JUNE IN MARCH

Mammoth Lakes was the 4th most polluted place in the U.S. in 2020

Global pollution levels were down across the board in 2020, reflecting the reality of a pandemic that’s kept people inside and at home instead of commuting to work or heading off on vacations.

IQAir’s annual air quality report for 2020 found that air quality, measured by PM2.5 in the air, in some of the world’s most polluted cities/countries had improved on the whole. Locales across China and South Asia, while still recording numbers in excess of the World Health Organization’s threshold for PM2.5 exposure, showed improvement over 2019.

The same cannot be said for the entire United States. While motor vehicle emissions were reduced as a result of the pandemic, average air pollution exposure levels for Americans were higher than in 2018 and 2019. 38% of US cities failed to meet WHO targets for PM 2.5, down from 21% in 2019 and 20% in 2018. The culprit: a combination of the largest wildfire season on record and rollbacks in environmental regulation coupled with lax enforcement of the Clean Air Act.

In September, 77 of the 100 most polluted cities for PM2.5 in the world were in the United States, per IQAir’s report: 35 in California, 35 in Oregon, and 7 in Washington. The wildfires that burned up and down the West Coast through summer and fall drove pollution levels through the roof in municipalities from Canada to Mexico.

PM2.5 pollution was up 15% in Los Angeles at year’s end, up 35% in San Francisco, 38% in Portland and 38% in Phoenix.

Comparatively, air pollution fell 13% in Chicago, 9.5% in Philadelphia, and 7% in New York City.

see POLLUTION, page 8

RAREFIED AIR

HOMES REMEDY

Inyo looks for housing opportunities

The Inyo County Planning Department held a public workshop for the 2021 General Plan Housing Element update on Wednesday to inform the public about the process of updating the Housing element and gather feedback about housing in Inyo County.

The update is mandated by the state’s housing and community development department and must occur once every eight years.

Each update includes a Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) that uses the median area income to determine the number of housing units needed in the county.

Inyo County Planning Director Cathleen Richards, who led the workshop, explained that the 2021 RHNA number falls between the two previous RHNA numbers in 2014 and 2009. In 2009, the number spiked due to the national recession and housing crisis. Richards noted that while the 2021 number (205) is larger than what it had been in 2014, it was still below the peak in 2009.

The breakdown by income is as follows:

- Extremely and very low income housing units: 40
- Low-income units: 40
- Moderate income units: 40
- Low-income units: 40
- “Above moderate” income units: 39

The workshop was pretty simple as far as public meetings go. Richards posed a series of questions related to housing to the attendees to get a sense of what the county will need to work on in the next eight years.

The difficulty that Richards faced in this approach was that the responses came from a limited group.

So that when she asked if anyone at the meeting had experienced housing discrimination within the county or they knew anyone who had experienced housing discrimination, Richards got crickets in response.

The only response to the question came from Mammoth Lakes Housing’s Patricia Robertson, who said she was unaware of any housing discrimination in Inyo County.

Robertson also offered an answer to the subsequent question, what are the barriers to reporting discrimination, saying “Regionally, we have a lack of legal aid available to low-income individuals. Reporting discrimination is kind of elusive.”

The conversation picked up after Richards asked, “What kind of barriers might there be to finding appropriate housing?”

Tonya Miller, with Premier Property Management, wrote “Income, credit, pets” in the chat, adding that income and credit problems are a near-daily occurrence for her when working with clients.

Robertson said that housing supply was a major limiting factor for those seeking housing.

“Prices are out of the range of many of our workforce households,” Robertson said.

She added that there are some options available (payment assistance programs, multi-family developments, grant programs, etc.) that can help.

Homes Remedy, page 9
Not For Ted

Well, a ‘tweener week so I unfortunately had to pass on an April Fools’ story this year.

In terms of ideas, spoofing Mammoth Lakes Town Council’s upcoming series of “strategic workshops” seemed almost too good to pass up.

Especially since Council has indicated a desire to schedule FOUR of these workshops.

I feel for Town Clerk Jamie Gray. By the fourth one, I imagine they’ll be discussing which brand of dog-poop bags we should be buying from Uline.

In my mind’s eye, I can envision meeting #1 …

Suaser: So it would seem to me … the problem we’re having is that we have too many people coming here, but we don’t want to stop them coming here, because I don’t know if any of us would turn away an additional customer and another dollar … and let’s face it. We know we can’t stop them. They’re coming even if we don’t market to them.

Rea: Then maybe we should reduce our marketing budget?

Suaser: Hell, no. That would be a show of weakness.

Rea: Weakness? Or common sense?

Suaser (sighing): Sarah. I’m getting tired of having to educate you about everything. Government is in the business of maximizing government. And as the old adage goes, ‘No one’s ever cut their way to prosperity.’ If we reduced MLT’s budget and number of employees, that would reduce demand for vital town services we insist on supplying, like affordable housing and ice skating. You see, we are all interconnected.

Rea: So we’re like a great tribe of Wakandans …

No one understands the reference, except for John Wentworth.

Wentworth: If I may, Bill, since I’m the only one of us who can seemingly bridge the gap between the Millennials (Sarah) and my fellow geesers, some of whom have a difficult time operating the mute button on Zoom calls … what if I told you there was a way to take visitors’ money without actually having to tolerate their presence?

Suaser: Well, that would sound too good to be true.

Wentworth: Not too good to be true. Bill. Merely visionary. I fashion myself as Mammoth’s Walt Disney. I’m in the business of making dreams come true … have any of my fellow Council members heard of a little thing called an NFT?

Stapp: Of course. A Not-For-Ted. That’s a closed session. John, can you please finish this up so we can try to outdo each other talking about The Par-

“Can’t anybody here play this game?” –Casy Stengel

——

RIP SKANDAR REID

A shocker this week was the sudden and almost incomprehensible passing of Bishop icon Skandar Reid, a combination sculptor/artist/healer/videographer/gadfly and most important, a man of great empathy and decency. An apt description shared with me this week: “I’m pretty sure he was from the future.” Look for a proper obituary in a coming issue.

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WWW.THE SHEET I Saturday, March 27, 2021

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I PUBLISHER

JACK LUNCH

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Cover Story

“Exploration is not mining.”

So said Mojave Precious Metals CEO Steve Swatton at a forum open to the public held over Zoom on Wednesday evening.

I chose forum open to the public versus public forum because the chat function was disabled for the meeting, attendees could not identify or communicate with each other and all questions were vetted by an MPM moderator.

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make some turns for Tony this season!
Talking the Walker

Dear Editor:

Let’s talk about the California Department of Fish and Wildlife fishing regulation changes that were put into place effective March 1, 2021. “There’s nothing like a chat about amendments made to sacred fisheries to get the voices soaring among those of us who live and breathe fishing. I’ve already engaged in more than one heated discussion.

This conversation started two years ago, when the California DFW announced it was going to overhaul statewide fishing regulations by proposing an “inland trout regulation simplification process.” Why? According to state employees, they wanted to make regulations uniform versus have rules unique to various fisheries and geographical locations throughout the state. They said this was confusing to many anglers. My take: Confusing to anglers who don’t read. I always understood them.

Result: Blue-ribbon fisheries all over California were open to review. So how to review them? Some obvious questions come to mind, like “What fish count data do department biologists have to make such changes?”

Jarringly, DFW employees told attendees of the first public meeting held in Bishop, California in March 2019 that there were no fish count surveys or data being used to make the decisions.

At that first meeting in Bishop, DFW fisheries biologist Roger Bloom stated that their team felt that it was time to tidy up the little annually-issued fishing regulation booklets that we used to find in outfitters shops sitting in a neat stack next to the cash register, stating what’s legal and what’s not.

Today, those regulations are mostly posted online.

DFW held a total of six public meetings in March and April 2019 soliciting public input. What effect did that have? Well, Hot Creek alone generated more than 4,000 responses. It had been proposed to allow spin anglers access to Hot Creek with lures. But those 4,000 responses left a mark with DFW, which ended up sticking the status quo. That, to me, is a victory. If it’s not broken, don’t fix it.

As to the countless other fisheries in the Eastern Sierras... some of the most profound changes include not allowing fishing on the Cottonwood Lakes until September 1, closing tributaries of Crowley and Silver Lake during certain spawn seasons, eliminating a barbless-only season on Crowley, opening up some high country fisheries that were otherwise closed, and closing the East Walker River during the winter months.

I believe that the Department of Fish and Wildlife got a lot of the changes correct. First and foremost, I commend them for better protecting some of the Eastern Sierra’s spawning fish. I think that is a critical component of improving the general health of some of the region’s major fisheries. They did this while leaving some spawning periods open to angling. For example, the Upper Owens with its famous spawning “snowbows” is still intact as a year-round fishery, but the cuts that move up from the lake are now more protected in tributaries like McGee Creek.

I don’t know why they decided to protect the cutthroat but left the spawning rainbow exposed. You’d have to ask them. But, the cuts got a good deal.

The closure of Cottonwood Lakes until September 1 is interesting. Given that these lakes see snow usually around October, it’s going to be a short season for those golden trout habitat lakes. Best guess as to why you can’t fish those lakes until September is because overnight hikers look to them for fuel, and in a system which isn’t supported by hatchery fish, it’s best to better protect them.

Crowley was generally left alone – a conversation that scared many fly anglers. Fly and spin anglers alike are wondering why the barbless-only season was changed. It’s legal to fish barbs on Crowley from August 1 to closing. This may have to do with enforcement, but I don’t know for certain.

East Walker

However, the change in the Eastern Sierra that is bringing the greatest attention and conversation regards the East Walker. While a few anglers enjoy bearing the sub-freezing conditions, and fishing for East Walker fish huddled up in some of the few buckets and deeper pools found in the river, most people wait until late spring, summer, and fall to fish those fish.

The East Walker has minimal flows about three months of the year, and depending upon who you ask, those fish should or should not be left alone. The split in opinion is about 50-50.

*Remember that the East Walker starts in California but flows into Nevada a few miles down the road, and Nevada is less Californian in their way of doing things, and therefore they haven’t closed down its section of the East Walker in the winter. My opinion? I think those fish should be given a rest in the winter. Those fish are exposed to predators when it is flowing just above 20 cubic feet per second (of water flow) – “cb,” and they have a hard enough time competing with each other for livable space. In a perfect world, DFW would just close it every time it flows under 70 cb, but they don’t have enough staffing to constantly observe and enforce the variation in flows.

I also think it should be closed in August when temperatures are skyrocketing and that water is oxygen-starved. Most people also question why they proposed the taking of fish from one trout 18-inches or greater in length to two. Allowing two might further encourage the taking of more fish in there, a system considered sacred by the majority catch-and-release fly fishing crowd that fishes it.

As of now, Trout Unlimited and Cal Trout are teamed up to focus on DFW, and they want the winter closure overturned. It makes a good soundbite, fighting big government bureaucracies for the rights of anglers. But I would then ask: Why the East Walker and not Hot Creek and the Upper Owens? The East Walker is a true tailwater fishery, and it will flow barely over 20 cfs for most of winter. The Upper Owens and Hot Creek on the other hand are spring fed (the Owens is also manipulated by LADWP flows), but both have more water in the winter in them than comparatively the East Walker. And, water equals fish habitat.

The changes, I think we can all agree, would have made a lot more sense if DFW used fish count science and census data to consider the fisheries. Yes, I’m implying that DFW admitted to their data-mining from asking people like myself in the Charlie Brown Auditorium at the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop what I thought of their proposals. They asked people in the backrooms of the Bass Pro Shop in Rancho Cucamonga. At every meeting in the beginning of 2019, people in attendance asked the biologists what actual biology they had. They really didn’t have any. I’m figuring the DFW biologists’ data amounted to angler input. I think they were proposing unthinkable changes, like opening up Crowley Lake to more months of catch and kill. They were considering allowing Hot Creek to become one giant bird’s nest of spawning browns from broken off lures. But the pushback they got on both fisheries was enough to tell them to more or less lay off.

So, DFW was corrected from the start on a lot of potential mistakes. They also listened to concerns of protecting the spawning browns in Rush Creek between Grant Lake and Silver Lake. But the entire process exposed fish count data, and I’d have a more solid argument about keeping the East Walker closed during winter if there were tangible numbers to work with.

It would have made this so much easier for everybody.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife Fishing Regulations effective March 1, 2021 can be found on their website.

Chris Leonard
Mammoth Lakes

*Chris Leonard guides locally for Kittridge Sports

Speaking of violations...

Dear Editor:

In his letter last week, John Rog- 074 wrote, “Who cares about the First Amendment... the Fourth Amendment (which compulsory masking probably violates)...”

Does compulsory wearing of clothes to cover your privates violate the Constitution?

Hank Garretson
Mammoth Lakes
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Homicide arrests made

In the early morning hours of November 9, 2020, a snowplow driver discovered two bodies on the shoulder of Highway 395, approximately 10 miles north of Bridgeport. The victims, identified as William and Yesenia Larsen, husband and wife, from Burbank, California, had no known connection to Mono County. Due to the unusual circumstances, the deaths were investigated as a double homicide.

A thorough investigation ensued, which led investigators to the determination that several former business associates of the victims were connected to the deaths. The investigation was presented to the Mono County District Attorney’s Office on March 18, 2021, for consideration of filing charges for the deaths of William and Yesenia Larsen. The District Attorney’s Office issued arrest warrants for Bradley Kohorst, age 35; Cory Spurlock, age 33; and Orit Oged, age 32. Kohorst, Spurlock and Oged all reside in Missoula, Montana.

Bradley Kohorst

Bradley Kohorst was taken into custody in Phoenix, Arizona, on Monday, March 22, 2021. Cory Spurlock and Orit Oged were arrested in Missoula, Montana, on Thursday, March 25, 2021. All three remain in custody awaiting extradition to Mono County.

Every member of the Mono County Sheriff’s Office played a part in solving this crime. This investigation proved to be complex and required the assistance of local, state and federal partners. The guidance and direct support of the California Department of Justice - Special Operations Unit, was invaluable.

18 agencies from four states as well as the federal government aided in the investigation.

Little League Registration

Registration is open for the 2021 Mono County Little League season will close on March 30th. A draft will be held on March 31st at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Registration info can be found here: https://mcll.teampages.com/organizations/20283/pages/177718

If you have a credit from last season, don’t send a check with your paperwork. Any questions email mcll@m5group.com

We anticipate practices starting early April and games May 1st

MLT Board openings

Mammoth Lakes, Calif. (March 23, 2021) — The Board of Directors for Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT) has two seats available for candidacy; one Lodging and one At Large. The application process for these two seats is currently underway.

To qualify applicants must hold a current Town of Mammoth Lakes Business License, be in good standing with current business licenses, taxes and assessments, reside within the Mammoth Lakes area and have a substantial business interest in the Town. The Lodging seat applicant must be a business owner or manager from that business type.

Letters of interest for the At Large seat are due April 9, 2021. Interested parties should file a letter of interest with Mammoth Lakes Tourism Office Manager, Emily Bryant, via email at ebryant@visitmammoth.com

Applicant interviews will be conducted by the MLT nomination committee in April and May. Recommendations and Board vote will take place in June.

The Lodging seat recommendation is brought forward to the Board from the Lodging Association.

Epic Cuts Prices

On March 24, Vail Resorts announced a price reset of its Epic Pass products - which puts pressure on primary competitor Alterra Resorts.

The Company’s pass prices have been reduced by 20 percent across the board. The price reduction applies to the entire portfolio of the Company’s North American pass lineup.

The Epic Local Pass is now available for $583 and the full Epic Pass is priced at $783.

This reset takes these products back to prices last seen during the 2015/16 season when the Epic Pass offered access to only 11 U.S. resorts compared to today’s more than 70 resorts worldwide.

Alterra Resorts 2021-2022 Ikon base pass (which includes Mammoth and June) is currently priced at $729 ($649 for renewals).

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you can still be exposed to secondhand smoke in your home through vents, doors, and windows.

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Mammoth Orthopedic Institute
at Mammoth Hospital

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It turns out that the months of brown skies, ash falling on cars, and barbeque-flavored air earned the Eastern Sierra some dubious recognition: Mammoth Lakes ranked fourth on the list of most polluted American cities in 2020, with an average PM2.5 level of 25.6 micrograms per cubic meter. Yosemite Lakes, California topped the list with 37.8 micrograms per cubic meter and Western Sierra cities and towns claimed the top 14 slots altogether.

Mammoth Lakes recorded the highest pollution levels in the county for September and October 2020 and what saved the town from being higher on the overall list was a run of very clean air for the first seven months of the year.

For reference, the WHO’s target PM2.5 level is anywhere between 0 and 10 micrograms per cubic foot. Anything up to 12.5 is considered “good.” For the rates present in the Eastern Sierra, IQAir writes “general public and sensitive individuals in particular are at risk to experience irritation and respiratory problems” for PM2.5 between 35.5 and 55.4.

For 55.5-150.4 (“Unhealthy”), the health recommendation is “Increased problems” for PM2.5 between 35.5 and 150.4. Anything above this level is considered “Harmful.”

For 150.5 and above (“Very Unhealthy”), the health recommendation is “Increased risk of respiratory and cardiovascular problems” for PM2.5 levels anywhere between 150.5 and 350. For 350.5 and above (“Hazardous”), the health recommendation is “Increased risk of respiratory and cardiovascular problems” for PM2.5 levels anywhere between 350.5 and 550.

The Sheet spoke with representatives from the Inyo National Forest and Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD) to talk about the connection between forest fires and local air pollution and how the two agencies are working in tandem to keep residents safe and breathing easy.

“The most definitely what we saw last year with, for example, the Creek Fire is not how we want it done,” Inyo National Forest Public Affairs Officer Deb Schweizer said. “Big fires with long term smoke impacts for lots of communities… that’s not the best way to do business if you want good air quality.”

The fire results of 2020 were spurred by 100 years of close mitigation, a process that the Forest Service is working to undo. Regarding controlled burns, Schweizer said, “You’ve got to do it because the more we don’t do it, the more we’ll get [large scale fires].”

For the most part, the Inyo’s controlled and prescribed burn efforts consists of pile burnings in places like the Lakes Basin, June Lake Loop and Sunny Slopes. Schweizer estimated that the Inyo has done about 1,000 acres of pile burns across the forest.

The goals are twofold: reduce the risk to the community of an unwanted fire and bolster ecosystem health in an environment that has long counted fire as an essential process.

Ultimately, “The goal is to restore fire and landscape so that it’s acting naturally,” Schweizer explained, “When it’s acting naturally, it’s probably not doing the things we saw last year.”

In discussing the Creek Fire, Schweizer stressed the importance of not losing sight of the wildfire’s destructive path across the Western Sierra and the communities that will be recovering for years to come. But, she added, fire crews working in the higher elevations of the Sierra noted good behavior in that area; the fire break left behind on the landscape will have protective effects for Eastside communities for years to come.

Phil Kiddoo, Air Pollution Control Officer at GBUAPCD, explained how wildfires can vary in their impacts. For naturally occurring fires, sparked by lightning strikes, the effects can be mitigated by accompanying precipitation or pre-existing burn scars from previous fires. Those can be a bit easier to predict and prepare for, given knowledge of weather patterns, although abundant fog can still be an issue.

On the other hand, human-caused fires typically occur during favorable fire conditions (very dry, high winds) and can be harder to predict or pinpoint until they have burned a large tract of land.

Prescribed burns by contrast are much easier to control, as “we know where they’re gonna be, when they’re gonna be, and the amount of emissions”, Kiddoo said. Compared to wildfires, “they’re almost a non-event unless they’re close to a community,” he continued.

The GBUAPCD works in tandem with the Forest Service to determine when and where to hold these fires, keeping an eye on weather patterns that favor smoke dispersal and discourage rapid spread.

The Inyo works off of a prioritization list to pick their controlled burns and submits a burn control plan to GBUAPCD for any actions it wants to take. The District reviews the plan, submits changes, and “if we aren’t satisfied, then we go back to the drawing board.”

Once the Forest Service is ready to burn, they get the plan to GBUAPCD within 72 hours prior, who send it to CalFire incident command once approved.

“The drought is continuing,” Schweizer explained. “Up until a burn there’s a lot of back and forth,” Kiddoo said, “When they’re going to do that burn and how and what to expect, especially if conditions are not real certain.” If the emissions from the burn cause a noticeable increase in pollutants, Kiddoo said, then the operation is called off for the day.

The science behind the fires, while educated, isn’t perfect. Kiddoo referenced the recent Taboose fire outside of Big Pine, which began as a controlled burn but ended up jumping fire lines and burning an additional 100 acres of land more than anticipated.

Given the recent declaration of drought in California by the US Department of Agriculture, the state is poised for another lengthy fire season.

“The drought is continuing,” Schweizer said; “Yes, this last little plug of snow we got is nice but it doesn’t change the fact that we are in drought conditions.”

As for smoke, “We can say we will want but if there’s fire burning from the Stanislaus [National Forest] to Sequoia [National Forest], we’re going to be impacted,” she concluded.
HOUSING

continued from page 1

help to mitigate the cost of development.

Scott Hooker, Director of Facilities for Northern Inyo Healthcare District (NIHD), reiterated Roberts’ assessment about housing supply issues.

Hooker said that NIHD has a rotating cast of contract workers and travel nurses that come to the area and need an affordable place to stay while they’re in town.

“Surprisingly, cost is also a barrier [for these workers],” Hooker said, “They have houses that they’re coming from, mortgage payments to make.”

He also said that the contract times can vary from a matter of days to a year in length. The average is about three months.

One option that NIHD had previously explored was modular housing on tribal land that would become the tribe’s property after a time. Despite having the financial resources to set up such an endeavour, the project never materialized due to a lack of available land.

Jennifer Castenada, Realtor/Broker with Blue Sky Real Estate in Lone Pine, recalled that there had been previous conversations at a county level about acquiring land from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and/or a county allowance on secondary accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for properties.

“The [LADWP] divestment conversation never ends,” Richards said, “IMACA finally purchased property in Bishop and it took over ten years working with DWP to get that parcel ... without the land purchased or leased it makes it really difficult to move forward.”

The issues with the ADUs, Castenada pointed out, is that people with vacation rentals would add them onto a home and presumably rent that space out for visitors as well.

What does the county need for housing? What would those units look like?

The assembled group agreed that 1-2 bedroom units have been in the most demand for people looking to move into the area.

Robertson recommended affordable small infill projects for single families or individuals. She said that grant funding will require a certain amount of housing density and small projects are more tuned into the Inyo County community. However, small developments, Robertson said, can be more difficult to finance than a 75-100 unit project.

Paula Riesen suggested senior housing as a need, a sentiment Richards agreed with based on the relatively significant 65+ population in the county.

Another issue that the attendees discussed was that the limited housing inventory was complicated by the word-of-mouth market.

Castenada related a recent experience in which she was notified that someone was moving out of a property and then received two calls from different people interested in renting the property. All before a listing was posted online.

The City of Bishop opted to hold its respective Housing Element update meeting on the evening of March 24, choosing to use a webinar-style workshop and written survey to get feedback.

The main issue in Bishop: land availability.

Sandra Bauer, a consultant with Bauer Planning and Environmental Services, said that the prior housing element update had identified only 2.5 acres of land within city limits that A) were not owned by another entity and B) could be developed.

“Is there anything the city can do to discourage rich flatlanders from buying our houses and leaving the city?” one attendee asked in the chat.

Elaine Kabala, City of Bishop Planner, said that the city is looking into potentially incentivizing local home ownership.

A number of attendees asked about LADWP divesting property. Kabala responded that although there have been conversations and the Housing Element is state mandated, “land divestitures from the city of Los Angeles are things that are very difficult,” She stressed LADWP is a partner in the process.

After a petition in the chat, Bauer and Kabala opted to extend the survey through early next week; it is available on the City’s planning department website.

A map outlining LADWP’s holdings (yellow lines) within Bishop city limits
CAN’T STAND THE HEAT?
By Page
Ninety-Two in the Shade
Thomas McGuane
Vintage Books
197 p./1972

When I opened a package that I received from my parents recently, I expected some of the things contained within: St Patrick’s Day decorations, recipe ingredients, etc. What I didn’t expect to find was a book, tucked under all the other items. My dad described it as “a very-well written and strange novel,” a bit of a period piece. Odd and outdated. No wonder Lunch enthusiastically endorsed the read.

The basic premise: young burnout Tom Skelton, experiencing a moment of clarity while strung out, heads home to Key West to recoup and make something out of his life by becoming a skiff guide. Only problem is, the skiff guide market in Key West is extremely limited and the existing operators aren’t all too keen to let a newcomer nose into their operations.

What’s striking about McGuane’s prose is that it sits right on the edge between the normal and the utterly absurd. There’s just enough reality within the lines to make some of the more unbelievable aspects of the book easier to digest.

Part of the reason for that is Skelton’s own fractured psyche. The reader meets Skelton in the middle of a heavy trip as he comes to terms with the fact that the life he’s been leading is unfulfilling and going nowhere. And McGuane’s writing frequently lapses into a stream-of-consciousness within Skelton’s mind, making the reality of his surroundings that much more indiscernable. Sentences are strung together without punctuation and no clear direction for where they’re headed. That McGuane opts not to break the book into chapters contributes to the rambling, psychedelic nature of the writing.

And a good deal of the unhinged quality of the characters and the narration has to do with the location: Key West, an island town at the very end of the road, and the islands, swamps, and bays that surround it. “Key West,” McGuane writes, “was a town where you had to pick and choose. It was always a favorite of pirates.”

Take Nichol Dance, a Midwesterner who by a series of misfortunes, brought on exclusively by himself, found himself in Key West with almost nothing to his name. Dance became a skiff guide out of necessity and has a reputation for being irritable, mean, and a massively hit-or-miss guide. Skelton opts to pursue his guiding education in the vein of Dance. The two are drawn together and are inarguably the center of the novel; Dance threatens to kill Skelton if he ever so much as thinks about guiding: Skelton insists upon pursuing the profession.

It’s an inevitable slow-burning rivalry between the two, one borne out of the sort of stubbornness that leads to inevitable endings. Skelton, for his part, feels that there’s no other option for him while Dance wrestles his reputation, pushed into extremes by people who expect him to do something that he doesn’t seem all that keen on doing.

“The future cast a bright and luminous shadow over Thomas Skelton’s past,” McGuane writes, “For Dance, it was the past that cast the shadow. Both men were equally prey to mirages. Thomas Skelton required a sense of mortality; and ironically, it was Nichol Dance who was giving it him.”

Where McGuane hits the nail on the head is in his pacing, humor, and setting. Key West is as much a character in the novel as any other, the heat and ocean smells of South Florida a constant presence throughout. He’s at home in this place and in Skelton’s mind, and it’s this easy familiarity that makes the novel a quick and enjoyable read.

And there’s a draw to it, for anyone who has ever moved somewhere on a whim to try to figure out this whole “life” thing.
GRIT IS A FOUR LETTER WORD

Mammoth Local Ann Gimpel writes about the allure of the backcountry

By Diane Eagle Kataoka

Grit is a 4-Letter Word
Ann Gimpel
Ann Gimpel Books
254 p./2018

This wilderness guide by the author of 95 published books examines the psychology of backcountry travel, a subject particularly poignant in light of many well-publicized avalanche accidents this winter.

Guidebooks cram the shelves of the Booky Joint and the Mammoth Lakes Trail System offers endless opportunities on more than 300 miles of trails. Rarely do they discuss preparations and caution in the way Gimpel does.

Her experience in both psychology and long-distance hiking gives her a unique perspective on the nonfiction aspect of backcountry travel. “Grit is a 4-Letter Word” is an important book, especially here at the high-altitude trailhead to multiple wilderness areas.

The wilderness has played a huge role in Gimpel’s life. As she says in the book’s dedication, “...the wilderness is an intensely personal place for me. It’s where I learned to believe in myself.” When she and her husband Bob Carlson moved to Mammoth in 2001, they’d already been making the drive from their home in Auburn almost every weekend of the year to hike, climb and ski. Together, they’ve explored many of the Eastern Sierra’s high peaks and passes.

In her years of backcountry exploration, she’s seen all kinds of people on the trails: Buff folks who crumpled because they weren’t mentally prepared for venturing outside their normal lives; couch potatoes who embraced the wilderness in all its glory. As she says, “People melt down in the backcountry, which has nothing to do with their fitness level.” It’s how they look at the world. “Attitude is everything. There’s more to bagging a peak than strapping on a backpack.”

Very few are immune to the allure of the wilderness. When Cheryl Strayed’s book “Wild” came out, a veritable flood of folks heard the call and clambered onto the Pacific Crest and the John Muir trails. Ill-prepared, they showed up in flip-flops and tennis shoes, ready to conquer the 2,650-mile PCT or the 200 plus miles of the JMT.

According to Gimpel, while many may be physically prepared for the hikes they undertake, most are not mentally primed. Thus, the subtitle of her book, “The Psychology of Backcountry Travel.”

Normally, when planning for a trek, a multi-day or multi-week adventure in the backcountry, one packs tent, sleeping bag, food, stove, first aid. We can get so wrapped up in the physical accoutrements of an extended hike or climb that our mental conditioning falls to sloppy seconds, if at all.

I’m reminded of Socrates’ words, “Know thyself.” While we may not ever be certain of how we will react in various circumstances, Gimpel prepares the reader for the psychological attitude necessary for strenuous attempts at backcountry exploration. This book is well-written, and the reading flows like a mountain stream. Chapters include the allure of the backcountry; how we actually see trails; how we can measure our personalities; how anyone can be a backcountry traveler; whether or not to travel solo or with other(s); and how to keep going when “life kicks us in the teeth.”

Interspersed among the informational chapters are personal anecdotes told by a handful of hikers who embrace the joys and horrors of their mountainous escapades.

“You have to be willing to put up with a lot of discomfort,” Gimpel says. Anyone can be a hero on a bright sunny day when the going is smooth and the trail is well marked. But what happens when a thunderstorm moves in and turns the trail to a dark, slick amusement park ride, or fire threatens? When problems loom, do you fall apart, or do you buckle down and figure out a solution?

“There are no problems that are insurmountable unless you give up,” she says. “I’ve been in many life-threatening situations and learned to narrow my focus. Can I take one more step? If the answer is yes, I do it. If not, I look for other options.”

One long-distance hiker quoted in “Grit” sums it up well. “The wilderness is a place to understand the vastness of our space. It is a place to at once feel small and humbled, and also to feel empowered, important, unique, and deeply consequential.”
Phil Higerd, who’s been in the plumbing business in Mammoth Lakes since 1988, recently drove 1,600 miles (one-way) to Texas so he could spend two weeks working for free.

And when he got back, told the Sheet, “I’ve never had so much fun crawling under muddy houses.”

Higerd was joined by plumbers from all over the country who descended upon Texas to restore water to households which otherwise may have waited months for help.

What follows is his story.

The last week of February, I got an email from Plumbers Without Borders (PWB); relaying a call from watermission.org in Austin, Texas; for plumbers to come from around the country to help with the disaster the state had experienced due to a week-long extreme cold snap; which combined with a failure of their power grid; left thousands of homes; particularly in the “under-resourced” parts of the community, without water due to massive freeze damage to their pipes.

Water Mission is primarily an internationally-focused non-profit that provides safe water systems where needed around the world: particularly in Africa, but this disaster struck close to home, so they redirected their administrative assets to organize a local relief effort in conjunction with PWB.

Many residents were being told that if they didn’t have a personal connection with a plumber, that it would likely be April before they could get any help, and furthermore, there were no repair materials to be found anywhere in central Texas.

Upon hearing this: thinking that anything I don’t know about freeze-damaged pipes* isn’t worth knowing (lol), I loaded my truck and headed out on the 1,600 mile trek, arriving 48 hours later.

“Actually, everyone who came learned about a tool, a trick, or a technique from our colleagues around the country.”

The first folks I met were a couple in their 70s from Ohio, traveling with their son (45) and grandson (17). They were engineers with years of hands-on plumbing experience who had previously worked with Water Mission on a major project in Liberia. They came with a trailer loaded with $5,000 worth of material that had been donated by their church and heavily discounted by his supply house.

Higerd said later, “We were friends after five minutes; good friends after 24 hours; and old friends after 48 hours.”

We were the “first wave,” soon joined by two guys from New York, two from Kansas and a terrific group from Georgia.

That first morning, March 1, we all teamed up on an inner city trailer park. Some of the units had cardboard and aluminum foil for windows. And despite being notified that we were coming, some of the residents were reluctant to answer our knocks at the door, probably due to apprehension about their immigration status, and fear that we were “La Migra.”

But by the end of the day, every...

*Actually, everyone who came learned about a tool, a trick, or a technique from our colleagues around the country.
Being thrown together in common cause can certainly mess with stereotypes.

-Phil Higerd

With the ‘good ol’ boys from Georgia...’

disappointment at not getting a shot of a plumber’s ‘crack’ - I was wearing a plumber’s "crack" - I was wearing aalion suit. A plumber’s "crack" - I was wearing a plumbers "crack". A plumber’s "crack" - I was wearing a plumbers "crack". A plumber’s "crack" - I was wearing a plumbers "crack". A plumber’s "crack" - I was wearing a plumbers "crack".

Mr. Higerd

...made a big deal of singling out one couple as though they had won the grand prize: that a plumber was going to THEIR house to get their water on that day: which we would have done anyway, along with 20 other families that day.

It was some of the hardest, dirtiest work I’ve done in years, but definitely the most enjoyable. After 3 weeks, I’m back; not exhausted, but invigorated. *Editor’s addendum: Invigorated to the point where Higerd will be back out on the road in late April to do a job for a military veteran on the Navajo Reservation in Gallup, New Mexico. And visit https://www.today.com/ video/water-mission-helps-texas-residents-get-much-needed-plumbing-aid-10490509047 to check out the Home Movie Network’s Today segment. Look for Higerd around the 4:45 mark.

GO BIG THIS SPRING WITH HUGE DEALS ON SELECT WINTER EQUIPMENT

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WE’RE GEARING UP FOR SUMMER BIKES ARE HERE!

(760) 934-9500
LOCATED ON MAIN ST.
3218 Main Street, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

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3218 Main Street, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
Sierra Employment Services, Inc. is hiring for the following positions:

**MCWD CB Dvr/Eq Op - ML 528**  
**MCWD Line Maint - ML 567**  
**MCWD Mch Maint Wrk - ML 39**  
**MCWD Mch Maint Wrk - ML 22**  
**SP Ice Rate**

Staffing Coordinator  
ML - $18 - 22  
Snow Shovelers - ML - $20 - 22  
Cngdo Frost Desk - ML - $16.75

Call Us Today  
760-924-0523 or 760-873-8599  
www.SierraEmployment.com

Mammoth Spa Creations is looking for an additional member for its team. We currently have an opening for a SpATAF Maintenance Technician position, and we are also hiring an Office Assistant. These are Full Time Positions (Monday through Friday). These positions offer vacation accrual, benefits and paid holidays. Experience is preferred, but not required. Heavy lifting is required. Please call 760.924.0901 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 mammothspa@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

# Help Wanted

**Mammoth Spa Creations**

**SpATAF Maintenance Technician**  
Must be honest and enjoy making customers smile! Day and evening shifts available. 
$17.50+ per hour starting pay & vacation benefits for qualified individuals.

**Office Assistant**

Please apply to:  
Please call Dave at (760)709-1390

**Mammoth Business Essentials**

**Sweaterhead**

*Front desk/night auditor  
*Sales Associate*  
*Sales and Administrative Assistant*  
*Sales Support*  
*Office Assistant*  
*Data Entry*  

**Sweetwater Plumbing Inc.**  

**Convi Ute Lake Resort**  
is hiring for an Alberta’s stores. Start in the store, gain experience, then move up to a management position. We are a fast-paced company looking for someone with a strong work ethic and a positive, can-do attitude. We are looking for someone who is a self-starter, work well under pressure, and display a willingness to jump in where and when help is needed. You must work well in a group, and be flexible.

**Benefits**  
We offer competitive wages, health insurance, dental insurance, and vision insurance.

**Shifts**

The successful candidate will be a reliable self-starter, work well under pressure, and display a willingness to jump in where and when help is needed.

**Application**

To apply, please fill out the job application. Please email resume to info@mammothchevron.com for guest service issues as well as the right hand to the company’s executive team. All employees are provided all necessary tools including company van, phone, iPhone, iPod computer as needed.

**Requirements**

We are looking for a dedicated full time sales clerk. Work available Mon. – Fri. 8AM – 6PM with a 1hr lunch. Duties include customer service, packing/shipping, making copies, scans, laminations, cleaning and more. There are many small tasks that consistently revolve around the store. We’re looking for an organized team member who can be on their feet and occasionally lift heavy packages. Starting wage @ $15/hr. Email resume to samp@mammothbusiness.com or stop by Mammoth Business Essentials.

June Pie seeks experience Pizza Makers and Bar Staff. Bar Staff are in peak season and occasionally lift heavy packages. Start @ $15/hr with tips. Benefits include pizza and entry to T-Bar Social Club concerts. We are a drama-free, vaccine required team operating 50-100 hours per week. We are looking for someone with a strong work ethic and a positive, can-do attitude. We are looking for someone who is a self-starter, work well under pressure, and display a willingness to jump in where and when help is needed.

**Hours**

We are open daily 11AM – 8PM and occasionally lift heavy packages. Start @ $15/hr with tips. Benefits include pizza and entry to T-Bar Social Club concerts. We are a drama-free, vaccine required team operating 50-100 hours per week. We are looking for someone with a strong work ethic and a positive, can-do attitude. We are looking for someone who is a self-starter, work well under pressure, and display a willingness to jump in where and when help is needed.

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**calendar of events**

**March 26-28/ Mammoth Lakes Film Festival Best of the Fest Shorts.** Visit https://mlff2020.mammothfestshorts.eventive.org for information/register for your pass.

**Saturday, March 27/ C5 Studios in Bishop offers an "Introduction to Cyanotypes: An Adventure in Alternative Photographic Processes" workshop with Joe Profita. Time: 1-3 p.m. If you are interested in going on an adventure to a place where science, photography and art come together in a magical, experimental process, this workshop is for you! Experiment with making your own Cyanotypes using this 170 year old photographic process! Register @ www.c5studios.org. Info: 760.258.1059.


**Wednesday, March 31/ Mammoth Lakes Recreation Allocations Committee meets 9:30 a.m. Viewing available through Granicus. Mojave Precious Metals community day to discuss its exploration project at Conglomerate Mesa. Location: Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce office at 120 South Main. Time: 10 a.m. ’til 2 p.m. C5 Studios in Bishop offers Pinch Pot Critters: A Clay Workshop for Kids and Adults. Get creative and make your very own pinch pot critter using a great basic clay technique called the pinch pot, using air-drying clay and applying paint to finish and decorate. For ages 5+ and parents. Time: 3-5 p.m. Register @ www.c5studios.org. Info: 760.258.1059.

**Thursday, April 1/ Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce PPE Distribution at the Visitor’s Center on Main Street. 10 a.m.-noon or as supplies last.

**Saturday, April 3/ C5 Studios in Bishop offers A Chalk and Charcoal Drawing Workshop with Naomi Hart Johnson. Create a beautiful landscape of a garden bursting with new life, an Easter-themed creation or anything else that takes your fancy! For children ages 7-14. Time: 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Register @ www.c5studios.org. Info: 760.258.1059.

**Upcoming Inyo County Grand Jury is taking applications for the ‘21-’22 cycle. Submit application to the Office of the Jury Commissioner at Box 1590, 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](http://www.inyocourt.ca.gov/generalinfo/jury-civilgrandjury.htm) or contact the Grand Jury Assistant at 760.873.5577. The Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau (BACVB) has several positions open for the upcoming Board of Directors election. All current member business owners, or their designated representatives, are eligible to run. The election is conducted by mail-in vote of the membership and elected directors will serve a three-year term beginning July 1, 2021. Those interested should contact Tawni Thomson by email execdir@bishopvisitors.org or call 760.873.8405. Deadline: April 30.**

**Covid testing/ Barber Shop: 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 Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at the Mammoth Lakes Foundation, 100 Village Way, 11 a.m. ’til 7 p.m. No appt. necessary. See ad p. 5. Walker/Coleville testing Fridays at Walker Community Center 9 am-12:45 p.m.**

**Covid Vaccination/ Pre-register for your Covid-19 vaccination in Mono County. Go to coronavirus.mono county.ca.gov or call 211. Inyo County vaccine registration can be accessed via the county website www.inyocounty.us.**

**MAMMOTH LIQUOR Beer lovers’ candy store Selection of more than 300 beers JOE BIDEN SUGGESTS YOU SPEND YOUR STIMULUS ON GOOD BOOZE 934.6260 Main St. Next to Rick’s**

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**MAMMOTH REAL ESTATE BLOG**
THE SHEET | Saturday, March 27, 2021 www.thesheetnews.com | 15

**AT THE MOVIES**

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Notice Inviting Bids

The Town of Mammoth Lakes will receive sealed bids for the work shown on the plans entitled:

2023 Transit Shelter Project

In the Town of Mammoth Lakes for The Town of Mammoth Lakes, California

Bids will be received in person at the Office of the Town Clerk of the Town of Mammoth Lakes located at: 417 Old Mammoth Road, Suite 230, Mammoth Lakes, California. 93546 Or via email to clerk@gov.mammothlakes.ca.us until 4:00 pm on Thursday, April 7, 2022 at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bidders may attend the bid opening via Zoom at: https://mammothlakes.zoom.us/j/99611235181?pwd=d0f3d4d49f88d32124aa4243f8bfa88b Meeting ID: 996 2480 7850 or email pcallanan@townofmammothlakes.com

The contractor will have a valid Class A, B, or C-5 Contractor license and a current Town of Mammoth Lakes Business Tax Certificate and shall maintain all required licenses throughout the duration of the Contract. The Contractor shall demonstrate their qualifications by having adequate equipment to perform work, qualified personnel, and having the ability to attend to the Town's needs. The Town will be the sole judge as to the qualifications of each bidder.

Each bid must be accompanied by a certified or cashier's check as directed in the bid documents.

Notice Inviting Bids

MAMMOTH LAKES TOURISM BOARD

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Mammoth Lakes Tourism Board has an At-Large seat with a term expiring as of June 30, 2021, which is available for candi-
dates. The term of appointment for the At-Large seat will expire two years after appointment to the Board.

The Mammoth Lakes Tourism Board meetings are scheduled at 1:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month.

Interested parties should file a letter of interest with Mammoth Lakes Tourism Office Manager, Emily Boy-
net, res email at eboy@eboy@mammoth.com by April 9th, 2021. Applicant interviews will be conducted by the NEC nominating committee in April and May. Rec-
ommendations and Board vote will take place in June.

Dated: March 17, 2021
Angela Planted, Assistant Clerk
TS #2021-0035

Fictitious Business Name Statement

The Following Person is Doing Business As:

XTC Tours

Gary Small
P.O. Box 100, PMB 341
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

This business is conducted by an Individ-
ual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed herein in 1990.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on March 15, 2021. File Number 15-173
2021-0039 (3/27, 4/3, 4/10, 4/17)

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dates. The term of appointment for the At-Large seat will expire two years after appointment to the Board.

The Mammoth Lakes Tourism Board meetings are scheduled at 1:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month.

Interested parties should file a letter of interest with Mammoth Lakes Tourism Office Manager, Emily Boy-
net, res email at eboy@eboy@mammoth.com by April 9th, 2021. Applicant interviews will be conducted by the NEC nominating committee in April and May. Rec-
ommendations and Board vote will take place in June.

Dated: March 17, 2021
Angela Planted, Assistant Clerk
TS #2021-0035

Fictitious Business Name Statement

The Following Person is Doing Business As:

XTC Tours

Gary Small
P.O. Box 100, PMB 341
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

This business is conducted by an Individ-
ual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed herein in 1990.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Mono County on March 15, 2021. File Number 15-173
2021-0039 (3/27, 4/3, 4/10, 4/17)

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**HORROSCOPES**

**By Clouds McCloud**

**Aries:** It won’t really take much to make the most out of this year of your life. You’ve just got to work hard for the good stuff and be sure to rest and rejuvenate any time you can. Basically, keep your life balanced and believe in yourself as much as Clouds does. If you can do that you’ll see that setbacks are really set ups and you’ll think love-making is the cure for any ailment.

**Taurus:** Your anti-hero for the week is fellow Taurus, Sydney Powell. The former Trump election fraud lawyer has a gift for supplying the dung for the Bulls of this sign. In an attempt to defend herself from a defamation lawsuit, Powell plead that “no reasonable person” would believe her election fraud claims. Please keep her in mind the next time you think about doing something really stupid, like storming the House or worshiping a TV star.

**Gemini:** There is proof that unicorns actually existed, although they weren’t exactly how most of us picture them. They weren’t slender, horse-like creatures with flowing manes. No, they were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia that were about 6-foot tall, stocky, shaggy beasts roaming around Siberia.

**Virgo:** This much we know is true: Virgos have trouble explaining how they feel. But there’s nothing wrong with this. We all have challenges and things we need to work on. For example, Clouds is always trying to give astrological advice beyond simply: Shag more often. It’s tough. Therefore, the next time you make progress sharing your feelings, how about you celebrate by shagging?!?

**Libra:** Your new role model is fellow Libra, Suzanne Somers. The 74-year-old former star of “Three’s Company” claims to have sex with her husband “three times a day before noon.” Somers has been happily married for 45 years and she and her husband are enjoying life—and each other—more than ever. If you need a better role model than that, you’re watching too many movies—of one type of the other.

**Scorpio:** There’s an old sports saying that goes, “Champions don’t show up to get everything they want. They show up to give everything they have.” You Scorpios are known for giving everything you have in life, it’s just that sometimes you give it to the wrong places/people/current fixation. So your mission, as we enter this season of change, is to be wiser with your efforts. Try to focus them more on what counts, or at least where it counts, and sneak in more recovery time.

**Sagittarius:** The Stars are saying that you could use a little more go with the flow in your life. Listening to more country music should help, especially to somebody like Willie Nelson. He once said, “Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones you’ll start having positive results.” And he sang, “On the road again/going places that I’ve never been/seem’ things that I may never see again/I can’t wait…”

**Capricorn:** Fellow amazing human and Capricorn, Betty White, recently turned 99. In honor of her completing nearly a century of life on her terms, Betty will supply your words of wisdom.

**Aquarius:** Studies have shown that people suffering from emotional wounds get easily annoyed with other people. This makes sense, of course, but that doesn’t mean it’s right. Part of our job in life is to make sure we don’t spread negativity. Just because someone is being a butthole to us doesn’t mean we should be like that to others. It just means we have a good excuse for doing it. So remember that excuses are like buttholes, everyone has, or knows, one.

**Pisces:** One of Clouds favorite things about Pisces is that you’re not afraid to let your wild side out every once and while. After months of being cooped up for the winter, the spring is the perfect time to get back in touch with our wild sides. That’s why your words of wisdom come from Oscar Wilde, “Be yourself. Everybody else is already taken.”

**PERSONALS**

I heard you ... thought you got fouled on your way to the hole. Listen, in this town, no one calls cheap fouls - especially in matters of romance. If the other guy didn’t take a swing at you, it’s not a foul.

I saw you ... NCAA bracket got wrecked when Ohio State lost in a first-round upset. That’s what you get for betting against Oral ... I saw you ... are interested in doing some more exploratory drilling. Aren’t we all? In search of ... a spring fling, but am so desperate will settle for an April shower.

I saw you ... stuck in the Suez Canal. That’s what happens when a big ship cruises shallow waters.

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*May 1st Move-in Date*
LUNCH continued from page 2

before being addressed to Swatton and his colleagues. Tightly controlled would be an apt description of the event.

The forum represented MPM’s first public relations salvo in its drive for approval of a proposed phase #2 of its exploratory drilling project at Conglomerate Mesa located southeast of Lone Pine on the way to Death Valley.

Wendy Schneider, Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo, summed up the purpose of the meeting as follows: “A big, Canadian mining company trying to curry favor with the locals while proposing to significantly expand the exploratory footprint at Conglomerate Mesa by a factor of ten.”

But The Sheet didn’t speak to Ms. Schneider until Thursday.

Wednesday was about meeting the team - and the team was apparently instructed to humanize itself.

Field Geologist Katie Von Sydow talked about how much she enjoyed lunching with the birds and the lizards at the job site.

And Project Director Carolyn Loder touted her local roots and her rock collection’s 2nd place finish at the Tri-County Fair when she was just a tyke.

The humanization was quickly followed by a basket of Halloween candy.

Loder mentioned how MPM had already made significant financial contributions to Southern Inyo Hospital and local fire departments. She even said they’d made anonymous contributions to the senior community.

“Translation: We’re good people and don’t like to toot our own horns, but what is the purpose of handing out money if our good deeds are not well known?”

Loder also touted a diversified econony, higher-paying jobs, tax revenue and local contracting of goods and services as potential benefits of a future mine. “A lot of local companies were really happy we were there [for phase #1] during the pandemic,” she said.

But here’s the thing. On Wednesday, MPM couldn’t answer the most fundamental of questions: Where are you for a future mining company going to find the water to make this project feasible?

Swatton swatted the question aside, saying, “It’s not prudent to think about water for a future mine right now.”

Really? I think he has it backwards. If you don’t have access to water, what’s the point of exploration?

MPM plans to hold an open house at the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce on Main Street in Lone Pine from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. this coming Wednesday. Field Geologist Von Sydow said she is looking forward to having face-to-face conversations.

We’ll see how that goes.

Some people sneak up on you.

First, they’re acquaintances. And then friends. And then really close friends you take on roadtrips. And then they’re like a second Dad.

And then they’re gone.

Ron Casey died on Sunday the 14th surrounded by family. He was 89.

And he was the sweetest, toughest sonofabitch you could ever meet.

In high school, he was a 175-pound lineman for Verdugo Hills (player of the year his senior year).

Told me about one game where the other team outweighed ‘em on the line by about fifty pounds a man.

They won any way. 6-0.

Ron: I couldn’t remember your directions [to the room].

Lunch: You couldn’t ask somebody?

Ron: Maybe I didn’t want to ask.

Lunch: What happened to you?

Ron: I had a heart attack last year.

Lunch: That’s exactly what this means."

Boy, they knew how to have fun.

And Ron was tough as nails. He used to drive to get the paper from the press for us. I remember him calling one night to say he couldn’t do the delivery that week but for sure, he’d get it done the next.

Lunch: Ron, is everything okay?

Ron: Well, I had a heart attack last night, but I’m feeling pretty good today. Don’t give away my job.

One of my favorite Ron stories was him doing this plumbing job, and there were all sorts of setbacks and a two-day job became a two-week job and the bill he handed to the client was for far more than the estimate.

The client started to complain.

So Ron grabbed the bill from him and tore it up and started marching off. He was tired and livid and frustrated.

And the guy calls after him says, “Does this mean I can’t call you again?”

“That’s exactly what this means.”

The guy paid his bill.

Thanks so much to the Casey family for sharing their Dad. And again, look for a proper obituary in a future issue.

This week the Mono County Board of Supervisors sent a letter to Governor Gavin Newsom’s office expressing a desire for the state to adjust the tier guidelines so as to make them less restrictive for smaller communities.

The letter, co-signed by Public Health Director Bryan Wheeler, referenced Mono County’s high vaccination rate and rare instances of severe disease as reasons for not clinging to the existing metrics.

The letter comes as Mono County is seeing a rise in cases. For the seven day period from 3/18-3/25, the county has recorded 23 positive Covid tests. The threshold for reverting back to Purple Tier remains at 35 new cases/day/per 100,000 residents.

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