildfire in California history.

While the Eastern Sierra hasn’t seen any evacuations yet, the massive wildfire burning about 13-15 miles from Mammoth Lakes has understandably generated a lot of anxiety. Both the Mono County Board of Supervisors and Mammoth Lakes Town Council took time to receive updates on the blaze this week.

The supervisors approved a motion to close Lundy Campground to visitors, with reopening predicated upon the actions of the Inyo National Forest.

One person called into the board with queries about upcoming reservations at Crystal Crag Lodge, noting “I don’t know if I’m going to be a burden on the community” if they were to visit. The supervisors noted that it wasn’t their place to give advice on the matter and urged the person to evaluate the conditions before making a final decision.

The Inyo National Forest remains closed to all visitors at this time, with no open flames permitted anywhere within the Forest or in surrounding communities. That closure has been extended through September 21st although it is expected to be extended even further.

Recent progress made on the Slink Fire, burning in northern Mono and Alpine counties, see FIRES, page 9
THE SECOND COMING
Forgive me if I'm suffering from smoky brain ...
MMSA issued a press release this week saying it's spent $1 million on Covid-related infrastructure in preparation for the 2020-2021 ski season.
This is $1 million more than it's spent on Eagle Lodge in the past two decades. Meanwhile, the town has bid a partial farewell to Public Works Director Grady Dutton, who has officially retired but will remain on as a "Parcel" consultant. Haislip Hayes is his successor.
Dutton's eternal claim to fame will be the Multi-Use Facility/Ice Rink which he said would open Halloween, 2017.
Given Covid, would you rather have a new ice-rink facility or wish you had simply put a roof on the existing open-air facility? Oh, never mind. ... Contemplate this for a minute as you look outside at the hordes of visitors traipsing up and down the sidewalks on Main Street.
If we had budgeted $4 million for marketing this year as opposed to $6 million, the town could be saving $40,000 a week. Just one week’s savings would be enough to pay for eighty years of car storage for MLT Executive Director John Urdi.
So now that I’ve gotten that out of the way, let’s hear from another reader who thinks I’m an idiot. From John Rogitz, in response to last week’s column:
Jack, it might be interesting for readers to get a little fuller picture of the "losers and suckers" comment that anonymous people said Trump made
In fact, that’s the first glimmer of background missing from the recent editorial. The allegations are anonymous.
On the other hand, there have been a number of non-anonymous people who were present when Trump supposedly made the comment who have refuted the anonymous allegations, including John Bolton, not known as a Trump acolyte. You forgot to mention that.
You cite a "professional reporter" who "verified the story". That "professional reporter" is Jeffrey Goldberg, editor of The Atlantic, where the story appeared. According to the New York Times, Goldberg "shaped" the Atlantic's endorsement of Clinton in 2016. Goldberg’s employer, the billionaire owner of The Atlantic, is a Biden mega-donor, having donated (so far) over $600,000 to the Biden campaign.
So the "professional reporter" is a Clinton Shill who was writing an anonymously-sourced story in a magazine the proceeds of which are going to Biden, and his "verification" consists of stating that he personally knows the anonymous sources, if only we will believe him.
Think your readers might be interested in that?
Oh, and Fox News "corroborated" the story not by independent verification, but by reporter Jennifer Griffin tweeting that "two senior Trump admin official con...

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SUNDAY SEPT. 20, 6:00PM
PIER KIDS
Caught up in the precariousness of survival and self-preservation, homeless queer and trans youth of color hang out at Christopher Street Pier, standing up to homophobia and abuse and forging their own chosen family.

SATURDAY SEPT. 19, 5:00PM
ACASA—MY HOME
In the wilderness of the Bucharest Delta, nine children and their parents live in perfect harmony with nature for 20 years until they are chased out and forced to adapt to life in the big city.

WWW.MAMMOTHLAKESFILMFESTIVAL.COM
Dear Editor,

I’d like to highlight some of the important work being done year after year by the Mammoth Lakes Foundation that is a primary focus of Dave and Roma McCoy’s dream for our community. Dave’s Scholars is a program designed to make college both accessible and financially affordable for our local community members. Although many of our Scholars come right from Mammoth High School, others are adults who choose to go back to school for a degree or certificate. Since the program began in 2003, over 700 scholarships have been awarded. The Foundation covers the cost of tuition and books for these students. This year, the Foundation is supporting 36 Dave’s Scholars; however, the Foundation provides far more than dollars. The Foundation’s staff play an instrumental role in the support of these students. Many students are the first in their family to attend college, some do not have stable family lives, all are filled with tremendous potential! The Foundation staff is committed to helping and supporting them in realizing those dreams.

The greatest achievement for locals is applying to a four year program. Many don’t know exactly how to move forward, others have been procrastinating. Having that discussion with a team that cares about and supports you and can provide guidance as to where to go, where to start, is critical. Follow-up emails are sent to students based upon those personal check-ins. Other topics this fall have centered around learning in the completely online realm. There is a real care and concern for each student’s welfare in this very isolating pandemic world.

If you have never looked at the Dave’s Scholars tab on the Mammoth Lakes Foundation’s website, I encourage everyone in our community to do so at www.mammothlakesfoundation.org. There you will find the story of several local students who have recently graduated from Cerro Coso or are currently attending. ou will see the appreciation for the support, financially and personally, in the students’ own words. These are difficult times, but supporting our community members in furthering their education continues to be done each and every day by the Foundation. This is a critical investment in our community’s future.

Lois Klein
MLF Board Member

Yearning

Dear Editor,

Yearning is a word of some depth. Merle Haggard sings of it in a favorite song of mine. It comes to mind in this time. Yearning for blue sky. Clear views from a mountain top. All of us together as a thriving community. Leaders who believe in science, humility and grace. Another Dave McCoy, another Willie Mays. Music festivals. Remember The Hag at the Sierra Summer Music Festival? Yearning.

Bob Kittle
Sunny Slopes

A hazy future

Dear Editor,

All this smoke brought to mind the fire in 2018 just on the other side of the Crest – called the Lion fire. It burned most of the summer from June on with lots of really annoying smoke though not quite approaching the smoke we’re getting now. Several prominent locals were upset that the Forest Service basically just let the fire burn and didn’t suppress it. The smoke was bad and certainly not very good for local business. The Forest Service said that it was best to let it burn as it reduced the fuel that a future fire would use and threaten our town.

If that Creek fire had taken a right turn, it could have posed a threat to us. The only barrier would have been the lack of fuel already burned up in the 2018 fire. It’s a tough pill to swallow but smoke is probably in our future.

Tom Gaunt
Mammoth Lakes

We’re no Roger Bannister

Dear Editor,

Covid-19 has changed our lives. The Creek Fire smoke has kept us indoors. We’ve had time to study our little hamlet. Unfortunately, not much positive has happened here since the 2012 bankruptcy. Is it possible to change direction, agree on a community goal and accomplish it? We used to be a “Village in the Trees.” We were a “community resort.” Are we now a “destination resort?”

Our pathetic track record:
1) Allowed a developer to build a village with inadequate parking.
2) Hot Creek Aviation litigation cost us $40+ million dollars.
3) Let MMSA build “temporary” tents at Little Eagle a long time ago.
4) Ceased building workforce housing in 2012 even though it was our primary need.
5) Granted a developer permission to build a hotel that towers above our tree canopy.
6) Gave a developer $300,000 to build infrastructure on his land at Sam’s Woodside.

Division seems to be our middle name so we:
1) Spent time, energy and money debating nightly rentals in our neighborhoods.
2) Lost 5 years and spent $1 million plus trying to create a “vision” and a Multi-Use-Facility.
3) Wasted time, energy and money promoting another airport in the Eastern Sierra.
4) May invade tranquil Solitude Canyon with E-bikes, ruining it forever.

There have been successes. Town built a new police station, constructed side walks on Main Street, bought the Shady Rest Tract and named it “The Parcel” without community input except paying $6 million for it. Town received a $20.6 million grant to help fund the infrastructure. The greatest achievement for locals and visitors alike is our fabulous Lake Mary Multi-Use Path. Town and Forest Service cooperated to make it happen. It took years to accomplish and is used constantly by bikers and hikers. Thank you Peter Bernasconi, who was Town Engineer at the time, for a true town amenity.

What do we want? Besides the Mammoth Yosemite/Bishop Airport issue and Solitude Canyon debate, the most controversial issue has been whether or not to build a new $13 million
UPCOMING EVENTS

MOVIES

- Sept. 25: 8 Seconds
- Oct. 24: Beetlejuice
- Oct. 30: Annabelle
- Oct. 31: Addams Family
  - Trick or Treat

MUSIC

- Sept. 26: Kane Brown
  - with special guests
  - Lauren Alaina & Granger Smith
  - Encore LIVE Drive-In Concert
- Oct. 3: Mirage: Visions of Fleetwood Mac
  - LIVE on stage
- Oct. 9: Queen Nation
  - LIVE on stage

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Bishop City Councilman Chris Costello is up for re-election

By Page

After accepting an appointment to fill the council seat left vacant by Pat Gardner and winning a subsequent election to finish out the remaining two years on the term, Bishop City Councilman Chris Costello is seeking a four-year term this November.

Costello, who currently serves as Mayor Pro-Tem, has spent more than three decades in the Bishop community. He came to California from New York in 1979 and landed a job doing special effects in Hollywood, where he stayed for 9 years. During that time, Costello attended bible college, where he met his wife DeeDee.

Faith brought the Costellos to Bishop, as they took positions as assistants and youth pastors at the local Foursquare Church (DeeDee has lived in Bishop since fifth grade). After 9 years, Chris became the senior pastor at the church, and the hospice facility in Bishop.

Outside of the church, Costello has operated Christian Brothers Firewood, run youth programs for IMACA, and worked for Northern Inyo Hospital. Costello also generated Christian Brothers Firewood, run as an EMT and worked for Mono County Emergency Medical Services while living in Chalfant.

“I’ve enjoyed being involved on the city council and have brought some wisdom, some new energy [to the council],” Costello told The Sheet, “I have enjoyed hearing from our constituents and bringing their concerns and needs to the council and have enjoyed seeing us work together to solve the problems that our city faces.”

In his two years on council, Costello has served on a number of city and local commissions, including the Owens Valley Groundwater Authority (OVGA) and the Inyo County Transportation Committee.

“It’s very important that we develop a water sustainability plan that the state will approve,” Costello said of his involvement with the OVGA, “and that will ensure a constant supply of water for our community.”

Costello also referenced his involvement with the Eastern Sierra Wastewater Commission as a key achievement. The goal of that commission, he explained, is to integrate the Eastern Sierra Sewer District and the Bishop Sewer District for a massive cost reduction. “That work, he explained, has brought with it a great deal of interaction with LADWP (Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power), a partner that Costello hopes to have a more expanded relationship with for future land deals.

Part of that work would include land for affordable housing.

“One of the big things in our future is the commercial airport in Bishop,” he explained. “Many investors are recognizing the value of that kind of service to our area and are actively looking to purchase homes in the area.”

“Our real estate market is actually up partly because of the airport coming in and partly because of people wanting to escape the city due to Covid.”

Costello called the housing issue a “double-edged sword,” explaining that incoming investors are hoping to create rental properties in Bishop, which limits privately-owned housing, but also increases tax revenue for the city. One current aim of the council is looking at ways to increase local home ownership so that people are able to live and work in Bishop.

In addition, Costello expressed a hope to protect local renters affected by Covid-19 while also supporting landlords who have mortgage payments due.

So what makes Costello stand out from the field? “I always been very diligent and hardworking in everything I do,” he said. “I like to believe that I am able to keep an open mind and have demonstrated that with our council.” Although he is well-prepared with a decision come meeting time, Costello added, he’s open to hearing differing sides and opinions and is willing to adjust his decision to create the best possible outcome for the city.

“I’m open and honest, sometimes to a fault,” Costello added. “I’m passionate about doing what is right and what is best for our people.”

On legal cannabis dispensaries in Bishop, Costello was opposed. “My experience in other cities is that cannabis dispensaries tend to lower that standard [of a city],” he said. “I don’t believe that it’s the right thing for our city just to gain some potential revenues to subject our young people and our at-risk people to that.”

On the 1% sales tax increase: “The city is in need of some improvements that don’t fall into our annual budget. For that reason, to improve things that have been static for a long time, I am for the 1% increase.” He noted that he’d originally been for a smaller increase but ultimately saw 1% as the proper amount.

On what he thought of perhaps folding Bishop Police Department and contracting public safety services with the county: “I believe that the City of Bishop police department is one of the best and that not only do we have officers who live here and raise their families here, but who really do have a balance of maintaining the law while giving people the benefit of the doubt and just policing in a very gracious way. I don’t see a need to bring in another organization who we would not have as much say in how they do their job. Bringing in contracted security and police work hasn’t had a good track record.”

To conclude: “I’m just looking forward to serving our community for another 4 years and helping to lead our council to have a safer and better community,” Costello said.

He added with a laugh: “When I first received the appointment, I had been told it was a 12-20 hour-a-month job. It’s more of a 20-hour-a-week job!”
If you’re looking for a steady hand in uncertain times, Jim Ellis believes he’s your candidate for Bishop City Council.

Ellis, 52, has served on Bishop’s Council for nearly a decade (save for a few week stretch in 2015). He and his wife Cami have been married for 11 years and have a blended Brady-esque family of six children (Ellis has three daughters and three stepsons).

We works construction for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Prior to that, he served as a dispatcher for seven years with the Bishop Police Department.

Raised in Bishop, Ellis graduated from Bishop Union High School in 1986. He is best described as politically conservative, yet not dogmatically so. And really, he says, a public servant does just that - serve the public, versus indulge one’s own personal views.

“My job is to listen to what people want. I may not necessarily agree with something, but if it has the overwhelming support of my constituency [I’m going to get it done].”

Take the recent issue that came before Council regarding the potential approval of marijuana dispensaries within city limits.

Yes, it might be easier to punt the issue. Tell people the county dispensaries are located close enough. But, says Ellis, “I have no problem listening to new ideas,” says Ellis, who says he “pushed hard” to start the ball rolling on downtown planning when he served as Mayor in 2018. And Ellis hopes Bishop voters pass the proposed UUT (local sales tax) measure on November’s ballot to provide the city a few more dollars to work on that plan (as well as some deferred maintenance projects).

“That money [the UUT hike, if passed, would generate between $1.2 and $1.8 million per year],” says Ellis. “If you look at the State as a whole, we currently have one of the lowest sales tax rates. And while our city revenue has remained fairly static, personnel costs have risen significantly... this isn’t the first time this [a UUT hike] has come before us, but it’s the first time I’ve favored it. I think the [added] money can help propel us into the future.”

And this really fits into Ellis’s larger vision as to what he wishes to accomplish with another term in office.

“We do a really good job at being a city you really don’t remember,” said Ellis. “But the Covid-forced transition to outdoor patio dining, says Ellis, has allowed the city a peek into what could be.

“Imagine if you can give people something to look at and reasons to stop,” he said. Further, he said, while the 18-wheelers along Main Street are certainly a nuisance, technology is at hand which may severely reduce that impact in the form of increasing transition to electric fleets. And he does credit Caltrans with flexibility in allowing outdoor seating on Main Street between Amigos and the yogurt shop.

Which segue’s into Ellis’s final pitch for his candidacy: experience. Which he thinks is valuable in this Covid moment. Ellis was recently tapped as Vice-President of the Desert Mountain division of the California League of Cities, and he acknowledges that these are helpful connections which take time to foster but are often beneficial.

He also says working as a police dispatcher provided a great skill set for his political life.

“Dispatch is about crisis. And it taught me how to deescalate that crisis, that panic, to slow things down and to be strategic,” he observed.

George and Cami Ellis at last Saturday’s Sierra Trash Eliminators event outside Bishop Ford.
Billionaire Wilderness
Justin Farrell
Princeton University Press
308 p./2020

When reading “Billionaire Wilderness,” one can’t help but think of “Downhill Slide,” Hal Clifford’s 2003 book about the corporate ski industry. The description for “Downhill Slide” at Amazon is succinct enough: “In this impassioned expose, Clifford’s 2003 book about the corporate ski industry, the natural environment, and skiing itself.” Their greed is gutting ski towns, the winter sport during the 1990s, and how control of America’s most popular ski town: Jackson, Wyo., earned by 8 percent of households. Teton County is the wealthiest county that boasts the highest per capita income in the United States. And what is that gap, exactly? 90 percent of all income in Teton County comes from skiing and the people who serve them. And what is that gap, exactly? 90 percent of all income in Teton County is earned by 8 percent of households.

Farrell wins over his typically recalcitrant, fabulously wealthy interview subjects with his resume: he’s not only a Yale University professor, but he’s a Wyoming native. His entree into their exclusive circles: He says he’s interested in their environmental views and activism. And he is. But he’s also interested in the shallowness and hypocrisy of these views.

For as Farrell sees it, the wealthy of Teton County practice an environmentalism of convenience.

They wish to preserve land, and are staunch advocates of the local land trust, because they don’t wish to see Teton County overrun with development.

So here’s an example. You have a ten-acre spread. The 10,000-square foot mansion sits on one acre. The other nine acres are placed in a conservation easement. Because, the other nine acres are kind of pointless anyway. If they were developed, they’d ruin the mansion view.

“... They overlay a veneer of altruism - assuming that conservation is always and everywhere a positive activity - despite the fact that, for many of them, they and their financial advisors view it primarily as an effective means by which their immense wealth can be preserved. But, of course, there is certainly nothing illegal about capitalizing on these million-dollar tax deductions."

And, indirectly, it makes that land becomes.

And, indirectly, it makes that existing property tax valuations to new ballot proposes that folks can carry homes in fellow counties. This is a tax break that could drive migration. The town of Mammoth Lakes, however, at least recognizes the housing issue and talks about it versus dismissing it. It’s not viewed as a buzzkill issue here, but progress has been glacial.

The x-factor which even the most environmentally conscious member of the ultra-wealth set can’t avoid has been on display over the past month: fire. Which burns down the poorest towns and the wealthiest playgrounds indiscriminately. If fire rips through the playground, don’t expect the uber-wealthy to stick around.

So what one asks while reading the book is: how much of this applies to Mammoth Lakes and the Eastern Sierra?

On one level, Mammoth is a bit different because it’s not the tax haven that Teton County is, and the town is compact (four square miles) versus sprawling.

But Mammoth is similar in that it’s a one-of-a-kind place, scarcity drives demand, and further “discovery” of mountain town jewels, especially in the Covid era, could exacerbate class divisions (wealth inequality here is certainly severe, just not as severe as Teton County).

And Proposition 15, on the November ballot, proposes that folks can carry existing property tax valuations to new homes in fellow counties. This is a tax break that could drive migration.

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that could help slow the fire’s advance; Yosemite National Park closed its gates to visitors on Thursday afternoon due to the smoke. There are currently no fires within the park.

The general concern regarding the Creek Fire was enough to warrant a community meeting on Tuesday night featuring presenters from the National Forests, Creek Fire Management Team, and the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

Evans Kuo, part of the Creek Fire Management Team, explained that the primary goal so far has been securing the mountain communities to the west and south of the fire. "The fire is 18% contained, most of which is in the area of those towns."

Kuo reported that the fire was pushing up the south side of the San Joaquin River as it moved to the northeast with additional activity in the vicinity of Mount Tom. In that area of the fire, Kuo noted, it has begun to hit exposed rock and "we’re starting to see some signs of it slowing down."

The real period of concern, according to Kuo, is the end of this week and the beginning of the next. Winds are expected to pick up (Mono County has a red flag warning for Thursday and Friday) which could push the fire closer to Mount Tom. In that area of the fire, Kuo explained that the fire management team, along with local stakeholders, has devised a series of trigger points of the fire that, when reached, would necessitate certain actions.

The fire has already burned through the first of points that involve actions for Mono County, resulting in coordination with the Inyo National Forest, Devil’s Postpile, and County officials.

The next point, which the fire has not yet reached as of Thursday, is in the vicinity of Pincushion Peak. If that trigger point is hit, officials will be paying close attention to the severity of the fire burning through the rocky terrain.

Local activity will ramp up if the fire reaches Fish Creek, east of Pumice Butte and south of Duck Lake. At that time, local authorities would begin discussing the need for an evacuation in Mammoth Lakes and a Code Red alert will go out to Mono County residents. A lot of this is contingency planning," Kuo said. "We want to give a sense of actions we would take if the fire comes under the influence of wind."

Kuo explained that the winds would hopefully begin to die down by Friday afternoon. As Mammoth Lakes Fire Chief Frank Frievalt said, "We are not an evacuation spot. Just because we’re mentioning it doesn’t mean we’re there ... that said, we’re also in historic times, we do have some strong winds coming up."

The presentation concluded with a question and answer session. The key questions, and answers, are summarized below.

Q: Why haven’t there been airborne flame retardant drops in the area?
A: We haven’t done anything unless necessary.

Q: What is the evacuation route?
A: Route 203, 4 lanes one way.

Q: What are the odds of an evacuation at this point?
A: Hard to say, there’s a lot of factors that can’t be predicted and things can change very quickly. Kuo noted that the winds increase probability but the natural barriers only drive that probability down again.

On a call with The Sheed on Thursday, Frievalt explained that the fire is still 15 miles away. Despite a red flag warning through Saturday, Frievalt stressed that there was no need to panic unless things changed drastically.

Mono County has created a Creek Fire website that features information about the wildfire. Visit https://creek-fire-preparedness-monomammoth.hub.arcgis.com.

Regular updates on the fire can also be found on the Mammoth Lakes Fire Department Facebook page as well as the Inyo National Forest Facebook page and the CalFire website.

Another community meeting on the Creek Fire is scheduled for Tuesday, September 22 at 7 p.m. The meeting can be accessed through Mono County’s Creek Fire website, going to https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/96975390897, or calling 16699006833 and entering Webinar ID: 969 7539 0897.
**T**he Mammoth Lakes Film Festival kicked off this week and continues through the end of the weekend. Tickets are still available for many of the screenings. More info, see ad page three.

One of the great things about short films, as Mammoth Lakes Film Festival director Shira Dubrovner explained over the phone, is that they’re just that: short. So even if you don’t love the subject matter or style, it’s not a torturous undertaking to watch.

Shorts Block 2 (screening Friday at 2 p.m.) kicks off with a brief two-minute sketch taken from a series of sketches about a group of people who’ve gathered at a cabin, titled “Cabin Stories.”

The sketch in question focuses on a group of climbers celebrating their inaugural “Free Solo Weekend” as a group, complete with all manner of long hair, dirty workout clothes, and California accents.

It’s an over-the-top satire of the climbing community and climbing wannabes that’s funny to someone who knows next to nothing about climbing outside of a few climbing films and some enthusiastic friends. Not so much climbing humor as humor about climbing.

Next up: “On Task,” a short look at a young charter school teacher in San Jose. The filmmaker’s role is strictly that of observer, showing snippets of the teacher, Erick Silva, at his job and at home.

There’s little context provided, but the film speaks for itself. The passage of time is marked by a school bell ringing. Silva’s lessons focus on character and success, the subject material of his lessons unnecessarily; what’s clear in his effectiveness as a teacher is relatability.

“On Task” shows the other side of teachers, who are away from work. Silva worries about his father to an unnamed person; Silva’s father wants to return to Mexico and Silva does not for fear that his father can’t get the medical attention he needs if he leaves the U.S.

“They Won’t Last” follows a couple, one a romantic and the other a cynic, attending their friends’ “perfect” wedding. It’s focus is messy relationships, and is at times hilarious and deeply touching.

Christine, an artist searching for her big break, avoids her boyfriend Alex’s proposal as best she can, haunted by anxiety, wistfulness and doubt. You feel no doubt due to the black and white filmmaking. It’s powerful films yet subdued, exciting and anxious.

The choice to shoot in black and white pays off; it gives the short a sense of being in real life or scenes from the film. It's that guesswork that makes the short both exciting and anxious.

One of the great things about short films, as Mammoth Lakes Film Festival director Shira Dubrovner explained over the phone, is that they’re just that: short. So even if you don’t love the subject material of his lessons unnecessarily; what’s clear in his effectiveness as a teacher is relatability.

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“Cage Match” is fast-paced and loads of fun, loaded with anime tropes that give the feel of a well-studied satire. The animations are basic but evocative and hilarious; the dialogue and plot fast-paced, witty and fun.

It’s not a short that requires a lot from the viewer other than their eyes (it’s entirely in Japanese) but there’s a deeper logic behind the whole thing that encourages closer attention. It’s a little piece of escapism that contrasts well with the other shorts in the block.

**ON THE ROAD**

By Mike

On Sunday morning, Democracy on the Road of Saveh, directed by Iranian filmmaker Touraj Kalantari, will be shown at the virtual Mammoth Lakes Film Festival. Kalantari’s film is kind of like stepping into an alternate reality where things are for the most part the same, but something is horribly off.

Kalantari’s documentary candidly interviews politicians and voters in Robat Karim, a small city in Tehran province, before a Council election. The description of the documentary given by the Festival states, “An up-close, humorous look at the campaigns of three local candidates…”

Humorous is one way to put it. I suppose watching the foibles of democracy play out in front of your eyes does have a certain sadistic appeal. It was viscerally relatable and maybe that’s why I’m lonely just watching her on screen.

My favorite short of the bunch was a quirky animated film, “Cage Match” about a Japanese businessman who feels out of place. The animations are simple, ink and paper, done in a style that evokes a Japanese animated TV show (anime) with all ambient noise supplied by a single voice mimicking the sounds of daily life.

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It’s not a short that requires a lot from the viewer other than their eyes (it’s entirely in Japanese) but there’s a deeper logic behind the whole thing that encourages closer attention. It’s a little piece of escapism that contrasts well with the other shorts in the block.

The disassociation between the last scene and the way these politicians present themselves was abundantly apparent. At every one of the candidates’ so called “rallies” to stir up momentum and get votes, every council candidate was peppered about concrete issues the constituents had.

One woman asked for the trash to be taken away from her street. Another man said he could make that abundantly clear.

Another woman, who got sick from paint fumes, asked that they simply stop venting paint fumes into her neighborhood.

Nothing gets done. The politicians would consistently brush aside these comments and promise that they would fix everything. Not one of them actually discussed policy or how the government even worked.

Another woman running said she doesn’t make promises to voters. When asked about her plans, she told the crowd that she would explain them in private but not in public.

Then the camera crew asks, “Shouldn’t your plans be in the public eye?”

The disassociation between the politicians rhetoric and their job titles was easily the most unsettling part of this movie. Again, it hit a little too close to home.

Despite everything written, the documentary was too good to put down. Like a car crash you can’t take your eyes off.

The reason it was so good was because of the authenticity. It pulled no strings, no punches, and part of me thinks Kalantari knew there would be no narrative. Part of me thinks Kalantari knew that the democratic system in Iran was as ineffective as it is, and he knew that if he just followed the campaign trail for a short time, he could make that abundantly clear.

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in late February and after the final rounds of funding come through, there might actually be some progress on The Parcel.

Reds Meadow Road

The Red’s Meadow road project, in contrast to The Parcel, is having its initial construction pushed back to 2023. Hasilip Hayes, new Public Works Director for the Town, explained where the project was, “It has been a little over one year since last update. And we are a little over 2 years into a four year process.”

“Reds Meadow [road] has some challenges. Some would say that is failing. The road is narrow, the asphalt is in bad condition,” said Hayes. “[There has been] a lack of funding to maintain that road.”

Reds Meadow road is basically 1.5 lanes for a good portion. Vehicle traffic is usually mitigated by the shuttles that runs to Devil’s Postpile (which didn’t run this year due to Covid).

So what will the construction be?

“We characterize it by two components. The first is from Minaret Vista down to just before Agnew Meadows. This initial 2.5 miles is the wild and windy part of the road. We are looking at a full reconstruction of the section,” said Hayes, “and the lower portion, picking up just after Agnes curve here, and all the way down to Red’s Meadow Resort, about 5.8 miles. That will receive full depth reconstruction.

Hayes then described the construction of the road would mean widening it to two lanes, aligning a number of curves, fixing the slope of the road, providing guardrails, drainage improvements, and a lot of minor tweaks and improvements. The 5.8 mile stretch will require work, “pulverizing the existing pavement, paving a hot mix asphalt concrete surface, drainage improvements, signing, striping and several roadside improvements,” according to the 95% technical memo.

Then Hayes explained the delay. “We are now looking at starting construction in 2023. It was previously 2022. That delay is not because of anything that is happening with the project, it is really related to the timing of the funding … We were anticipating receiving funding in February … But we were told we would not get funding until September.”

By the time it would go out to bid and come back, Hayes said it would be too late to start construction.

The other noteworthy moment came in when Madera County joined the conversation. “We know you are at the 95% design phase. We just feel like there should be a little more collaboration on a project of this nature,” said Madera County CAO Jay Varney, “We would like to see the plans as they move along. It is a little bit disconcerting to find out what is happening in your own County from a local citizen.”

A Madera County Supervisor named Tom Wheeler then explained his gripes with the communication. Apparently Mr. Wheeler had given his card to multiple people associated with the project and had never received any correspondence.

The road actually lies within Madera County. It would be like someone building a treehouse in your backyard without warning you about it.

Madera has been disappointed with the lack of communication coming its way but this wasn’t a contentious issue. Mayor Bill Sauser moved on from the issue by telling Hayes to give them all of the information/updates that they desire.

One the road is reconstructed, the Town of Mammoth Lakes will be responsible for future maintenance.

Mammoth Lakes Recreation

The Town has officially gutted Mammoth Lakes Recreation. The end result was foreshadowed, in June, when TOML did not renew MLR’s contract worth $192,000.

Rather, Mammoth Lakes Council gave MLR $4,000 a month for three months for a small set of deliverables.

MLR had the $192,000 a year from Measure B funds and was asked to fundraise around $1.9 million during the span of its three year contract (running from June 2017 - June 2020). This did not happen.

The new contract reads, “Town shall compensate contractor in the amount of $4,000 per month for the months of July, August and September 2020, for a total of $12,000,” and then after, “As compensation for Contractor’s work hereunder from October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, Contractor may use the remaining balance of such funding to provide the scope of services and specified deliverables as provided for in Exhibit A.”

Exhibit A is a shortened list of deliverables similar to previous contracts but smaller in scope.

Executive Director Matt McClain and MLR have parted ways. MLR’s organization has been trimmed down to the bone. And Councilman John Wentworth thinks this is the right step, “I think this is going to be better for all parties involved and I think it absolutely is in the community’s interest. MLR is going to be a key partner for the Town going forward and I think this is structuring and setting them up for success.”

The Town has the option to compensate MLR for extra work if it so chooses. But considering the agenda item lasted barely even five minutes, it seems unlikely.

New Bear Cop

An excerpt from a staff report regarding wildlife management: “The Town has increased its services and response capacity to wildlife, domestic animal and related complaints, and increased police department related enforcement activities with the recent hiring of Code Enforcement Officer Rick Bellis.”

In effect, Becomes the new Steve Searles. That is all. The report assured continuity, “The wildlife program will continue with the same standards and protocols that have been developed and implemented over the past several years. The position is assigned out of the Police Department.”
LUNCH continued from page 2

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer; 
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold: 
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, 
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
everything runs aground.

The ceremony of innocence is drowned; 
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand; 
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

Turning and turning what words would you say

When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,

A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it

Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds,

The darkness drops again: but now I know

That twenty centuries of stony sleep

were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle.

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

—W.B. Yeats (1919)

Recipients include:

• Another T-Shirt Shop • Blazing Shears
• Haute Looks Salon • Innsbruck Lodge • Pokonobe Lodge • Mammoth Mountain FM Associates • Noodle-J • Profiles Salon • Red Lily Floral Design • Simply Massage Mammoth • The Bodyshop Gym • Therapeu
tic Exercise Design & Development

The Measure Z campaign rages in Mammoth Lakes. Shields Richardson, Michael Raimondo and John Wentworth all make No on Z speeches at Council.

In Bishop, County Sheriff/Crime Stoppersdumps Sally Symons, who’s later found to have embezzled. A Bishop Police Officer sends a letter to the Mammoth Police Officers sign a letter of no confidence in outgoing Chief Chris Carter.

Statement of Abandonment

Of Use of Fictitious Business Name Statement

Mammoth Estates Rentals

The following persons have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name: KG Properties, Inc.

221 Canyon Blvd. P.O. Box 642
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

This business is conducted by a Corpora
tion, whose name is Mammoth Estates Rentals. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on November 29, 2020. File Number 20-154 (9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10)

Fictitious Business Name Statement

The Following Person Is Doing Business As

Wooden Spoon Breakfast Club

Sue-Sold Breakfast, Inc.

2987 Main Street, P.O. Box 3266
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

This business is conducted by a Corpora
tion, whose name is Wooden Spoon Breakfast Club, Inc. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on August 24, 2020. File Number 20-149 (9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10)
TOWN STUFF

Sept. 18-20/ Mammoth Lakes Film Festival is happening virtually this year. Lots of films, post-screening Q & As, special events, more. Info: www.mammothlakesfilmfestival.com/ see ad page three.

Saturday, Sept. 19/ Surprise late addition to the Mammoth Lakes Film Festival. Join a free conversation with David Zucker, renowned director of Airplane! and the Naked Gun series. Time: 10:30 a.m. More info: www.mammothlakesfilmfestival.com/see ad page three.

Monday, September 21/ Mammoth Lakes Housing Board meets. Time: 6 p.m. Attend virtually via the www.townofmammothlakes.gov website.

Tuesday, September 22/ Clean up and Drive In @ Tri-County Fairgrounds. Stop by between 8 and 10 a.m. to grab supplies and pickup trash around Bishop. Participants get a free ticket to a showing of “Stone Locals” at the fairground. $20 for non-participants.

Wednesday, September 23/ The New Normal: Coping With A Covid World. Seminar conducted by Mono County Behavioral Health. 5:30-6:30 p.m. Viewing https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/99456162274/


Covid-19 Community Conversation hosted by Mono and Mammoth officials. English: 5:30 p.m., Spanish: 6:30 p.m. Visit https://coronavirus.monocounty.ca.gov for the Zoom link.

Friday, September 25/ Drive-In movie @ the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop. Tonight: 8 Seconds. More info: See page five or log onto www.tricountyfair.com.

Saturday, September 26/ Tailgate concert series continues at the Tri-County Fairgrounds. Kane Brown headlines and the bill includes special guests Lauren Alaina (an American Idol alumna) and Grainger Smith. For more information/tickets, visit www.tricountyfair.com.

Ongoing: Free Covid-19 Testing in Bishop every Monday, Wednesday, Friday @ Church of the Nazarene, 8 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
Walk up Census stations now available at Mammoth Lakes Library! The Mammoth Lakes Library at 400 Sierra Park Road has set up stations that you can use to complete your household’s Census online before the deadline of September 30th. Stop by between 10 and 7 Monday through Friday, or between 10 and 5 on Saturday. No appointment necessary. The Cast Off is open on Tuesday and Saturdays only due to Covid-19 restrictions. No book drop offs when closed.
Vons offers two hours of shopping Monday-Friday from 7-9 a.m. for those shoppers who may be virus-vulnerable.
Mono County Library locations will offer pre-arranged pick ups for library materials. www.monocountylibraries.org.

TOWN STUFF

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**Call for Bids**

To order the plans and specifications by telephone call Reduced plans only (11X17)

Plans & Specifications (incl. bid forms) 1771.1. exemption specified in Labor Code sections 1725.5 and 1771.1, all subcontractors. Pursuant to Labor Code sections 1725.5 and 1771.1, all subcontractors shall demonstrate their qualifications by having adequate license, a Driver's License, and a current Business Tax equipment in good working order, experience, and ability shall demonstrate their qualifications by having adequate

The contractor shall have a valid Class B Contractor license and a valid California Certificate and shall maintain all required licenses throughout the duration of the Project. The Contractor shall demonstrate their qualifications by having adequate equipment and workforce to perform the work. The Contractor shall be sole judge as to the quality of each proposal.

The Director of Industrial Relations has determined the general prevailing wage rate of per diem wages in the locality in which the work is to be performed shall be used as the minimum applicable law in its bid. The bid shall be awarded to the responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid on the base.

The Tensile Fabric Structure will house an Olympic sized ice rink/multi-purpose court along with associated public and private spaces such as entry hall and lobby, both indoor and outdoor seating, restrooms, washrooms, and urgent care areas. The rink will be a complete turnkey system with all mechanical, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, finishes, and operable as specified. The project also includes site work such as concrete curbs and sidewalks, entryway, canopy and drainage improvements. The Town will be furnishing the site and related elements, ice rink chiller system and Tensile Structure. Contractor to coordinate Scope of Work with others, as necessary.

The engineer's estimate to complete the base bid is between $7,000,000 and $7,300,000. The work includes the construction of Mammoth Twp. Library and Community Recreation Center at 421 Mammoth Lakes Blvd.

Any interested party may inspect the Proposed Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan at Town offices.

Any interested party may inspect the Plans and Specifications, which include but are not limited to the payment of prevailing wage rates, which have been predetermined and are on file with the California Department of Industrial Relations. The project also includes site work such as concrete curbs and sidewalks, entryway, canopy and drainage improvements. The Town will be furnishing the site and related elements, ice rink chiller system and Tensile Structure. Contractor to coordinate Scope of Work with others, as necessary.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on August 17, 2020. This business is conducted by Husband and Wife. The registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above. This business is listed on May, 1996.

**Notice Inviting Bids**

**Response Deadlines**

- Opening Date: September 14, 2020
- Closing Date: October 5, 2020
- Response Due: October 5, 2020

**Contact:** John Wentworth, ESCOG Board Member: johnw@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov 248 Mammoth Slopes Dr., P.O. Box 1838

Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

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LETTERS

Multi-Use-Facility (MUF) with an Olympic Ice Rink. In 2015, three Council members pursued this “vision.” If only three members want to invest $13 million in this vision, wouldn’t it be prudent to have ALL FIVE Town Council members AND the community supporting this “vision?” Remember, a 6-month ice rink is not a real recreation center. Build it right or do not build it at all.

Why do we even need an Olympic Ice rink? Nopeer resort has one. We have a National Hockey League (NHL) ice rink. Crested Butte, Colo., population 1,700, has an outdoor, covered NHL-sized ice rink. Big Sky, Mont., pop. 3,200, has an ice sheet in Town Center, supported by donations. South Lake Tahoe, pop. 22,000, has a year-round covered NHL-sized rink. Jackson Hole, Wyo., pop. 10,500, has a skating pond in the Town Square. Crested Butte has a Coors Light pond.

We should honor that legacy with our attitude is an important part of his legacy. For Dave there was not a ski area as one entity and the town as another; there was no dividing line. They were joined at hip. One needed the other. We should honor that legacy with our actions, today and in the future.

Randy Short
Bishop

Snowcreek Golf Course is Now Open
Season Passes are available at the Pro Shop

Snowcreek Golf Course 760-934-6633
www.livesnowcreek.com
2 Fairway Drive, Mammoth Lakes, CA

• Twilight Rates  
• Youth and Senior Rates  
• Cart and Club Rentals

To our loyal customers for allowing us to take care of your pool and spa maintenance needs during this time of uncertainty, and to our hard working employees!

STILL FEATURING
Sundance Spas
$1,500 OFF!
On select models, contact shop for details.

Call today and find out how easy it is to own a New Sundance Spa!
1401 Tavern Rd, Mammoth Lakes
(760) 924-3091 • mammothspacreations.com
Licensed- Bonded-Insured. CA. Lic. 849466

LETTERS continued from page 4

The community’s plan will not happen if three TC members build the MUF at Mammoth Creek Park West. Only three TC members have ever pursued this “vision.” If only three members want to invest $13 million in this “vision,” wouldn’t it be prudent to have ALL FIVE Town Council members AND the community supporting this “vision?” Remember, a 6-month ice rink is not a real recreation center. Build it right or do not build it at all.

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LETTERS continued from page 4

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Why do we even need an Olympic Ice rink? No peer resort has one. We have a National Hockey League (NHL) ice rink. Crested Butte, Colo., population 1,700, has an outdoor, covered NHL-sized ice rink. Big Sky, Mont., pop. 3,200, has an ice sheet in Town Center, supported by donations. South Lake Tahoe, pop. 22,000, has a year-round covered NHL-sized rink. Jackson Hole, Wyo., pop. 10,500, has a skating pond in the Town Square. Crested Butte has a Coors Light pond.

We should honor that legacy with our attitude is an important part of his legacy. For Dave there was not a ski area as one entity and the town as another; there was no dividing line. They were joined at hip. One needed the other. We should honor that legacy with our actions, today and in the future.

Randy Short
Bishop

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