Colleen and Rodney Wiley honeymooning on the Central Coast in 2014

THE FINAL SPIN
Rodney Wiley, 1968-2020

The life of the party has moved on to the afterlife. Rodney Wiley, aka DJ Rodney O, died last weekend after a bout with pancreatic cancer. He was 52.

Although, friend Dave Levy might say, he wasn’t 52, but more like 24 and a half on his 28th rotation.

Not to suggest that Rodney’s was a case of arrested development. Far from it. Rodney just knew who he was, was grateful for the gifts life presented, lived hard and lived well.

He was born in Van Nuys on June 21, 1968 and spent his youth in the San Fernando Valley, graduating from Birmingham high school.

And as he said in a video tribute made by his pal Jordan Burns (who used to drum for the punk band Strung Out — one of his many friends from the music industry), his original dream was to become a professional snowboarder. So he moved to Mammoth during the 1991-1992 season and got a job as a liftie.

But before he’d left the Valley, he’d become interested in DJ’ing thanks to friends DJ Aero and DJ Ice and bought some of his own equipment.

He learned on vinyl — no tech shortcuts.

His first gigs were house parties. At his house. Which the cops kept busting up.

One day, then-Mammoth Lakes Police Sgt. Paul Dostie says to him, “Why don’t you go make something of yourself?”

The context being: You throw really successful parties and you clearly have an audience. Can’t you get hired somewhere where these parties are legal?

Rodney listened. And Ed Hurley hired him at Ocean Harvest (where the Red Lantern is now located).

Hurley, among others, immediately saw that Rodney had that gift of being able to read a room. “And if it wasn’t working, he’d switch it up on the fly.”

“It wasn’t about his taste in music,” said Colleen. “It was about his ability to read a room and understand the vibe.”

Greg Alexander, former owner of Whiskey Creek, said that when Rodney first broke

Interested in dining outdoors? Apparently, Mammoth Mountain lives by different rules than others in Mammoth Lakes. This shot was taken Wednesday. Lunch weighs in on page 2.

ZERO POINT ZERO
ICU capacity nil in Southern California

California entered its second week of more strict stay-at-home orders on Monday, and the Covid-19 situation around the state has only grown worse.

Greater Sacramento and the Bay Area fell below the 15% ICU capacity needed to avoid a stay-at-home order, joining Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley under lockdown.

Only the Northern California region remains above the threshold 28.1% ICU availability. ICU availability in the San Joaquin Valley is at 0.0%, with Southern California clocking in at 0.5%. By Thursday afternoon, that number was also 0.0%.

Greater Sacramento has recorded 14.1% availability and the Bay Area has 12.9%.

Statewide ICU availability is 4.1%.

The state is averaging 63.9 new cases per 100,000 residents, with 52,281 new cases on December 17 and 379 additional deaths for a total of 21,860. The statewide positivity test rate is 11.3%.

Covid-19 case numbers have doubled in Mono County over the past 30 days, a reflection of state and national trends. The local positivity rate is 22.7% and the per capita positivity rate sits at 22.7%.

County supervisors continued to advocate for increased local control at Tuesday’s board meeting, with repeated questions about how Mono County could make the case to be classified differently and keep businesses [more] open.

Additionally, Supervisor John Peters reported on plans being coordinated by a Southern California regional taskforce that aims to represent the region as a whole in advocating for economic relief and a business recovery plan.

Peters expressed a hope that Mono County could be classified differently from the rest of the region if local Covid-19 conditions improve, as the county’s limited ICU beds have little to no impact on the region’s capacity as a whole.

In regards to concerns about additional industries being shut down, Mono County Public Health Officer Tom Boo said, “Everything is on the table with our continually exponentially skyrocketing cases.” Specifically speaking on Mammoth
WELL DONE, CITIZEN

As my favorite bartender in the whole wide world, Roberta Fisher (of Challis, Idaho) would often say, “You do what you have to do to survive.” And we’re all caught in the crosshairs of pandemic survival (financial and physical) these days.

As we sort through the overarching mixed message (We’re open, but we’re closed), let’s start with the front page photo. According to Mono County Environmental Health Director Louis Molina, the reason that it’s okay for Mammoth Mountain to host outdoor dining on its Tusks sun deck is because the deck is considered common area, not necessarily dining-specific, and that MMSA patrons represent a “captive” audience. They need to rest somewhere. They need to eat somewhere. They can’t just grab it and go.

Molina contrasted that with the Stellar Brew deck. Saying if Stellar Brew’s deck was open, it would be “inviting people to congregate,” which is what we’re trying to avoid.

By that standard, I said, why is the ski area open? Molina was quick to reply that under no circumstances should it be implied that he believes the ski area should be closed.

That’s not the direction I’m heading. Which is: If it’s legal at the ski area, it should be legal everywhere else in town.

If people are wearing masks and keeping distance, the government referees should swallow their whistles.

A letter that came in this week.

“Citizen, well done investigating local businesses for possible shutdown order violations. The Leader has spoken, as always with a benevolent eye toward the good of the folk and improvement of the health of the father-land. We must not tolerate those who stand in destiny’s way. It will be a magnificent thousand year rule ahead, if we but understand that our experts require only temporary, trifling obeisance to their reasonable compulsion mandates a few weeks longer, to flatten the curve.

Now that you have joined the righteous cause, use your outlet to promote further national greatness by exhorting others to follow your example. Form a protection squadron. Tolerate no departures from The Lead-er’s progressive vision. Inform the State Police of violations. Stigmatize non-conforming jackanapes by forcing them to wear a yellow “J.” We have but to crush ignorant dissent on our way to final triumph over the enemy flu, for which we all can, we all should, we all must, cry “hail victory!”

—John Rogitz

How come I keep returning to Kipling’s poem, “If.”

I had a whole riff on it in the May 2 editorial. But I’m gonna come back to it now because old men tend to repeat themselves. Maybe because they tend to be so tiresome.

If you can keep your head when all about you/ Are losing theirs, and blaming it on you

So if I understand Mr. Rogitz correctly, he wants me to stop being curious and stop performing my job if he doesn’t like whatever investigation I’ve undertaken. I imagine Mr. Rogitz also believes the IRS shouldn’t audit anyone, because heaven forbid they may uncover billionaires who don’t pay taxes.

And Lance Armstrong should still be the seven-time champion of the Tour de France.

What we try to convey in the paper is what’s happening, or at least what seems to be happening. And how people feel about it. And how people respond to it.

So Mr. Rogitz will be excited to learn I doubled-down and did the same run-through in Bishop this week.

I walked into three downtown hotels on Tuesday evening.

At the Cielo, I asked if they had availability. The front desk person responded by asking me, “Queen or King-size bed?”

Across the street at the Holiday Inn Express, I asked if they had availability. The front desk person replied by asking me if I was an essential worker.

I said no. My reply literally pained her. She really wanted to serve me and make me happy. She didn’t wish to turn me away and disappoint.

We kind of eyed each other. Hemmed and hawed a little bit. Then asked about room prices. She quoted prices for a queen and a king. I told her I had to go outside and consult with my wife.

She would’ve rented me a room. I mean, the charm and dashing good looks alone ...

At the Elms, I inquired as to availability. And they gave me a price. No questions asked.

So I thought about this, and it’s patently obvious that Bishop is really eating Mammoth’s lunch. People are literally being trained to stay in Bishop and ski in Mammoth. And then, when they drive down the hill at night, they can go check out the new casino, which is open.

But while the bulk of Bishop’s rooms are hotels/motels, Mammoth has a sizable, private Airbnb/agency-managed supply.

And one agency manager described what was really happening in Mammoth.

“Owners are blocking dates as owner stays and renting the units themselves versus using property managers who would otherwise follow the rules and pay the taxes. They send out private emails to their friends and colleagues. It’s all off the books.”

And because it’s all off the books, and it’s virtually impossible for Town compliance officers to verify whether or not it’s an actual owner stay,
“Rules for thee not for me”

Dear Lunch:

On Friday 12/11 while our town is under the same mandatory “stay at home”, “no dining” and “no nightly rental” orders as L.A. County, the permit-issuing side of Mono County/TOML/Forest Service allowed a large film crew from L.A. to break these orders and film a commercial shoot at MMSA while staying at the Sierra Nevada Lodge.

Our businesses are closing. Our workers are unemployed. Our families are suffering. Our town is DYING. Those of us following these mandates are doing so because we are told, despite the science, that masks and social distancing no longer work. We are told fighting the virus at our elevation is exponentially worse. We are told our positive cases are skyrocketing due to these entities not complying do so because we are community-first. This clearly cannot be said for the entities listed above. Not only is this hypocritical behavior a giant slap in the face to all of us, it puts the health of our community at risk.

How is this okay? Where is the outrage and accountability? Is it because MMSA is TOML’s largest employer? Or the G.M. of Sierra Nevada Lodge is on the board of MLT? Hollywood has the money which MLT directly benefits from. You connect MLT with Sierra Nevada Lodge.

Let me repeat that ... These entities care more about money then EVERY. SINGLE. ONE. OF. YOU.

It's a big club and you ain't in it”

- George Carlin

Joe Hannigan
Mammoth Lakes

Editor’s follow-up: Regarding film crews as essential workers, we solicited this response from Mono County Tourism Director Alicia Vennos:

“The Mono County Public Health Officer has been authorizing film shoots/productions on a case by case basis since late July. Film industry workers are on the Governor’s list of essential infrastructure workers, (https://covid19.ca.gov/essential-workforce/- Section 13, paragraph 15) and as such, are exempt from the Regional Stay At Home Order (when working on productions). The film industry COVID-19 safety operational guidelines include stringent protocols – cast/crew are tested 72 hours prior to arrival, COVID Compliance Officers monitor all on-site activity, food is provided on-site, etc.

However, we are not actively promoting filming, and request that productions postpone until after the Regional Stay At Home Order is lifted, if at all possible.

Most recently, we had a vehicle commercial shoot in Mammoth/June for two days last week; another 10-person crew will be shooting in June Lake this week for two days. Since the pandemic began, we have had about a dozen productions on location in Mono County.”

Holiday Delights at C5 Studios!

Gift Shop featuring local Artists and Artisans

Get creative! Join us for a holiday art workshop!
EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND ... BUT WHY NO LOVE FOR DOMAILLE?

By Page

A year of public hearings, information sessions, and public input for the proposed housing development at the Tioga Inn project located just off Highway 120 (in the Lee Vining metro area), proponent Dennis Domaille will have to wait until 2021 before a verdict is reached on the matter.

A final decision for Domaille will tentatively come in the 28th year since he first began work on the project.

Tuesday’s Mono County Board of Supervisors meeting featured a public hearing and subsequent vote on the project that would’ve given the go-ahead for work to proceed on the housing component of the inn. That did not happen.

The board voted to approve an environmental impact review for the project in October but withheld final decision, citing postponement of the planned meeting due to weather and the governor’s recent stay-at-home order.

On Tuesday, tribal representatives asked that the board delay the hearing and final decision, citing adherence to county policy and code, reconciliation had been met, and cited initial efforts for the tribe and address their concerns.

Those meetings, and the necessary discussion, never took place.

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A number of supervisors had initially felt that existing efforts for reconciliation had been met, and cited adherance to county policy and code, in addition to the already approved plans for Tioga Inn hotel and restaurant, as reasons to proceed.

Chief Dennis Domaille was the only supervisor to vote against the plan.

Supervisor Fred Stump said that despite the current issues facing approval of the housing project, the fact exists that plans had already been approved for the site and that verdict could not be changed after the fact. Stump’s additional concerns about a fire evacuation route were satisfied by a commitment from CalTrans to work on the issue.

County staff also added that a map of the trails system provided by the tribe indicated the system would only be impacted by the approved hotel plan, not the proposed housing project.

Godbe disagreed with this information, stating that the housing project would directly impact the existing trails and argued that “the disagreement alone is enough to merit delaying this.”

County Counsel Stacey Simon also explained that, as housing is considered essential under state guidance, a meeting between Domaille and Tribal representatives would not have to wait until the stay-at-home order subsides.

Mono Lake Kutzadika’a Chairwoman Charlotte Lange called in to the meeting to give her side of the story and implore the supervisors to delay a decision.

“Mono County has a responsibility to protect interests in Mono County,” she said, “We should all be in agreement on this project.”

She explained that Domaille has a “moral obligation” to the tribe to respect its wishes, and said that Domaille took 24 days to get in touch, with a further 8 days passing before a meeting could be set up.

Lange said that she felt disrespect from the Supervisors for not taking their concerns seriously. “When you talk about passing this thing, you should have the decency at least to continue this consultation project.”

DOMAILLE ALLEGED TO HAVE MADE SUPERFICIAL EFFORTS TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT

The Kutzadika’a tribe alleged that Domaille had only made superficial attempts to come to an agreement previously, and that they had been repeatedly left out of the process. In October, Domaille said that he would reach out and schedule meetings with the tribe and address their concerns.

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Michael Godbe, legal representative for the tribe, explained the aforementioned reasons for the requested delay, adding that the primary concerns are the cultural trail system in the area and designation of the location as “Cry Dance District” of historical and cultural significance.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has also created concerns about in-person meetings with tribal elders.

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more LOVE, page 5
For his part, Domaille reiterated that he is “ready willing and able to meet with Charlotte or legal counsel at any time” and said, “I don’t really know what direction Charlotte or attorneys gonna go here: the spirit of cooperation or get back into the legal arena.”

"From what I understand, there’s a map of the trails and I’m expected to agree to an easement without them bringing forth the easement to me,” Domaille said. "If they bring me an easement and it doesn’t interfere with things, I’d be happy to sign that.”

The map in question, depicting the cultural trails around the site, is confidential and may only be viewed by a select group, which includes the Supervisors and select county staff.

Numerous public commenters supported the tribe’s concerns and asked that the hearing be further delayed until they are assuaged. Katherine Bancroft, tribal historic preservation officer for Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone reservation, spoke on the training required to properly analyze the dig site until they are assuaged. Katherine said Peters.

For his part, Domaille reiterated that he was surprised by the Attorney General’s office involvement in the proceedings and other new information coming to light. “Every time without fail in the 24-48 hours leading up to a hearing, we are bombarded with new letters, new information,” he said. “My ability to digest new and relevant information at the eleventh hour, compounded with a representative from the Attorney General’s office makes it to me not tenable to make a good informed decision in a public hearing for a project such as this.”

“it is regretfully that I feel un-equipped to make a decision today,” said Peters.

The board voted to delay the hearing in order to adequately digest the new information coming in and to allow for Domaille and the tribe to meet and attempt to rectify their concerns.

…continued from page 4

LOCAL BRIEFS

Downtown recap

Elaine Kabala, Associate Planner and Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Bishop, gave a summary of public feedback on the Downtown Specific Plan at Monday’s Bishop City Council meeting.

The City conducted public outreach workshops in November to employ public feedback in shaping the Plan. 63 surveys were conducted during the outreach phase.

Inyo County hospitals and emergency services are seeing sharp increases in patients and requests for service that are non-emergent, resulting in Emergency Room bed shortages, and possible increased wait times. Inyo County has a limited amount of EMTs and front-line healthcare providers. The following guidelines are encouraged to curb over-extension of Inyo County’s valued COVID-19 responders:

-Do not call 911 unless it is an emergency; non-emergency calls can use 760-878-0383, option 4
-If you have any of the following symptoms it is an EMERGENCY, call 911 or go to your local ER: difficulty breathing, persistent pain, pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to awaken, bluish lips or face, choking, acute pain, severe abdominal pain, severe bleeding, or chest pain – or any other serious injury.

Do not go to the emergency room for non-emergency conditions.

For non-emergency symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness, call your Primary Care Physician. Your doctor may offer telemmedicine so you can have a virtual consultation or schedule an appointment to see you in person.

The Inyo County COVID-19 response team values your effort to stay safe and reduce the spread, including adhering to the Regional Stay at Home Order.

-Press Release

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Please stay in-yyo homes

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-Press Release

more BRIEFS, page 6
Council was in general agreement with the public feedback. Councilmember Stephen Muchovej asked about potentially expanding the scope of the project to include a portion of Gainey Street, the future home of a housing project. He also asked about what an architecture board would look like, an item suggested by the public and Kabala. Kabala explained that it would be an advisory board for the Planning Commission and any area requiring design review. It would have a say on whether or not a building’s design is compatible with a vision or desired aesthetic. Councilman Jim Ellis agreed with Muchovej and expressed an interest in continued public outreach on the project into 2021. Ellis also inquired about a call to expand sidewalks along Main Street to 10 feet. “Our options with regards to Main Street are exceptionally limited,” Kabala explained, “It’s very important that this plan is considered in the context that we can’t make improvements in downtown until Caltrans makes changes to Main Street.”

Ultimately, Kabala said that the document would be a guiding influence for Caltrans in their efforts to improve downtown Bishop.

The single-family home market in Mammoth Lakes has produced 114 sales year-to-date (YTD). Median YTD home prices are $880,000, which is up 11% in comparison to 2019. Just four months ago, the YTD median price for 2020 was up only .5% for the year; suggesting nearly a 11% increase in just four months. While 2020 median home prices are near record highs, they still have not surpassed 2007 figures when the median price for a home was $900,000. As of December 10, there were zero single-family homes for sale in Mammoth under $1.1 million.

As of December 1, 2020, the YTD median price for a condominium in Mammoth Lakes was $479,500, which is 6.5% higher than the median price observed for all of 2019. This median price was determined using 392 sales YTD. Sales volume for condominiums is on pace to break a 10-year high. As of December 10, there are only two condos in Mammoth available for under $1 million.

The most notable market change in 2020 YTD is sales activity. March and April showed a sharp drop in the number of sales, while late June and July began to demonstrate a recovery in volume. August trends tapered off somewhat while September set record highs. In October we saw sale volumes for single family homes pulling back to some sense of “normal,” but November was 26% above the 10-year average.
COVID
continued from page 1
Mountain Ski Area, Boo added, “If cases continue to rise, I think closure of any and all of those businesses have to be on the table.”

White Mountain Fire Department Chief and local EMS coordinator Dave Doonan called in to give his perspective on the local Covid situation.

“Although I’m not deeply involved in transporting patients in Mono County,” Doonan said, “we are in a crisis right now, I’m not as optimistic as Dr. Boo. Northern Inyo Hospital is at or near capacity.”

“People who call [the virus] a hoax have no idea what’s going on,” he continued.

County staff brought back a penalty ordinance for individuals and businesses that violate Covid-related guidance; the board had previously asked staff to lower proposed penalty amounts, reaffirm a commitment to outreach and education before punishment, and include specific language about training enforcement officials.

The revised ordinance lowered penalty amounts to $100/day for the first 5 days, with $500 for every day beyond that and outlined all steps taken prior to enforcement.

“This is a tool in the toolbox for Public Health, for our enforcement team and both the town and the county and it’s also hopefully a way to in effect level the playing field for those that are doing the right thing,” Peters said of the enforcement ordinance.

Supervisor Jennifer Kreitz opposed the additional ordinance and expressed her feeling that the county would be able keep people in compliance without it. She proved the lone “no” vote on the item, which passed 4-1.

Inyo County has seen a dramatic rise in Covid-19 cases in recent days, with 44 new cases added on Monday, December 14th, in addition to one death. It added another 12 cases Tuesday.

As of Thursday, the county had 114 active Covid-19 cases and 19 deaths. The majority of those cases are in northern Inyo county.

County Supervisor Jeff Griffiths gave a brief update to Bishop City Council at its meeting on the 14th.

“It’s bad and I’m on these statewide calls and it’s bad everywhere in the state,” Griffiths said, “Reports from the hospital are that you can’t fly anyone out.”

Griffiths reiterated a common talking point used to illustrate how Covid-19 waves progress: once case numbers reach a peak, hospitalizations will reach a peak a week after, with deaths beginning to peak an additional week after that.

“The limiting factor, he explained, is staff capacity to care for sick patients. “There was a time when you could pull traveling nurses and resources from an area,” he explained, “The only way that mutual aid works is you have to have an unaffected place you can pull from. “There is no unaffected place in America.”

He concluded: “It’s bad right now and it’s going to get even worse in the next week or two.”

Inyo County Supervisors received an update on the situation the following day at their board meeting.

In addition to the recent spike in cases, Health and Human Services Director Marilyn Mann reported a countywide positivity rate of 7.3%.

Inyo County Public Health Director James Richardson said that there were seven confirmed positive Covid patients at Northern Inyo Hospital, with one bed available.

Griffiths related a story on Tuesday about a patient who broke their femur and yet could not be transferred out to Reno because of capacity issues.

“I was told they’d have to have broken both femurs [to get transferred],” he said, “Our system is on the verge of being overwhelmed. This is not the time to be tired of it [Covid protocols and staying at home], but time to double-down on our efforts and do the right thing.”

In other state news ...

A judge in San Diego County ruled that local strip clubs Pacers and Cheetah’s may remain open despite the governor’s stay-at-home order.

Judge Joel Wohlfeil, in his ruling, questioned the correlation between ICU bed capacity and the goings-on at the clubs. He found that the defendants in the case, the California Attorney General’s office, gave no evidence that live adult entertainment or restaurants in compliance with protocols have impacted the Southern California region.

The case came about after the AG’s office sent cease-and-desist letters to the establishments in question stating that they were in violation of the stay-at-home order.

Wohlfeil’s ruling may far-reaching consequences for the San Diego restauranter industry in their struggle to remain open and profitable.

However, Wholleil’s decision on the case runs counter to another San Diego County judge’s finding, in a different case, that rejected requests from gyms and restaurants to reopen.

San Diego County put out a statement on Wednesday afternoon that they would suspend enforcement of the relevant portions of the stay-at-home order until they can gain clarity about the scope of the ruling.

San Diego news drawn from KUSI and the Times of San Diego.
NOBODY DID IT BETTER

By Colin Wolf

Rodney Wiley (aka DJ Rodney O), died last weekend after a long bout with pancreatic cancer. He was a friend to all, enemy of none. His was a happy orbit, and fortune smiled upon those who shared that orbit.

In a way, Dling is similar to skiing: just about anyone can do it at first, but very few people are actually any good. Longtime Mammoth Lakes resident Rodney Wiley, aka DJ RodneyO, was undoubtedly one of those few.

I lived in Mammoth Lakes from 2007 to 2011, before the Ikon Pass, before semi-reliable Internet, and before Airbnb ruined the rental market – a time when people had shitty phones like chunky Nokia’s and toilet-dunked Blackberry’s, and the signal sucked so uptight and snooty, like something re-worked, mostly because it sounds too course, Rodney at the center of it all.

Wild Wednesdays were such an institution that no other bars in Mammoth would even attempt anything on that night of the week, because they all knew it would be a colossal waste of time. How could they compete with everything I just mentioned, plus the occasional Jell-O wrestling match, or national acts like Dirt Nasty, or Pharcyde stopping through town?

But despite all that, Rodney was extremely humble and kind. When I was a staff writer for The Sheet, I wrote an article joking about how literally anyone could be a DJ, including my idiot self. To my surprise, the first person to reach out and give me pointers was Rodney. It got to the point, where I stopped joking about DJing, and actually enjoyed it and started my own weekly night at the Auld Dubliner. I even gave myself a ridiculous DJ name, ‘Thor The Falconeer. Rodney and Thor performed quite a few gigs together, and I was always shocked he would even consider putting my dumb name on one of his flyers, but he did.

One of our last was a tribute party for the late R&B singer Nate Dogg at Lakanuki. I asked Rodney to do that party with me because we both loved ‘90s gangster rap, and we both wanted to celebrate the passing of an icon. During a break, Rodney and I were talking about our sets, and he said something to the effect of, “The reason Nate Dogg was so great, was because his mere presence made anything infinitely better.” Same goes for Rodney.

Mammoth lost its own icon. In an industry where anyone can do it, but few are great, Rodney was the absolute king of local nightlife for decades (plural), and he made Mammoth infinitely better.

DJ Rodney O @ Whiskey Creek in Mammoth. January 10, 2010.
MAN OF THE YEAR
Nobody's created more fun than Rodney O
By Lunch

A ll we (or maybe I shouldn’t say we, as the ‘we’ I’m referring to are our town political leaders, whose collective leadership skills don’t even match Neville Chamberlain’s) ever talk about in this town is how we need to have more things to do, bring in more events, make it more exciting ... that this is the path to enlightenment [i.e. becoming a world class destination resort]. In other words, we’re always looking outward. At our peer resorts. Over our shoulders.

Meanwhile, some of the events we do have, and the talented people who make them happen, are taken for granted. Without a lot of fanfare, DJ Rodney O (the man who makes Whiskey Creek’s Wild Wednesdays go) has surely entertained more people in Mammoth Lakes over the past fifteen years than anyone else. And that is why he is The Sheet’s Man of the Year.

Rodney O, who shall remain both age-less and “real” nameless for this article in order to preserve his identity, moved to Mammoth during the ‘91-’92 season. Rodney O (a name itself derived from an L.A. rap trio founded by Rodney Oliver) began his career in the L.A. club scene carrying records for DJ Aero and DJ Two Tone. At the time, Rodney’s initial goal was to be a lyricist, and he made music, produced records, and angled for his break. But once he recognized “I wasn’t going to be the next Cypress Hill,” that’s when Rodney became a little more open as to what the Fates may hold.

Then he made a visit to Mammoth. He’d never been here before. Just came to visit a friend. A week later, he was a Mammoth Lakes resident.

Rodney’s first DJ’ing gig in Mammoth occurred in 1994 when “Nutch” [O’s spelling] over at Ocean Harvest offered him a Tuesday hip-hop night. “The other DJ’s were all playing rock ‘n roll,” said O. “Guns’n Roses, Offspring ... I guess people were ready for something different.”

Ready is an understatement. In short order, Rodney was working full-time, although it took until about 2001 for him to make a living solely as a DJ.

Rodney moonlighted as lift crew and then night crew at MMSA to make ends meet.

“And I’m good to go, yes Rodney O Leader of the show, make the ladies say “Oh!”

Everlasting Bass

A turning point (or perhaps we should call it an acceleration point) in Rodney’s DJ career in Mammoth occurred when Greg Alexander, owner of Whiskey Creek, hired Rodney to work a Whiskey Creek employee party that was “just off the chain,” according to Rodney. Alexander was impressed. His wife was even more impressed. "The key to knowing he was a great DJ was my wife. He just played music that women will dance to," recalled Alexander.

Rodney acknowledges that the music he listens to in his free time often doesn’t match what he’ll play on the job. “I don’t necessarily play the music I like. You know, I don’t go around listening to Beyonce or Justin Timberlake, but their stuff is a staple. You have to play it. The girls like it."

After the employee party, Alexander decided to hire Rodney for Wednesday nights. By this time, Rodney had established Wild Wednesday at Rock ’n Grill, but it certainly wasn’t the spectacle then that it’s become now.

Initially, Wild Wednesday at Whiskey Creek was called RENO (Restaurant Employee Night Out) night, but the name eventually changed as the event grew, "I didn’t want to limit it anymore," said Alexander.

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more RODNEY, page 10
RODNEY continued from page 9

“Roll down the windows, conniup are some hoochies”

RODNEY Humps on the Boulevard

For most, the idea of DJ’ing for a living just appears like a pronounced case of arrested development, but when you watch Rodney perform, you gain an instant appreciation for what he does - the concentration it requires, the timing, the technical expertise, the stamina ... and while he juggles what he’s doing with the music, he is constantly distracted by fans, friends and hangers-on, who can jekyll-and-Hyde themselves into harassers at the drop of a hat. If he hadn’t become a DJ, Rodney could have certainly become a very skilled EMT surgeon.

“It’s much more intense than you’d think,” admits Rodney. “I spend a lot of time at home working on going through my music, figuring out what goes with what, then deciding whether that would work up here, practicing mixing. And I spend a lot of money on music, go to the L.A. clubs and see what they’re doing ...”

So what does work up here?

“The business owners have an idea of what they want. They also like a wider range of music – from classic rock to hip-hop.”

Just last week, Rodney encountered a situation where security had rolled up the billiards tables in order to make room for the dance floor, and in the process, had had to move a pool cue which belonged to a patron. The patron, who’d had a bit to drink, decided that Rodney had stolen the pool cue. “The guy flipped out. I tried to tell him to talk to a manager, but I could see it wasn’t going anywhere. He wasn’t listening. So I helped him offstage and handed him the security and they escorted him out ... with his pool cue, I might add.”

“I’ve pretty much seen it all,” said Rodney. “Drunk, naked, violent. Naked’s okay. The other two I could do without.”

“Who you foolin when you say that you can fade the O?”

Rodney Oliver U Don’t Hear Me ‘Tho’

In our increasingly youth-centric world, it can be somewhat unnerving to keep growing older while your audience stays the same age. This isn’t entirely true; there’s a certain segment of Rod- ney’s loyal audience which has grown with him. But then, there are also the seasonals who stay forever 23. Rodney believes that the wide range of music he plays does extend the age range of his audience. And he also makes it a point to go out and do an after-party every once in awhile, to be in the mix and stay current.

“If I’m not working, you’ll rarely see me out, but if I have been working, I’ll try to do the fun, work and party and get it all over with.”

As for growing old gracefully, Rodney O sees Tony Hawk as the standard-bearer. “He’s shown Gen X can stick in the business somehow. Maybe producing, playing ... a friend of mine is opening a 5-star resort in Cabo. He asked me if I’d like to be his music director. These opportunities tend to come up now and then for me. If someone’s visiting Mammoth, they eventually end up at Whiskey or Lakazuki one way or the other, which means they’ve got a good chance of meeting me.”

Rodney’s just one of those beautiful, humble people who are great to have around. And he responds in kind to like souls. “The people who come in with a good attitude and who like to have fun, those are the people I focus on. That’ll get you everywhere.”

RODNEY continued from page 1

onto the scene, Mammoth was a live band, rock ‘n roll town, and Alexander almost exclusively booked live music on the weekends. But there was an issue when the band took its breaks: the dance floor would clear out and the bar area got ridiculously crowded and the fire marshall would give Alexander a hard time.

So he initially hired Rodney to DJ on weekends (expanding upon Wild Wednesdays) to keep people on the dance floor and disperse the crow a little better.

So there’d be 45-minute band sets and 15-minute Rodney sets.

In pretty short order, said Alexander, that 15 minutes was flipped. 15-minute band sets and 45-minutes of Rodney. Rodney was the party.

But what made him truly compelling was his character. As Mike McKenna, a former bar manager at Whiskey, said this week, “He was the coolest guy in town and also a truly nice person. A rare combo.

From friend Dave Levy: “I met Rodney in Mammoth in 1995 as a visitor through some friends of a friend. We liked each other immediately ... in that 20-something year old dude – too cool sort of way. I moved to Mammoth the following Fall (’96) and my wife and I landed at Mountain Shadows Condos, where it turns out Rodney also resided. We hung out here and there in the months that followed, mostly at Ocean Harvest and such. By the following summer I was working as a Bike Park Ranger at MMSA. In late summer I went over the bars at speed and blew up my shoulder, requiring several weeks in a sling. Meanwhile, I’d scheduled a firewood delivery and many of the pieces turned out to be oversized, thus requiring another hand split to be usable. Furthermore, they needed to be thrown up to our 2nd floor unit deck and stacked.

So I’m out there one afternoon with a mail in my one properly-usable hand trying to split the big pieces when Rodney rolls into the complex. Seeing this rather putiful sight, he asks what exactly my plan is, revealing of course that I had none. He then proceeds to spend the next couple of hours splitting those pieces, and then playing catcher on the deck and stacking our wood. Perhaps not so much a remarkable story, but the casualness with which he instantly shifted into “well let’s do this then” mode is very indicative of how he rolled. He was always down to help in real time, and yet always surprised and humbled when others acted the same towards him.

Brent Truax at Sierra Nevada Resort echoed Levy. “If you needed help, he helped. It didn’t matter the nature of the help required or the time of day ... he was happiest when others were happy.”

Rodney met his wife Colleen on the Millennial New Year’s Eve, 1999. She was watching the scene with a friend and they ended up at Ocean Harvest, where Rodney was working.

Little did Colleen realize that her friend had an ulterior motive - she had a thing for DJ Aero, who was visiting that night.

So the friend disappeared with Aero and Colleen was abandoned in the DJ booth with Rodney.

“I fell in love with his sincerity, kind- ness, sense of humor and spontaneous ‘live for the moment’ approach to life,” says Colleen.

And Rodney of Colleen: “You’re the yin to my yang.”

They dated a year-and-a-half before they moved in together. And then lived together another 12 years before Rodney proposed - which caught Colleen by surprise.

They were married at June Mountain on June 27, 2015. As Rodney said in an interview with The Sheet last November after he’d received a diagnosis of stage 4 pancre- atic cancer, “Of course, I’m freaked out, I’d like another ten years, fifteen years. But ... I’ve also lived one of the best lives anyone can live. I got to be a professional DJ. I surfed around the world. I’ve lived 100 years in 50.”

This wasn’t just Rodney deluding himself into acceptance. This was really how he felt. As Colleen said, “Even in his early 30s, he would say that if he died tomorrow, he’d be okay with it as he had already lived a great life.”

Truth be told about Rodney’s musical taste? Here’s a clue from his wife: “On roadtrips, when the Sirius XM was on and he was controlling the radio, he’d play reggae and hip hop.”

And Mammoth’s Reggae Festival she says, was Rodney’s favorite local festival.

He is survived by his wife Colleen, mother Patricia, older sister Sheri and brother-in-law William Brown, as well as by his dog Moorea, a German Shep- herd mix. His father Douglas preceded him in death.

Colleen says she’s hoping to host a celebration of Rodney’s life for the local community sometime in June, Covid permitting.

If you want to honor Rodney in the meantime, heed his words: “If you’re laughing and smiling, you’re the winner in life.”

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**TOWN STUFF**

**Friday, December 18/19**  
Schoolyard Express (Chair 17) and Canyon Lodge will open for the season today, with limited services including rentals, tickets, retail, restrooms & takeout food options. Private lessons out of Canyon Lodge can be booked in advance via MammothMountain.com. Sit down with Sage Cattabriga-Alosa 7-8:30 p.m. $20. Attend this virtual event featuring guest speaker Sage Cattabriga-Alosa, a world-renowned freeskier, mountain biker and filmmaker. Watch some of his video clips of gnarly ski descents and outdoor adventures. Q&A session will follow. Info: register: www.friendsoftheinyo.org/760.873.6500.

**Saturday, December 19**  
Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre presents: A Twisted Christmas Carol by Phil Olson 7-9 p.m. Link to join FREE Webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/u/88158791966. Info: See ad p. 5

**December 19-24**  

**Monday, December 21**  
Mammoth Lakes Lodging Round Table meets 10 a.m. Viewing available thru Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/u/88670501007

**Mammoth Lakes Restaurant Association** meets 3:30 p.m. Viewing available thru Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/u/8588766342

**Tuesday, December 22**  
Round 4 of TOML Business Assistance Program application deadline. Funds are planned to be distributed by the end of December. Please review the Town’s Business Assistance webpage for additional information: https://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov/977/Business-Assistance-Program. Qualified small businesses can apply for grants of up to $20,000.

**Wednesday, December 23**  
The New Normal: Coping with A Covid World Community Conversation hosted by Mono County Behavioral Health. Viewing available through Zoom on Mono County’s Covid page.

**Ongoing**

There is an unscheduled vacancy on the Bishop Planning Commission. This appointment will be in effect until April 9, 2021. All interested persons may contact Bishop City Hall @ (760) 873-5863 Ext. 24. Applications and descriptions of duties and responsibilities are available at City Hall and on the City’s website at http://www.cityofbishop.com. Applications accepted until 4 p.m. on Jan. 8, 2021. C3 Studios “Ancestors of the Arts” show ongoing @ C3, 210 South Warren St. in Bishop (back of the old J.C. Penney bldg.), 1st weekend hours: 10-5 Friday-Saturday and 10-1 Sunday. More info: See story p. 21

The Inyo Council for the Arts Holiday Gallery Show is up at the ICX’s new location at 150 Willow Street in Bishop! Gallery hours are Monday-Friday, 10-4, Masks, physical distancing required. Info: 760.873.8014/info@inyo.org

Mono Arts Council’s “Howling at the Moon” art show is currently on display at the MAC Gallery inside the Minaret Mall across the way from Minaret Cinemas. Hours: 12-5, Friday-Monday.

Laws Museum, located just outside Bishop off Highway 6, is open Friday-Monday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Info: www.lawsmuseum.org/760.873.5950.

Mono County Libraries Storytime Live! Join Ms. Chelsea for a story and fun activities on the Mammoth Lakes Library Facebook page. Time: 10:30 a.m. on Wednesdays. Or start your week off with a community storytelling, Mondays at 10:30 a.m. on the Mono County Libraries Facebook page.

All Visitor Centers (Mono Basin, Mammoth, White Mountain, Lone Pine) are closed, but visitor questions are being answered via phone daily, 8-4:30.

Mammoth: 760.924.5502

Mono Basin: 760.647.3044

Lone Pine: 760.876.5502

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CJ Driver w/Hazmat IV  -  $22-25
PR Bookkeeper  ML  -  $20-22

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Mammoth Spa Creations is looking for an additional member for its team. We cur-
rently have an immediate opening for a spa Maintenance Technician position, 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. Please call 760-924-8991 or stop by the store located at 1401 Tavern Road Mammoth Lakes for more information and to pick up an application. Resumes can be e-mailed to mammothspas@aol.com.

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

Mammoth Lakes Justice Court is hiring
This is an at-will, part-time professional level contract position that serves at the pleasure of the County of Inyo and Mono Superiors Courts. The Child Support Com-
mis sion will be primarily hear matters
brought by the Department of Child Sup-
port Services in Inyo and Mono Counties as
part of the Title IV-D child support enforce-
ment program. For additional information
go to: https://www.jud.ca.gov/gener
ginfo/employment.html.

Second Chance Thrift Shop is looking for a bright, energetic, customer service orientated, ready for front line retail with potential to grow. Must be able to safely lift 50 lbs., have excep-
tional customer service skills, and desire to
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letter to: epl@elcoservices.eastsierra.ca.
org or fax to 760 934 2475

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moth Lakes, CA 93546

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Job Functions:
• Extensive knowledge of commercial & personal insurance coverage
• Experience conducting needs assess-
ments
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on the phone or email.

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Strong desire to use insurance tech in all aspects of the process.

Insurance experience and a valid California Insurance License is desired. Would need to obtain a Property and Casualty California Insurance License to qualify for this position. We will train and educate in all aspects. However, having previous experience working within the insurance industry is a bonus.

Wages and Compensation:
• We offer competitive compensation-
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How to Apply:
• To learn more about this position visit our Website and Apply:
• https://www.ins scouts.com/careers

Part Time Office Reservationist needed.
It can potentially become a full time job. Must have professional manner, responsible, dependable, computer skills and able to finish tasks assigned. Must be able to work weekends.

Duties are answering multiple telephone lines, customer relations and numerous other tasks. Please fax resume/ job experience to 760-666-3943.

Experienced real estate agents/brokers to work with a 30 year old Mammoth Lakes brokerage. Mammoth newcomers will be considered. Top rated franchise affiliation with vast technology and support network. Tremendous flexibility. Strong referral opportunities. Work from home if so desired but with a centralized meet-and-greet/work office available. Attractive compensation package. Call 760-934-2400. Outstanding opportunity for the right person. Please send resume/letter of introduction to post@

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I saw... your industry is considered essential. Does that include adult films? I’ve got a working title for you: French Dirty Laundry! Featuring Governor Gower Moreson and co-starring Mayberry May. I saw... you are operating at 20% capacity. Talk about walking a mile in Donald Trump’s shoes.

IMACA (Inyo Mono Advocates For Community Action) is looking for a Family Services Specialist in our Community Con-
nection for Children Program who wants to join our team located in the beautiful Eastern Sierra.

Position will be open until filled
Go to Website for Job Description & Application at: www.imaca.net or 760-873-8557 ext.111 or IMACA office at 137 E. South Street, Bishop, Ca. 93514

Applicants must complete an IMACA application form. IMACA Advocates For Community Action, Inc. Is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Fictitious Business Name Statement
The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

Imagery Print Services LLC

Wagner’s Snow Removal
Wagner’s Property Services LLC, 1451 Majestic Pines Rd.
P.O. Box 8300
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

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

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on October 19, 2020.
File Number 20-191
2020-0199 (11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19)

Fictitious Business Name Statement
The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

Kiwi Construk
Paul Malcom Sarten
18210 HWY 6
Hammill Valley, CA. 93514

This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above in 1998. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on November 13, 2020.
File Number 20-202
2020-0203 (11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19)

F fictitious Business Name Statement
The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

Imagery Print Services LLC

1451 Majestic Pines Rd.
P.O. Box 8300
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

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

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on October 19, 2020.
File Number 20-191
2020-0199 (11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19)

Fictitious Business Name Statement
The Following Person Is Doing Business As:

Imagery Print Services LLC

Wagner’s Property Services LLC, 1451 Majestic Pines Rd.
P.O. Box 8300
Mammoth Lakes, Ca. 93546

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

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on October 19, 2020.
File Number 20-191
2020-0199 (11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19)

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File Number 20-191
2020-0199 (11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19)
Although it’s been a downer of a year on all accounts, one new business in town hopes that they can elevate spirits, at least a little.

Mammoth Holistics, the town’s newest cannabis dispensary, opened its doors to the public on Saturday, December 12.

The store is a sister business to Torrey Holistics, a San Diego dispensary that opened for medical cannabis in 2015 and made the transition to recreational in late 2017 when California legalized recreational cannabis.

Torrey was a bit of a pioneer in the San Diego market; when the dispensary opened in 2015, it was one of four medical dispensaries in the area. Now that number is upwards of 25.

Doug Gans, who co-owns the business with Tony Hall, told The Sheet that the original goal in starting the business was “to do something new and do it the right way.” At the time, cannabis dispensaries operated in a sort of grey area within the law as the industry as a whole was not heavily regulated.

That dedication to professionalism and high standards paid off, as Gans reported that business has experienced continually increasing success and the shop was awarded the first recreational license in California in December 2017. According to Gans, the California Bureau of Cannabis Control uses Torrey as an example of good standards and practices when training new employees.

Gans has explored entering the cannabis market in Mammoth before but initial plans fell through. But the same day that everything went to pot, Gans was informed that the Century 21 bank building on Old Mammoth Road had fallen out of escrow and was available for purchase; Gans purchased the property before the day was through.

“We wanted to make this kind of a destination,” Gans said of the dispensary, “We put a lot of extra money into the dispensary than we probably needed to … I wanted to really make something that people were gonna talk about.”

The aim is to take the successful model from Torrey and implement it in Mammoth. Along with high standards and a reputation for strict compliance with regulations, the shop eschews “bud-tenders” in favor of “cannabis consultants,” representatives in the store with a deep knowledge of the products, effects, and who can match a customers needs with exactly the right thing. Instead of leaving the customer to wander the store looking for something and reading packages, a consultant walks them through the store.

Locally, Mammoth Holistics is managed by Sean Doherty, who has been with Torrey Holistics for three years. Doherty said that while the opening wasn’t a grand spectacle, to be expected given the pandemic, that was more preferable, as it allowed time for staff to get used to having customers in the store and for any kinks to be worked out.

The shop itself is small; customers first enter an entrance/waiting area, complete with artificial fireplace, for ID checks and then are let into the store proper through a door. The interior is clean, minimalist and well-lit, products are arranged by type and staff stand at the ready to engage with customers as soon as they walk through the door.

As manager, Doherty spent two weeks just educating employees on the products in the store to ensure that they have the proper knowledge to steer a customer towards exactly the right product.

“Sleep,” Doherty said, “is the number one thing people come in for. We have all sorts of stuff for that.”

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way that all businesses operate and cannabis is no exception. Doherty explained that, since customers aren’t allowed to smell or handle products, sales reps have become more educated in describing all aspects of an item. The shop has also put in magnifying jars to allow for closer inspection of flower and gives a bottle of hand sanitizer to each customer for free.

“It’s super fortunate that we were deemed an essential,” Doherty said, “We’re going to try to do everything we can to help the local population.”

Doherty, who was raised in the Tahoe area, told The Sheet that “jumped on the opportunity” to move to Mammoth for its familiarity and the ability to spend time in the outdoors. He moved up with his partner and one year-old daughter, and related a story about taking his daughter sledding for the first time in her life.

Gans too has committed to the town; he said that the process of building a business and getting to know people locally led to the purchase of a home in town.

“We’re really excited to be here,” said Doherty, “and we’re here to stay.”
Dutch resort town located in Santa
what Solvang did. This week that Mammoth should do

The "essential worker?" He wasn’t.
He had said that as part of what he perceived to be a wink/nod rental ar-

When my wife told him he needed to produce documentation about his es-

The city needs to do something to keep these businesses open. I’ll take
the heat wherever it comes from.
Councilmembers Jim Thomas and Karen Waite raised concerns about the liability of such an openly defiant

The city of Redondo Beach and Manhattan Beach are making similarly subversive moves, Wullbrandt said.
They even declared their outside res-

A different take
A story that appeared the next day in rival publication Noozhawk had a slightly different take.

Meanwhile, when I reported that my wife’s Airbnb in Bishop received ten
calls in a 24-hour period last week, one of which was from an essential worker - that wasn’t quite accurate.
The "essential worker?" He wasn’t.

When I heard rumblings from a few folks this week that Mammoth should do

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... explained that this could potentially really put businesses in Solvang at risk if they’re getting the message from their elected leadership that this is a vi-
able legal option when, in fact, isn’t.

Clarke also suggested the governor’s order would last longer than the three weeks it currently dictates. "If anybody thinks this is going to be three weeks, you’re smoking something," Clarke said.

The city needs to do something to keep these businesses open. I’ll take
the heat wherever it comes from.
Councilmembers Jim Thomas and Karen Waite raised concerns about the liability of such an openly defiant

The city of Redondo Beach and Manhattan Beach are making similarly subversive moves, Wullbrandt said.
They even declared their outside res-

The Sheet attended Monday’s Zoom
meeting of the Mammoth Unified
School Board. The most interesting item involved Brooke Bien’s state-of-

The Sheet spoke to Philip Grant this week about what’s happening in Solvang. Grant, who’s owned First
Street Leather in Solvang for more than four decades, owned a sister First
Street Leather shop in the Village at Mammoth for approximately fifteen years before deciding not to extend his lease once Covid hit this past spring.
Of the Council decision to defy the state, Grant said, “I think it’s a bad call ...

While Jeff Griffiths wrings his hands

Lunch continued from page 2
these folks are not going to be pay-
ing bed tax during the most lucrative week of the year when Stonegate,

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Northern Inyo Healthcare District Pharmacists Jeff Kneip and Frank G. Laiacona place the box of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine into Northern Inyo Hospital’s ultra-low temperature freezer, which meets the proper storage requirements. The vaccine arrived Thursday. NIHD received 975 doses of the vaccine, which will be shared with Mammoth Hospital. Two doses are required for each recipient, 28 days apart.
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