PURPLE PAIN
Mono County misses out on red tier by slimmest of margins
By Page
While the local effort to combat Covid-19 continues to produce encouraging results, Mono County did not enter the red tier this past week as previously anticipated. The culprit: an adjusted 7.2 case rate per 100,000 residents, above the threshold for moving into the red tier.

“One or two cases can actually make a huge statistical impact and prevent us moving to a less restrictive tier,” said Mono County Public Health Director Bryan Wheeler at Tuesday’s Mono County Board of Supervisors meeting.

In this particular instance, one case was added to the county’s list due to timing and another came from the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport during routine screening.

Wheeler expressed a hope that the county can argue that the adjudication received in late 2020 during the large outbreak at the base would establish a precedent that would have the recent MC-MWTC case removed from the county’s overall caseload. That would in turn bring the case rate down to 6.1, good enough for movement into the red tier.

Despite a slight uptick in cases from the previous week, the test positivity rate remains far below thresholds and Wheeler expressed a belief that the county is still headed in the right direction.

As it turns out, the county may be headed to the red tier sooner anyways. California has instituted a new metric for vaccination that will change the requirements for movement between tiers.

Once 2 million doses have been administered to residents living in the hardest-hit quarter of the state, as measured by the Healthy Places index, the Blueprint for a Safer Economy will be updated with less stringent requirements.

Counties in the purple tier will be allowed to have up to 10 new cases per day per 100,000 residents and still move into the red tier.

The CDC also okayed small local vaccine rollout and low transmission, organizers are optimistic that their events can come back, albeit with a few changes.

Events face an uncertain future in 2021
By Page
It was about this time last year that doors began to shutter around the East-side and events were cancelled.

In a matter of hours, Elevation Mammoth went from full steam ahead to cancelled while other organizers looked on in uncertainty.

In the March 14, 2020 edition of The Sheet, Kevin Green, Mammoth Lakes Yoga Festival organizer said, “I feel like I’m watching a category five hurricane that I know is gonna land... I don’t think people are where they need to be in terms of what might be coming.”

At that time, most events were still tentatively on, with contingency plans in place to postpone.

Ultimately, just about everything was cancelled - except the Bishop fireworks.

A year later, with successful local vaccine rollout and low transmission, organizers are optimistic that their events can come back, albeit with a few changes.

On Thursday, March 11, the Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce hosted a meeting for event organizers with Mono County Public Health Officer Tom Boo present to answer questions and give a rundown on current guidance.

Boo was frank about how much he was able to say on the matter, explaining that “I really don’t have any answers for people about what’s going to be permissible or allowable this summer and fall.”

“The vaccines are proving great and really effective so far,” he said, “I think we will see progressive allowance of more activities, maybe tied to vaccination status.”

The concept of a “vaccine passport” has been thrown around as an idea for ensuring that activities don’t become superspreader events, although that proposal carries a number of additional questions.

Boo ran through current guidance from the CDC: people who are fully vaccinated (meaning two weeks after the second dose) can gather in small groups with no need for masking or social distancing.

The CDC also okayed small gatherings between vaccinated and unvaccinated people provided those who are not vaccinated are not considered at high risk for the virus.

Medium and large gatherings are still off-limits, although Boo said the CDC has not established what “small” “medium” or “large” means.

“It’s progress but probably not what the people on this call are looking for,” he said.

According to Boo, California is expected to issue some new guidance on gatherings on either March 19 or 22, with the caveat that the state doesn’t often meet its internal deadlines.

Sandra DiDominzio, owner of Green Fox Events, asked if it was possible for the county to ease restrictions on gatherings if the state is slow to issue guidance.

“Local jurisdictions are allowed to be stricter than the state but never more lenient,” Boo said.

He continued: “If it was up to me, I might go ahead and permit restaurants the option of indoor dining... I’d be inclined to give restaurant operators permission for more EVENTS, page 4
IT’S GETTING HOT IN HERE

The temperature was certainly hotter during the various Covid conversations this week.

In Inyo County, several business owners made public comment at both the Bishop City Council meeting on Monday evening and the Inyo Supervisors meeting on Tuesday morning.

Inyo Supervisors bore the brunt of Bishop businessman Chris Taylor’s (owner of 1903 - formerly McMurry’s) remarks on Tuesday. One could argue he was set off by how he was treated at the Council meeting Monday. To set the stage, there was a light agenda for Monday’s Council meeting.

Nevertheless, there were many queue’d for public comment so the public was warned it would have three minutes maximum to speak.

I’ve covered public meetings in the Sierra for 18 years. I don’t ever recall an instance where a person was literally shut down for exceeding the three-minute limit. Maybe one time. Maybe after ten minutes.

From the moment Taylor began speaking (after the ‘can you hear me?’ phase), until when he was first muted was exactly three minutes. No warning, just muted.

He’s silenced for a moment and then you hear him talking again and a voice telling him his time is up and then he’s muted for good.

So I raised my hand and when I was promoted, I asked Mayor Stephen Muchovej to give me three minutes to Mr. Taylor because I wanted to hear the rest of what he had to say.

As I’m making this request, Councilmember Jose Garcia is vigorously (and sourly) shaking his head.

So here’s my message to Mr. Garcia. You are a public servant. You were elected to represent the citizens of Bishop, and it’s your job to listen, even when you disagree with someone, even if you don’t like what they have to say, or how they say it.

As impressed as I was with Mr. Garcia a few weeks ago during the midyear budget review when he asked a number of pertinent questions, I found his demeanor on Monday to be jarringly tone-deaf.

When Mr. Taylor spoke to Council Monday, he said plaintively that with vaccine occurring and overall testing down, the percentage model used to determine tiers within the state system is destined to remain elevated, and with just $25,000 from the county coming in a recent grant and no money from the state, he has no choice. He is open.

*And he is. As well as Whiskey Creek and Back Alley Bowl in Bishop. The Sheet

CONFIRMED THAT TUESDAY EVENING ONE COCKTAIL AT A TIME.

How can I get by seating just 25%, or 22 people? he asked. It’s time to get open without the county stopping by to issue fines. Or threaten to recover its grant due to non-compliance with the terms.

“Please, please let us thrive,” pleaded Rosie Garcia in her comment. Aaron Schat said his workforce has been trimmed from 100 employees to 60.

People think to-go business makes everything right, he said. It doesn’t. Help us out.

Inyo County Supervisor Jeff Griffiths urged these business owners to attend the Supervisors meeting the next day where discretion on enforcement would be discussed.

Griffiths added that from what he’s read and gathered from public health sources, and it may be controversial, but there hasn’t been a lot of spread in the County from restaurants, perhaps there’s been spread in the back, in the kitchen, but that’s happening whether there’s in-person dining or not.

Mayor Stephen Muchovej then referenced a recent CDC study which indicates that states allowing indoor dining do have higher transmission rates, but the “error bars” are high, meaning the correlation is fairly weak. Suggesting a 1% case growth in places where there’s indoor dining versus not.

The next day, Chris Taylor got a bit more antagonistic. “Everyone on this call has to go to work except for the people appearing on this screen,” he said, concluding with “While you may work for the governor, I don’t.”

Public Health Officer James Richardson responded. “I understand and am aware of your frustration, but please understand our position.”

Richardson then went ahead to give the only cautionary counterpoint heard locally all week.

- We could be in for a surge within few months.
- The UK variant, which was present in 4% of U.S. cases last month, is now at 30-40%, and will be the predominant strain within a month. The UK variant is highly transmissible and causes more death.
- When we relax health standards, we see cases increase.
- Experts insist now is not the time to let one’s guard down.

Richardson concluded by saying he didn’t think the existing rules are arbitrary. They’re based on science and data. “It doesn’t make sense when you’re running a marathon to give up with 100 yards to go,” he said.

The race between vaccination and variant continues...

He also said, as a physician in private practice, that “I have a job, too. I’m also affected.”

He noted that currently, there are hardly any hospitalizations and “activity is low.”

Supervisors agreed that the County would only pursue enforcement of Covid rules in “egregious” cases. It did not define egregious.

Supervisor Boeser wanted enforcement to only include “education” but her colleagues were more realistic. Enforcement without a threat of penalty is a complete non-sequitur.

Mayor Muchovej, who spoke at the Inyo Supervisors meeting, said continued closure “is a blueprint for a dead economy.”

There was so much from the George Booth interviews that didn’t fit into the confines of an obituary, so permit me to indulge a few stories here.

Ex-wife Susie told one story testifying to the fact that he wasn’t much of a fix-it person (something I can relate to).

They’d moved into a new place in Crowley and were still familiarizing themselves with things and George just couldn’t get the outside lights to work. So he called Paul’s Electric. The electrician dutifully comes over, assesses the problem, and makes the following expert recommendation.

“You might wish to buy bulbs for the fixtures.”

I didn’t include this next one because it was more about Dave Hammon than George Booth but quite funny. As well as being a throwback story to a different era.

JACK LUNCH
PUBLISHER
For a subscription, visit the website, make a donation and be added to the e-mail blast list.
LETTERS

LETUSBE

The following letter was sent to Governor Gavin Newsom by Bishop City Council concerning the Covid-19 tier standards for rural areas.

The Inyo Supervisors then issued a press release (in anticipation of sending a similar letter) following its meeting Tuesday.

Dear Governor Newsom:

The Bishop City Council requests that you give serious consideration to lowering the standards for rural counties to move up from tier to tier under the State COVID-19 guidelines. Constraining rural counties the same as urban areas is unrealistic and unreachable.

Even with the newly proposed relaxation of the purple tier (to 10 new cases per day per 100,000 population), it would require we have less than 1.8 cases per day for our tier to be lessened from widespread: essentially we would need to have 1 new case per day in a county that encompasses 10,000 square miles to move down from “widespread” transmission! This is not an epidemiological argument, but is just an argument based on simple statistics: the current tier system is not a tiered system but is bi-modal in our case, where we either have widespread transmission or no transmission. This is unrealistic and unreachable.

There’s no denying we could be doing better, and our transmission rates have gone down appreciably (to roughly 4-5 new cases per day). But the current tiered system is not equitable to counties with low populations. When one scales new cases to be in units that are per 100,000 residents, this means even if we have 9 cases in a week, we end up in the “widespread” category — any sensible person would agree that having a single-digit number of new cases in a region of 10,000 square miles be considered “widespread” emission does not make sense. The current system is not a tiered system but is bi-modal in our case, where we either have widespread transmission or no transmission. This is not an epidemiological argument, but is just an argument based on simple statistics: the current tier system is stacked against us.

The matter is exacerbated when you take into account that our area is so highly dependent on tourism, which as of now is completely allowed by the state. We recently saw that Death Valley had 800K visitors last year (which was down from 1.6M). Where does that population go into determining how widespread our transmission is? If we were to do that, we would already be in the “red tier” and would likely be in “orange” by next week if our trends continue as they are.

It is for those reasons that we, at the City of Bishop, are asking you to reassess the blueprint for a safer economy for our region; because, as it is, it can easily be referred to as a blueprint for a dead economy.

We request that the State seriously consider treating rural tourist-oriented counties such as Inyo County on a different level than large urban areas. We appreciate any sensitivity you can provide on this issue.

Sincerely,

Stephen Muchowoj, Mayor

101 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

760-663-7570

C10-000617-LIC

California State Board of Equalization

The Inyo County Press Release:

At its meeting of March 9, 2021, the Inyo County Board of Supervisors received the weekly COVID-19 update from staff. The Board heard reports from Health and Human Services staff and Public Health officials regarding the current status of vaccinations, testing, and the status of the virus. The Board also took comment from members of the public including several business owners.

Considering and weighing all of this information, the Board indicated support for a proposed letter from the Board Chair to the Governor requesting that the state allow for indoor dining and theatre operation in counties currently in the Purple Tier of State’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

The letter also requests changes to the tier system to make it easier for small rural counties to move from the Purple Tier to the Red Tier and to provide early access to indoor dining and theatres for those that can demonstrate that they have been vaccinated.

The Board also provided direction to concentrate the County’s limited staff resources towards vaccinations, contact tracing, and education. Although the most egregious public health violations may still be acted on, staff will prioritize its time pursuant to this Board direction.

And the Inyo County Press Release:

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more LETTERS, page 14
greater capacity if they were able to verify the vaccination of customers or a high level of vaccination in staff. That said, a business cannot require staff to be vaccinated as the currently available vaccines were approved for emergency use by the FDA. Boo said that he had a progressive stance on utilizing vaccination status “as a way to permit more social and economic activity” but his suggestion to Dr. Erica Pan, state epidemiologist, went unanswered.

His take on the matter was pretty simple. He theorized that a large gathering or festival might require guests to prove that they’ve been vaccinated. That approach would incentivize more people to get a vaccine and would ensure greater safety for attendees.

One difficulty remains. Event organizers can plan and sell tickets based on their county’s current tier status but if that county were to change to a more restrictive tier at the time when the event took place, the more restrictive guidelines would go into effect.

That could mean retracting tickets and offering refunds or canceling the event altogether.

California’s most restrictive tier requirements are expected to change in the coming week. The state has said that when it is able to vaccinate 2 million individuals considered to be at increased risk of Covid-19, the metrics for leaving the purple tier will change. The current threshold to leave the purple tier is 7 cases/day/100,000 residents; that will change to 10 when the 2 million threshold is reached.

When that happens, asked Bleu/Eatery owner Teresa Brocia, could someone host an indoor gathering/event at 25% capacity?

Mammoth Lakes Town Manager Dan Hollier stepped in to say that if the event were at a restaurant, the guidance for restaurants would apply.

DIdomizio gave a hypothetical scenario to Boo of three weddings, one in May, one in July, and one in September, asking what his guidance might be for each.

“I’m guessing May would probably be optimistic,” Boo answered, and for July and September, “It would probably be reasonable to plan for a larger wedding.”

Event organizers were also given a chance to speak about their plans moving forward.

John Eickman, part of a group that recently acquired the June Lake Triathalon, said that he and his partner were planning to go ahead with the event after pulling off endurance events around the country in 2020.

Eickman said that he was encouraged by the state’s guidance that placed emphasis on outdoor non-contact activities.

“We very very very much want to do Bluesapalooza,” said Mammoth Brewing Company owner Sean Turner, “It’s all dependent on what restriction will be in place come the first week of August.”

Turner said that he and his team haven’t made a final decision beyond expressing a desire to host the festival, noting that the decision is dependent on the level of restrictions on the county this summer as well as the amount of time they will have to put everything together.

Michelle Tomaier, director of special events at Mammoth Mountain, said that MMMSA is in the same boat as Turner.

Currently, MMMSA has plans to host the Mammoth Motocross event in June, an effort similar to Bluesapalooza in terms of timeline and planning.

“We need this long runway in order to plan and adjust as we see fit,” Tomaier said.

In terms of organizing sporting events, Boo said, the biggest restrictions would be on the crowd, not the competitors.

Mammoth Lakes Public Information officer Stu Brown said that the Town currently plans to host some form of 4th of July celebration this year.

The Sheet spoke with Mule Days president Kevin Bigham about the organization’s plans to move ahead with the celebration this year.

Bigham said that while many factors are continually shifting and changing, his organization is working with the Tri-County Fairgrounds to pull the event together.

Some notable changes: no concerts are planned and the opening night supper and barbecues have been cancelled.

Bigham wasn’t sure what the spectator presence might look like, given changing guidelines. Like Bluesapalooza and Motocross, Mules Days requires intensive planning; any disruptions or last-minute changes may doom the venture.

He explained that they are running an especially tight budget this year, making the event a make-or-break of sorts.

“If we don’t make enough money this year, it’s very difficult for us going forward, if not impossible,” Bigham said.

“We’re in the same situation as many businesses in town ... I think Bishop needs this.”

COMING IN APRIL

Inyo County’s Consolidated Office Building is anticipated to be open by April 3. The projected cost of $8 million for the 42,000-square foot building is less than one-third the cost of Mammoth’s similar project completed last year. Inyo’s building is expected to house 140 employees. There will be an unveiling eventally placed on the front roof of the building to provide some architectural relief and make it look less like a prison.

The views from the building are fairly impressive. We’ll see if it makes anyone more efficient.

LUNCH

Hammon was a young lawyer who’d just gotten a job in Dave Baumwohl’s office and had been in town for approximately two weeks when Mono County Sheriff’s Deputy Hap Hazard pulls him over for a light being out and soon realizes that Hammon’s had a bit too much to drink.

Hammon’s feeling his oats and when Hazard asks him to take a breathalyzer, Hammon refuses. Which he’s coherent over for a light being out and soon realizes that Hammon’s had a bit too much to drink.

Hammon’s feeling his oats and when Hazard asks him to take a breathalyzer, Hammon refuses. Which he’s coherent enough to recognize as a dumb error. A refusal = a one year suspension of one’s license.

So Hazard hauls Hammon to the Sheriffs Substation on 395. He asks him what he does for a living, Hammon doesn’t want to give Hazard the satisfaction of knowing he’s bagged a local attorney so he tells him “Gigolo.”

That night, of hitchhiking home from Bridgeport, Hammon is picked up by a guy named Jimmy Stewart, who also happens to be an attorney and agrees to represent him.

So the pair set up a meeting with Assistant D.A. Booth in the Justice Court, located in the old Footloose building (long torn down) in the Village at Mammoth.

As they get to talking, it’s revealed that Hammon’s also a Michigan State alum - which didn’t forgive Hammon’s DUI, but Booth did agree to dismiss the refusal of the breathalyzer.

Another detail referenced by more than one person ... when not married or when he was in between marriages, George was famous for working for the ladies restroom line at concerts and events during intermissions. Smart, right? There’s nothing like having a captive audience.

As Jim Moffett said with a laugh, “Of course, there were a lot of misses. But some of them called! I’m so thankful social media didn’t exist in our era.”
Survivor: Mount Tom

On Sunday afternoon, March 7, Inyo County Sheriff’s Dispatch received a SPOT notification from a hiker requesting assistance for her hiking partner who had taken a 40-foot tumbling fall on the north ridge of Mt. Tom at approximately 12,000 feet. The subject was experiencing acute back pain and was unable to move. The reporting party was a Wilderness EMT and both women were experienced hikers who had been on the route before.

With deteriorating conditions and darkness falling, CHP H-82 out of Apple Valley attempted to extract the subjects or insert Inyo Search and Rescue (SAR) members nearby. High, gusty winds made this impossible. H-82 then attempted to drop overnight gear to the subjects or insert Inyo Search and Rescue members nearby. High, gusty winds made this impossible. H-82 then

Around 9 a.m. the Sheriff’s Office heard from the hikers that they had made it through the night, where temperatures were below zero with wind-chill, and both of their husbands had made it to them that morning having hiked through the night to bring supplies. At 11 a.m., after several setbacks, an Army National Guard Chinook out of Stockton attempted to insert 12 Inyo SAR members near the party, but the more powerful Chinook was also turned around by the winds.

After the gear drops failed, an Inyo SAR ground team began up the north ridge around 2 a.m. on Monday, March 8 to attempt to reach the hikers, however conditions turned the field team around after several hours. Around 9 a.m. the Sheriff’s Office heard from the hikers that they had made it through the night, where temperatures were below zero with wind-chill, and both of their husbands had made it to them that morning having hiked through the night to bring supplies. At 11 a.m., after several setbacks, an Army National Guard Chinook out of Stockton attempted to insert 12 Inyo SAR members near the party, but the more powerful Chinook was also turned around by the winds.

With a storm forecast to arrive Tuesday morning making helicopter extraction even more unlikely, Inyo SAR deployed multiple ground teams up Elderberry Canyon to reach the party and prepare for potentially lowering the patient more than 6000-feet down Elderberry Canyon. Given the scale of this potential evacuation, a mutual aid callout went to SAR teams across the state.

While ground teams hiked, a Naval Air Station (NAS) helicopter from Fallon and another NAS ship from Lemoore made numerous attempts to reach the subject, but gusty winds turned them all back.

At approximately 10:30 pm, the first SAR team reached the party and was able to assess the situation better and begin to form an extraction plan for first light. Around 2:15 a.m. on Tuesday, March 9, YX-31 out of China Lake was able to take advantage of a lull in the winds and insert a medic near the party.

Both the patient and the reporting party, who had suffered significant frostbite to a foot, were successfully hoisted out by 3 a.m. and were flown to Antelope Valley for medical care. The SAR team and the husbands of the two hikers descended the headwall of Elderberry Canyon where they met up with dozens of SAR members who had traveled from near and far and hiked through the night to help with what could have been a truly epic extraction.

The Inyo County Sheriff would like to extend its deepest gratitude to the SAR members involved in this mission from Inyo SAR, Mono SAR, El Dorado County SAR, Los Angeles County – Montrose SAR, L.A. County – Sierra Madre SAR, and L.A. County – Antelope Valley SAR. We would also like to thank the crews of all five helicopters from Army National Guard, CHP Inland Air Ops, China Lake NAWS, NAS Fallon, and NAS Lemoore for their incredible skill and persistence.

A loud explosion rocked Stovepipe Wells Resort around 4:30 a.m. on Monday, March 8. The blast damaged concession employee housing. The Resort in central Death Valley National Park is still providing full public services. The explosion appears to have been caused by a propane leak. The investigation continues, but foul play is not suspected.

Park rangers provided emergency response and secured the scene. Fortunately, there were no injuries that required medical transport.

**STOVEPIPE GOES BOOM**

![Image of Stovepipe Wells Resort with a loud explosion around 4:30 a.m. on Monday, March 8. The blast damaged concession employee housing.](https://example.com/stovepipe-explosion.jpg)

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**more BRIEFS, page 6**
Late Night Collision

On Saturday, March 6, 2021, at approximately 1:15 a.m., the California Highway Patrol responded to a collision on US 395 SB south of Pa Ha Lane near the Casino. Upon the arrival of the officers, it was determined the collision involved two pedestrians who were in the #1 lane of southbound US 395. The driver of a Dodge Pickup was traveling southbound on US 395 at approximately 30-35 mph and did not see the pedestrians in the roadway. After the collision, the pedestrians were transported to Northern Inyo Hospital. One of the pedestrians sustained major injuries and the other pedestrian sustained minor injuries. The driver of the Dodge pickup was not injured in the collision and was also determined to not be under the influence of alcohol. The case is still under investigation.

Re-leash the Hounds

Due to an increase in dog-related incidents that involve dogs off-leash, the Mammoth Lakes Police Department will be increasing enforcement of animal control laws.

Starting April 1, anyone walking dogs off leash will be cited with no exceptions. This ordinance includes all streets, campgrounds, paved and groomed trails, and parks. Also included are Shady Rest, the Lakes Basin, and propane tanks. The one exception: dogs may be off-leash if securely confined within private property that is controlled by their owner.

Make The Outdoors Great Again

Inyo National Forest Supervisor Leslie Yen appeared before the Mono County Board of Supervisors this week to talk about the Great American Outdoors Act and how it would play a role in projects on the Inyo.

Yen explained that the act will provide between $1.5 million and $2 million annually to the forest for the next five years. The focus, she said, is "really on the deferred maintenance backlogs" in tandem with improving visitor experience, access, and overall health and safety.

Nora Gamino, engineering and minerals officer for the Inyo, talked about the forest’s local hard infrastructure projects aided by the Great American Outdoors Act including the Silver Lake launch in the June Lake Loop and day use toilet replacements, which will replace flush toilets with vault ones. Vault toilets require less general upkeep and maintenance than their flush counterparts.

Two trail projects have already been approved for GAOA funding for FY 2021: a John Muir Trail and Pacific Crest Trail joint maintenance project working out of Red’s Meadow, and a Pacific Crest Trail general maintenance project that is part of a much larger multi-state effort.

For 2022, the Inyo has submitted a few trail project proposals already. These would include campground amenity improvement projects in the Horse-show Meadows area and replacing broken kiosks and signage at trailheads. Gamino said that in terms of infrastructure for 2023, there is an ongoing tandem project with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access to survey forest campgrounds and financial options for improving these campgrounds.

In addition, there are proposed repairs to the Rock Creek boat launch and long overdue signage projects at Hot Creek Geological Site. The Inyo will not know if it is approved for the FY 2022 projects before it submits applications for the FY 2023 cycle.
COVID
continued from page 1
the milestone on Saturday, then the new guidelines would go into effect Monday and Mono County would subsequently be placed into the red tier.

Once 4 million doses have been administered to the designated population, counties with fewer than 5.9 new cases per day per 100,000 residents will be eligible to move into the orange tier and counties with a rate below 2 new cases per day per 100,000 residents may enter the yellow tier.

The goal in adding breathing room to the tiers is to have “an overall effect of allowing counties to loosen health restrictions at a somewhat accelerated, but still responsible, pace,” per the state’s press release.

Wheeler also announced that the county’s vaccination clinics were still achieving high rates of jabs, with Monday’s clinic at Mammoth High School administering 635 doses to county residents.

As of Thursday, March 11, the county had administered 6,058 first doses and 4,264 second doses. Last week those numbers were 4,699 first doses and 4,173 second doses administered.

“There’s only about 800-900 individuals left in the database,” Wheeler said, “so with the vaccine that I am picking up in Inyo (a full Pfizer case of 1170 doses), that’s enough vaccine to vaccinate the rest of the individuals who indicated that they are interested in a vaccine.”

He added that the county has set up some large clinics next week to aid in the sprint towards fully meeting demand in the county.

And he announced, Rite Aid pharmacy in Mammoth has received a limited supply of the Johnson & Johnson single-dose vaccine, enough to administer 5 per day. As Mono County continues to quickly vaccinate residents, Wheeler said, there is an expectation that vaccine priorities will be further expanded as “We are ahead of the state at this point.”

When the priorities do get expanded, seasonal employees without identification that lists them as county residents will be eligible to receive a vaccine provided their employer writes a letter certifying that they live in the county and are employed here.

Wheeler also stressed the importance of outreach to the Hispanic population as they as a group have been underserved in the push for vaccination and most systems do not cater to residents who speak Spanish as their first language. To that end, there is hope that if the vaccine supply remains steady, the county may be able to host some walk-in clinics, no pre-registration required.

The push comes as the state transitions all counties to a third-party system called MyTurn for registering residents, a change that could disrupt the groundwork and infrastructure that have made Mono County so successful in its vaccination program.

Supervisor John Peters, who represents Mono County on the California State Association of Counties, said “It’s going to be tough for rural counties to switch to a third party administrator when what we’re doing is working.”

Alpine County became the first to return to the yellow tier this week, 20 counties total are now in the red tier and 3 are in the orange.

Inyo County has a rate of 29.4 new Covid-19 cases per day per 100,000 residents and a 7.1% positivity rate. That rate puts Inyo near the top of the list for California.

Inyo Health and Human Services director Marilyn Mann said at Tuesday’s Inyo County Board of Supervisors meeting that the county has administered a first dose to approximately 4,000 residents. That represents about 20% of the county’s population.

“We’re trending towards building that herd immunity we keep hearing about and wanting to have in place,” Mann said.

The county plans to hold a large-scale vaccination clinic on Saturday, March 13 that will get 1,018 residents their second dose of vaccine.

The next focus, she said, was getting doses to the county’s most vulnerable communities. That effort, she said, will be aided by the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson vaccine) that is easier to store and only requires one dose to achieve effectiveness.

On a national level, President Biden announced Thursday that he expects May 1, all American adults will be able to sign-up for a vaccination appointment and be vaccinated by the end of the month.

By July 4, Americans should be able to go about their daily routines in small groups. 4,000 additional troops will be deployed to assist with the effort and the federal government is going to set up a website and call center to help people find appointments.

In addition, the list of individuals eligible to administer vaccines is set to expand to include dentists, veterinarians, and medical students, among others.

The announcement came hours after Biden signed a $1.9 trillion recovery package aimed at ramping up vaccination efforts, opening schools, and distributing financial aid to middle- and low-income families.

Most Americans can expect to receive a $1,400 payment from the government, with the first wave added to bank accounts starting this coming weekend.

Analysis from the Urban Institute, based out of Washington D.C., estimates the package will reduce the overall poverty rate by more than a third.

The CDC reported that 33.7 million Americans have been fully vaccinated, good for about 10% of the total population.

The news comes as the national death toll tops 530,000 citizens and more than 29 million cases reported.
George Emerson Booth 1947-2021

I knew how to keep a party going, but my efforts paled in comparison to when George Booth walked into a room.

-Tom Hale

According to former Mono County Superior Court Judge Stan Eller, who lured him to the Eastern Sierra to work in the District Attorney’s office in 1985, George was born in Wisconsin and grew up in Whitefish Bay, a suburb of Milwaukee.

He was the middle child of three. He was, and remained throughout his life, a gifted athlete. In college, he swam competitively for Michigan State University. And in college, the legend of George was already well underway. Fraternity brother and former college roommate Tom Hale said George, “Had an electricity about him that was unbelievable.”

Hale then told the story of how he’d grown up and played sports with a friend who’d pledged Theta Chi and he’d rat out the Theta Chis and been to all their parties and it was a done deal. Theta Chi told him he didn’t even have to rush. He was a shoo-in.

But Hale ended up visiting some other fraternities with friends from his dorm. And they were visiting Lambda Chi one night when the door opened and this “golden-haired maniac” appeared before him.

And Hale just knew that he’d be joining Lambda Chi instead. “I’ve had three epiphanies in life. He was one of them. It changed the direction of my life.”

“I knew how to keep a party going,” observed Hale, “but my efforts paled in comparison to when George Booth walked into a room.”

Post-college, George obtained his law degree at Cal Western Law School in San Diego. He met Stan Eller in San Diego 1975 while both were serving as Public Defenders. “We ran through San Diego pretty well,” as bachelors, recalled Eller, who moved to Mono County in 1981 to become Deputy D.A.

Meanwhile, Booth remained in San Diego, building a successful private practice as a criminal defense lawyer. He was unusual, said Eller, in that he not only had a law degree, but had obtained a Masters in Criminal Law from New York University. In 1985, Eller became Mono County District Attorney and recruited Booth to join him, but not before Booth won a not guilty verdict in a murder case – his final criminal defense case.

Current Mono County District Attorney Tim Kendall said this was unusual. Many legal careers often start on the prosecution side before moving to defense “because there’s more money in that.”

“He didn’t care about that [the money],” said Kendall. “He was a staunch advocate for victims and victims’ rights. He took it personally.”

When asked to describe Booth’s best professional moment, Eller referenced a bus accident that occurred on the Walker River in the ‘90s where the driver of a tourist bus was going too fast and lost control, plunging the bus into the river, killing all but two passengers. “The emotion and the magnitude of that case … he handled it flawlessly,” said Eller. Professionally, he was a bulldog and got into his share of spats, but he was never one to carry a grudge.

Fellow Michigan State alum David Hammon said there were times it got so contentious in court that he’d go see George afterwards to clear the air. George would simply wave his hand and say, “Heat of battle. Don’t worry about it.”

Attorney Tim Sanford said the first time he and George met, he’d just moved here as the new Assistant D.A. Sanford had been around for perhaps five years. And when they met in their

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first case, “things got a little chippy in court,” acknowledges Sanford. And then continued in Booth’s office after court, voices rising and epithets getting more profane. “We were nose-to-nose screaming at each other,” said Sanford. “He was trying to establish his turf and I was protecting mine. We knew we’d be working in the same pond for years.”

And then, the late Andrea Lawrence ventured to poke her head in the door, saying something to the effect of, “My goodness, I don’t hear that language very often.”

Like a couple of chastised schoolboys, Booth and Sanford shut up. And never raised their voices to each other ever again.

“One day you was his friend, he was loyal and generous,” said Sanford.

When Eller became a judge, Booth was elevated to the District Attorney title in 1999, and held the job until his resignation in 2012.

“Do the right thing for the right reasons all the time. He instilled that ethic from the beginning,” said Todd Graham, who joined the office as Booth became D.A. “He’d always say no case is worth reserving in his position, ‘You have enough time in life to do the job—eventhough he didn’t know it at the time, Susie Booth said an MRI performed after his death suggested that George had suffered from cognitive decline beginning while he was in his forties. Which perhaps also explained George’s fastidiousness and habit of writing everything down.

“Those years, living in the Sierra and working for George and raising my boy, were the happiest years of my life by a mile,” said Graham, who added, “We laughed until we cried at some point every day. He was so much fun.”

“His sense of humor reflected his intelligence,” added Jim Moffett. “He could find humor in many places, including himself.”

Along the way George was a pied piper of sorts in the legal community, a friend and mentor, an instigator of annual backpacking trips as well as regional trips to NCAA tournament sites.

Personally, Booth was a complex character. Certainly multi-dimensional. There was his fun side. His contemplative side. His indomitable side.

Susie Booth observed, “George was quite the whirlwind. He was 1,000% forward or sound asleep,” she said with a laugh.

When asked to elaborate, she described it this way. “If he had a big case, he’d be up at 4:30, walk the dog, work all day, come home, get angry at the television watching Fox News for an hour and pass out. And then the case would be done and he’d reengage.

Perhaps a large part of his single-minded focus was that he needed that focus to do the job—even though he didn’t know it at the time, Susie Booth said an MRI performed after his death suggested that George had suffered from cognitive decline beginning while he was in his forties.

Which perhaps also explained George’s fastidiousness and habit of writing everything down.

It’s a testament to how good he was that he could literally spend decades operating at something less than 100% and still lap the field.

Both George’s parents contracted Alzheimer’s so he pretty much knew he was at a relatively high genetic risk.

Attorney David Hammon recalls George saying upon receipt of his ultimate diagnosis, “I figured one of us [George, brother Donald and sister Anne] would get it. I’m glad it was me versus them.”

Which was typical George. “He had the ability to care deeply for others,” said Eller.

“He was a man’s man sensitive enough to share his deepest feelings, which doesn’t often happen with people in his position,” said Moffett.

And he was a helluva stepfather to Jesse and Quinn, said Susie Booth, attending all their various events and encouraging all their various whims. It was all about the kids for George, said Susie. He’d spoil the crap out of them and encourage them to have as much fun as they could while teaching them ethics. “You have enough time in life to be a grown-up,” he’d say.

Susie recalls a time where there was a water issue in Crowley and neighbors were pitted against each other, many complaining about the water usage of others—particularly those who had larger lawns or more apparent use.

So George showed up at the meeting wearing a shirt upon which he’d written “Big Lawn Person,” and proceeded to point out that every kid in the neighborhood was playing on his lawn, so ... wasn’t that a good thing?

A light of George’s life was his relationship with his son Alex, who is developmentally disabled. He loved his son with everything he had. One would often run into the pair of them at Keough’s Hot Springs.

In retirement, George was active in Bishop Sunrise Rotary and working the counter at St. Timothy’s Thrift store in Bishop.

His decline became more rapid by 2016, and in 2019, he was placed in a Memory Care Center in Sacramento.

True to form, he had a girlfriend at the Care Center within a week.

The ladies, his friends ... everybody loved George to the very end.

A celebration of life will be held locally later this spring.
Ethel Bellas, 80, of Lone Pine was born on October 26, 1940 and left this earth on February 25, 2021.

Ethel spent her entire childhood in Lone Pine before moving to the city. While in school, Ethel was in charge of planning school dances and participated in the school band. After graduating from Lone Pine High School in 1959, Ethel moved to Bakersfield to pursue her education at Bakersfield College—she also played the clarinet in the college band. She later finished her college education at Los Angeles Trade Technical College in 1988.

After moving to Los Angeles, Ethel worked various positions, such as a clerk typist with United California Bank, a part-time secretary for Sears Savings Bank, an intermediate typist for the Los Angeles Probation Department, and a clerk in the booking department for the Los Angeles Sheriff Department. At one point in Ethel’s career, while serving as a first-class petty officer in the United States Naval Reserve, she decided to join the United States Navy.

While in the Navy, Ethel served as a recruiter, and later transferred to be a top-secret clearance secretary in the Pentagon, as well as being stationed at other various locations throughout her Navy career. Ethel often said she was one of the first female Native American recruiters.

Throughout the Native community, everyone knew or called Ethel, “Auntie”—she was everyone’s Auntie. Ethel and her sister, Marie would often be seen in the Indian Day parade in Bishop and the Lone Pine Film Festival parade in traditional Native American regalia. Ethel was also a participant in the Rose Parade and rode with the late Iron Eyes Cody, while also working to help establish an Indian Health Clinic in Southern California. She would often encourage young Native people to pursue a college degree, join the military, or to simply maximize opportunity and do something meaningful with their lives. Ethel often reminisced about her childhood in Lone Pine, her Navy career as a recruiter and a secretary in the Pentagon, and the various people she met throughout her lifetime. Ethel was very passionate about current events and very observant about what was happening in the world. Those who knew Ethel well found her to have a great sense of humor, kind words of encouragement, a generous and giving heart, as well as attending or hosting family dinners anytime of the year. Whenever someone called Ethel on the phone, they would often hear a cheerful and bright voice answer on the other line, such as “Hello!” or “What’s up girl!” if a niece, nephew or family member called to check up on her. Ethel’s family knew her for being very patriotic, for her love for travel, and for her zest for reading and learning about new things—she was also a lady of class, dignity, punctuality, and had a great sense of style. She often painted a clear picture of the Native American family tree through various stories and experiences within the Bellas family and other relatives spread throughout California. Ethel was survived by siblings, brother Leonard, and his wife Alice, and their daughter, Bonnie Holowachuk and her husband, Tim Smith; her sister Marie and her daughter, Julie (niece) and her husband, Michael Maddux (nephew-in-law) and their daughters, Melissa and Lisa (great nieces of Ethel); daughter, Cathy (niece) and her daughter Kristen (great niece); and son, Louis Leonard Espinosa (nephew). Ethel is also survived by various nieces, nephews, and cousins, including niece, Virginia Rubio, and her son, Gilbert (great nephew), and daughters, Virgie and Priscilla (great nieces), and Virginia’s grandchildren, Selena, Octavio and Valentino. Ethel was preceded in death by her parents, Ned and Molley Bellas; brothers Charlie, Ned Jr., Kenny; and sister Lucille. Ethel Bellas, Paiute and Shoshone, was a member of the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation, where she also lived and resided.

Funeral services for Ethel Bellas will be held on March 17, at the Mount Whitney Cemetery in Lone Pine at approximately 1 p.m. A private family viewing will be held from 6-7 p.m. on March 16, at the Mount Whitney Mortuary in Lone Pine. The family of Ethel Bellas is currently raising funds for funeral expenses at a GoFundMe page at: https://gofund.me/9c28d671
As the United States marks a calendar year of the Covid-19 pandemic, it seemed apt not to serendipitously that A Gentleman in Moscow landed at the top of my reading list when it did. For the titular “gentleman,” Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov, is sentenced to life imprisonment within the Metropol hotel at the outset of the novel in 1922 and spends the remainder of the pages, spanning some 30-odd years confined within.

The novel is Amor Towles’ 3rd and is by far the most famous within his bibliography. He worked in investment banking for over 20 years, switching full-time to writing in 2012 after publishing his first novel, Rules of Civility. Towles’ writing career is by far the most famous within his age group, and his first novel would be followed by 2016’s A Gentleman in Moscow.

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Count Rostov’s imprisonment in the Metropol lasts through some of the most turbulent years in Russian history, the collapse of the Soviet Union not withstanding, and he serves as a witness to the growth of a nation that today covers one-sixth of the world’s land.

He also serves as a bridge to Russia’s past, the days of grand balls, country estates, and the Tsar; anyone familiar with famous Russian literature will have read novels and books from this time. The novel is as much about the Count as it is about the people who inhabit and work in the hotel and the country outside that is changing day-by-day. At the beginning of Gentleman, the characters who bring the Metropol to life are employees of the hotel, residents who are only there temporarily.

But as the years pass and the country changes, so too do the inhabitants and the people who enter and exit the hotel and spend the remainder of their days there.

A downgrade in apartments doesn’t do all that much to change the Count’s demeanor at first. That’s not to say he’s unlikeable, far from it in fact, but in his 30s he’s a relic from the past, born into wealth and used to a particular lifestyle.

The only reasons he’s allowed to live by the Revolutionary Government is because of a revolutionary poem he wrote in his younger days.

But, as many experienced this past year, being shut inside forces the mind and body to find escapes or routines to fall into. For one thing, his term is indefinite; until he dies, he cannot set foot outside.

Where Towles excels in his writing is the age-old tenet of “show, don’t tell.” He allows the years to do the talking, with according changes in the Count’s behavior and the other characters of the hotel representing the toll that time takes.

At the beginning of a chapter, Rostov attends a meeting of the hotel restaurant’s main staff: chef, maitre’d, and headwaiter.

What Towles doesn’t explain is that the Count has, in a matter of years, become the restaurant’s headwaiter, a job he seems born to do although presumably one which sits far below his noble upbringing.

The secondary characters are as important to the novel as the primary; they age with the count, have their own histories and fears, and yet are able to grow in their own right. A key piece of this lies in the count’s friendship with Nina Kulikova, a nine-year-old inhabitant of the hotel whom the Count grows close to in his early years at the hotel.

She’s a precocious child whose intellectual match-up with the count and the two become lifelong friends. She represents a softening of sorts within the Count, and his affection for Nina is made evident by Towles. She becomes like family to him, replacing the void left by the deaths and departures of his own family.

Nina marks one of the constant outside threads throughout the novel, with her daughter Sofia continuing that thread after she comes into Rostov’s care.

It is in these scenarios, questioned and harpered by children, where the Count loses some of his confidence and charm. He becomes mortal in a sense. And it’s a lot of fun seeing him stumble through the acts of parenthood, a job he is unsuited for.

One of the best scenes in the novel is the Count’s argument about Russia’s contributions to society which he describes as Chekhov and Tolstoy, Act 1 Scene 1 of the Nutcracker, and caviar. For it captures the deep-seated love for a country that has not always loved him back.

But true to the tropes of Russian literature, Towles is ready with proverbs and wisdom. For one of the most enduring quotes within the book, and perhaps the most poignant, is one told to Rostov when he was a child after the deaths of his parents.

“If a man does not master his circumstances then he is bound to be mastered by them.”

It’s this approach to his life, turned upside down at a constant rate, that carries the Count through the years. And the circumstances continue to change.

Towles doesn’t focus on the years encompassing World War II, he depicts the aftermath, a nation struggling to heal the wounds of over 20 million deaths. And as the Cold War begins, it shows up in the form of Americans and subtle recruitment, of high ranking Soviet party members wishing to expand their knowledge of the world.
Mammoth Spa Creations is looking for a maintenance person for its team. We currently have an immediate opening for a spa Maintenance Technician position, and 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 760-924-3091 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.

Alpenhof Lodge 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 ability to work with a diverse public. Please inquire with Scottie at 760-914-7433. www.mammoth-taxi.com.

Vacasa is now hiring Maintenance Runners in Mammoth Lakes - $18/hr. Must have reliable transportation and basic maintenance experience. Please apply at https://www.vacasa.com/careers/positions/fgm-jid-2762277.


Convict Lake Resort has the following full time job openings:
- Reservation Specialist - FT
  Start at $19 w/benefits, some OT. Must have good customer service skills & computer skills. Established company, great work environment.
- Maintenance Technician - FT
  Start at $21 w/benefits, some OT. Must have own small tools, plumbing, electrical & mechanical skills. Established company, great work environment. Email resume: lisa@convictlake.com

MLH seeks an experienced graphic design and marketing firm for a rebranding strategy to celebrate our 20th anniversary. As the local nonprofit leader in affordable housing, our vision is that communities in the Eastern Sierra thrive because everyone has access to safe, affordable, quality housing. We need our name, logo, and brand strategy to reflect our mission to support community housing for a viable economy and a sustainable community. Visit our website for the complete Request for Proposals and scope of work: www.MammothLakeshousing.org. Deadline for submissions is March 19, 2021.


The Holiday Haus Motel is hiring maintenance staff, starting at $21/hour DOE and housekeeping staff, starting at $16/hour DOE. Call 760-934-2414 or send resume to holidayhausemammoth@gmail.com, you can also stop by the office at 3905 Main Street.

Mammoth Community Water District’s Engineering Department is currently recruiting for one permanent Assistant Engineer position. For Application Information/To Apply: Please see the District website: https://mcdwd.ca.gov/employment/.

Account Manager Needed. Full Time Position. Looking for a friendly, team player. Duties include Accounts Payable & Receivable, as well as General Office Duties. Competitive pay. Please email your resume to info@butterhooservices.com

Help Wanted

Crowley Lake Fish Camp

Has jobs available for the upcoming season! We are looking for full-time and part-time Dock Workers, as well as a Gate attendant to help check guests and boats in. Please email your resume to crowleylakefishcamp@gmail.com or write to us to learn more.

Notice of Public Hearing

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Mono County Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing at a Special Meeting on April 15, 2021.

As authorized by Gov. Newsom’s Executive Orders, N-25-20 and N-29-20, the meeting will be accessible remotely by live stream at: https://www.mono.ca.gov/meetings at telephone: 669-950-0413 (Meeting ID: 961 8907 9878) where members of the public shall have the right to observe and offer public comment, to consider the following:

9:05 a.m. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 21-003/Voss. The proposal is to permit a non-owner occupied short-term rental use by owner of fish camp. The property is located at 2/12 Skye Dr, Lake June, Lake Mono, P.O. Box 000 040. A maximum occupancy of eight persons and four vehicles may be allowed and all parking will be contained onsite.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, a Notice of Exemption will be filed. Project materials are available for public review by contacting Michael Draper at (760) 924-1491 or md@mono.ca.gov. Hard copies are available for the cost of reproduction.

INTERESTED PERSONS are strongly encouraged to attend the live cast meeting by phone or online, and to submit comments by 8:00 AM on Thursday, April 15 to the Secretary of the Planning Commission, PO Box 247, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 or attend the live cast meeting by phone or online, and to email at cddcomments@mono.ca.gov, or via the live cast meeting (technology permitting).

If you challenge the proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Secretary to the Planning Commission no later than the close of the public hearing.

For additional questions, please contact Michael Draper, Mono County Planning Division, as listed above.

Mono Co. Service Area No. 1

 mono county housing corporation

Our mission is to support community housing to celebrate our 20th anniversary. As the local nonprofit leader in affordable housing, our vision is that communities in the Eastern Sierra thrive because everyone has access to safe, affordable, quality housing. We need our name, logo, and brand strategy to reflect our mission to support community housing for a viable economy and a sustainable community. Visit our website to learn more about our vision.

Account Manager Needed. Full Time Position. Looking for a friendly, team player. Duties include Accounts Payable & Receivable, as well as General Office Duties. Competitive pay. Please email your resume to info@butterhooservices.com

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Mono Co. Service Area No. 1
TOWN STUFF

Saturday, March 13/

Monday, March 15/
Mammoth Lakes Lodging Round Table meets 10-11 a.m. https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85878656342

Monday, March 15/
Mono County Local Transportation Commission Special Meeting begins at 9 a.m on Zoom. https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/96790803899?pwd=WnVXZ1pwWXViZ1IwcU9ZRjgxNXdnUT09

Mammoth Lakes Restaurant Round Table meets 3:30-4:30 p.m. https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85878656342

Meet Inyo National Forest Supervisor Leslie Yen at a Zoom event hosted by Inyo350. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. No advanced registration required. Go to https://inyo350action.org to join.

March 16-18/
Mammoth Lakes Art: Theater With Deja sponsored by the Mono Arts Council. Classes run from 4-5 p.m. on March 9 and March 11. Tuesday class is for grades K-5, Thursday is for grades 6-8. Register online at monoarts.org

Tuesday, March 16/
Inyo County Supervisors meet. 10 a.m. Attend via https://zoom.us/j/808254781 or access via county website.

Monday, March 15/
Mono County Land Development Technical Advisory Committee meets begins at 1:30 p.m on Zoom. https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/85790803899?pwd=WnVXZ1pwWXViZ1IwcU9ZRjgxNXdnUT09

Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce Power Lunch meets 12:30 p.m. Register on the Chamber website Not Your Grandma’s Bingo hosted by Volunteer Eastern Sierra. Proceeded to Mammoth High School Boosters. Link opens 6 p.m, first game at 6:30 p.m. Go to https://giveluxer.com/March-Zingo to sign up.

Wednesday, March 17/
Mammoth Lakes Town Council meets at 4 p.m. Viewing available through Granicus.

Thursday, March 18/
Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce PPE Distribution from 10 a.m. to noon or as supplies last. At the Mammoth Lakes Visitors Center

TOWN STUFF

Women in Business meeting, 5:30-6:30 p.m. With guest speaker Liz Mohler. Register on the chamber’s website.

Mono County Community Covid-19 Conversation starts at 5:30 p.m on Zoom. Access via county Covid website or https://monoCounty.zoom.us/j/901775658

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

Monday Basin: 760.647.3044
Mammoth: 760.924.3502
White Mountain: 760.873.2500
Lone Pine: 760.876.6200

Mono County Libraries operating under Call Ahead for Pickup Service.

Upcoming
Inyo County Grand Jury is taking applications for the ‘21-’22 cycle. Submit an application to the Office of the Jury Commissioner at PO Box 1508, Bishop, CA 93515. For a copy of the application or for further questions, please visit the Grand Jury’s website at http://www.inyocourt.ca.gov/generalinfo/jury_civilgrandjury.htm or contact the Grand Jury Assistant at 760.873.5157.

Covid testing/
Bishop: Tri-County Fairgrounds, Tallman Pavilion on Monday and Thursday - participants must be in a vehicle to get tested. And at Statham Hall in Lone Pine on Tuesday and Friday, Time: 8-4.

Mammoth Lakes testing Mondays and Thursdays at the Mammoth Lakes Foundation, 100 College Pkwy. 11 a.m. ‘til 2 p.m. No appt. necessary. Walker/Coleville testing Fridays at Walker Community Center 9 a.m-12:45p.m.

Covid Vaccination
Pre-register for your Covid-19 vaccination in Mono County. Go to coronavirus.monoCounty.ca.gov or call 211. Inyo County vaccine registration can be accessed via the county website @ www.inyocounty.us.
Pursuant to Public Contract Code section 2300, the successful meeting site will require assurances for funds withheld by the Town to ensure performance under the Contract.

Lynn Boulton
Lee Vining

*The OHV grant deadline for the 2022-23 year was March 2. There were a few exceptions. The Mammoth Lakes, County Sheriff Department and the Bishop BLM Field Office for enforcement to the tune of $250,000. There are two projects focused on Search and Rescue and Avalanche response as well. The public comment period ends May 4.

Still a Pig
In regard to Mammoth Council's vote to proceed with the Community Recreation Center...

Dear Editor:

You can take a pig and dress it up in fancy clothes, put eye liner, rouge, and lipstick on it. But when you finished it looking like a pig, it is still a pig. You can't put a MUF and call it the CRC, put a tent roof on it and downscale it to live within the budget. But it is still a pig. We live in the Eastern Sierra which is one of the best recreational spots in the world. We have Alpine and Nordic skiing, mountain and road bicycling, hiking and backpacking, camping and fishing. The possibilities are endless. In five minutes, one can be in the middle of “nowhere.” Yet we need a pig?

In the last year, our community has gone through a horrendous economic decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If one compares the Town of Mammoth Lakes budget for 2018-2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic to the projected 2020-2021 budget during the pandemic our TBID has decreased from $5.68 million to $3.2 million. Assuming a TBID rate of approximately 1%, that is a decrease of approximately $240 million over one year. Additionally, TOT has been reduced from $20.4 million in 2018-2019 to a projected $75.4 million for 2020-2021. Considering the TOT rate is 13% that has produced a reduction in rental income of approximately $70 million. From before the pandemic to in the middle of the pandemic, the town’s businesses have lost approximately $310 million.

Yet during these times, Mammoth- Town Council should reconsider the path it is currently on, and consider this: it represents their citizens and their well being. A town is its citizens and its visitors. The town will survive and rapidly recover from the pandemic if its citizens and their businesses remain viable. People will come to Mammoth if it has a robust community of citizens and businesses. Visitors will not be coming here because of “The Pig.” It is time to cancel “The Pig” take the $15 million and GIVE it to the businesses that are trying to help it through this pandemic.

John Stavlo
Mammoth Lakes

Lynn Boulton
Lee Vining

*The OHV grant deadline for the 2022-23 year was March 2. There were a few exceptions. The Mammoth Lakes, County Sheriff Department and the Bishop BLM Field Office for enforcement to the tune of $250,000. There are two projects focused on Search and Rescue and Avalanche response as well. The public comment period ends May 4.

Still a Pig
In regard to Mammoth Council’s vote to proceed with the Community Recreation Center...

Dear Editor:

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John Stavlo
Mammoth Lakes

It would spare thousands of deer and make Highway 395 significantly safer. Why can’t I designate my fuel taxes, too?
HORRORSCOPES
By Clouds McCloud

Pisces: As you begin your next evolution around the sun, Clouds wanted to pass along a couple things. First, from Eckhart Tolle, “Some changes look negative on the surface, but you will soon realize that space is being created in your life for something new to emerge.” Secondly, from the Seventies, “A disco ball is just a bunch of broken glass stuck back together to make a magic ball of light.” Thirdly, you are a living disco ball, so please dance more often.

Aries: As you head into the next year of your life, take some time to reflect on any blessings and lessons—especially the ones in disguise—in your life which you’ve learned over this last year. It would also be good to start each day expecting good things to happen. You deserve them, so don’t be surprised if your morning coffee tastes like success, your underwear gives them money, or if your underwear feels like it’s holding in magic.

Taurus: As winter sets its sails for the season, you should be ready for change. That’s all that really means is that you have to be open to going with the flow. That’s one of the hardest parts of the COVID pandemic has been the lack of hugging. Since Cancerians are great huggers, Clouds thinks you should all be vaccinated first. Hugging has so many benefits there’s no way you can just be friends with it. No, you want to start hugging and make lots of babies together. So please start hugging anyone you can, safely of course. The best part of practicing things safely is the practicing part.

Leo: Leos can get thrown off track by anything, you should be good. It might not mean “elevator music” or Chuck Mangione is, but you probably know some of his music. Chuck grew up in upstate New York and discovered Chuck Mangione, more like maybe Sublime or The Eagles: “Lighten up while you still can/Don’t even try to understand/Just find a place to make your stand/and take it easy.”

Cancer: One of the hardest parts of the COVID pandemic has been the lack of hugging. Since Cancerians are great huggers, Clouds thinks you should all be vaccinated first. Hugging has so many benefits there’s no way you can just be friends with it. No, you want to marry hugging and make lots of babies together. So please start hugging anyone you can, safely of course. The best part of practicing things safely is the practicing part.

Libra: The change of seasons can be difficult on some people. But then again, some people can make anything difficult. To help you deal with any difficult people, remember that poet Rainer Marie Rilke said, “We must trust in what is difficult. Everything alive trusts in it.” If that doesn’t work try using this line: “I’m no cactus expert, but I know a prick when I see one.”

Scorpio: Even though Scorpio is a water sign, you can often relate to fire signs—at least their feisty natures. That’s why you can also relate to a fellow fire sign, the late, great Lucille Ball. In honor of Women’s History Month, she’ll provide your words of wisdom. 1) “The secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age.” 2) “I’d rather regret the things I’ve done than regret the things I haven’t done.” 3) “I have an everyday religion that works for me: Love yourself first and everything else falls into line.”

Sagittarius: You may not know who Chuck Mangione is, but you probably know some of his music. Chuck grew up in upstate New York and discovered early on that he had a passion for music. But not the type of music kids from the sticks usually get into. Nah. Chuck got into jazz. Chuck would go on to defy the odds and win numerous Grammy awards because he followed his passion, made the most out of his connections and worked hard. Basically, Chuck is a classic Sag. So be sure to add more things like “Feels So Good” to your playlist.

Capricorn: Even though you Capricorn prefer to work by yourselves, you can be good team players as well. To help you with the latter, never forget that a boss has the title, but a leader has the people. Also try to remember the words of Coach Derek Jones, “If everyone would strive to be the captain of their team as opposed to the MVP, there would be a lot better teams.”

Aquarius: Fellow Aquarian Roger Mudd passed away recently. The former TV newscaster was still a regular on the History Channel and was most famous for Bumming the late Senator Ted Kennedy with a rather simple question. In fact, whenever a person has a bad encounter with the press, some folks still call it a “Roger Mudd moment.” Since you’re bound for some spotlight soon, be sure you’re prepared and relaxed when the moment arrives so you can avoid any such moments. As Miguel de Cervantes wrote, “Forewarned, forearmed—to be prepared is half the victory.”

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*Newsflash! State Farm is offering homeowners insurance in Mammoth Lakes and June Lake. Call today for a quote.

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