**AMERICA LOST**

After 24 years, America Hernandez is headed out of Mammoth

I never like to talk about myself. But I’d like to share about my community, which is the working community, the Latino community, the poor community- the core of Mammoth,” said America Hernandez, a long-time local of Mammoth Lakes.

She will be leaving the community soon due to an unavailability of quality housing for her family.

As we walked together along the creek next to Sierra Meadows Ranch, under streaming sunlight and chirping birds, America shared, “this is my Heaven on Earth. That’s what I like to call it. And if Earth can be this beautiful, I truly cannot wait to see what Heaven will look like.”

Hernandez has been here for 24 years. She moved here when she was 24 years old.

“When I first moved here, I met people much older than me, who moved here to work, working for Dave McCoy. They would come seasonally, to work either in the summer or the winters. They would see advertisements in the newspapers in Los Angeles or outside the country and come. That’s how my parents ended up in the Eastern Sierra more than 3 decades ago, when they were in their 30s. And that’s how I ended up here in Mammoth Lakes - I came to spend time with my parents after finishing college in Mexico.”

Hernandez ended up falling in love with the area. “I was only going to be here for a year and that was it. But it turns out that I really liked it here. So I decided to stick around. And I started working for Mammoth Hospital. Back then, Mammoth was not as touristy as it is now. It was more of a small community in the middle of nowhere, very rural, and everyone knew each other. It was a safe place to live and to be at peace and away from the city chaos.”

She eventually met her husband, who had moved here when he was 18. They have two children: one who is currently enrolled at Mammoth High School, and one who just recently graduated.

“I am leaving Mammoth because I cannot afford my current living situation here, and I see AMERICA, page 10

**SWING AND A MISS**

MLT strikes out with latest song release

Here’s the thing about swinging big: although the contact is more likely to knock the ball out the park, the strikeouts can be all the more spectacular.

Such is the case with the “Don’t Be a Bleephole” song. Mammoth Lakes Tourism’s (MLT) ill-fated attempt to create material that discourages bad behavior from guests.

The song launched with a partner website (NoBleepholes.com) on VisitMammoth.com and a billboard promotion in Mojave late last week.

The lyrics are/are as follows:

In Mammoth Lakes, we love our town and visitors.

And we love Mother Nature but lately some behaviors are taking a toll.

So we’re channeling Mother Nature to see what she’d say.

Guess she kinda has a potty mouth because she says do come visit, do enjoy yourself but…

Don’t be an ***hole.

Don’t be an ***hole.

A kind of rude SOB.

We’d love to see you out here in beautiful Mammoth Lakes just as long as you don’t come up here and *** up this place.

But if you’re cool and kind (Respect the outdoors, pick up after your dog, and put out your campfires)

We welcome you to join us and see what Mammoth Lakes is all about.

But if you’re an ***hole, Maybe you should just stay home.

And if you’re cool and kind you know, a considerate non-littering leave no trace kind of vibe.

We hope that you can join us and Get out there and have yourself a great old time.

But please try not to be an ***hole.

And we’ll all get along just fine.

So strong was the public response against the campaign that by Monday, August 2, the song had vanished from YouTube with the billboard and materials on promotional websites as the only evidence it had existed at all.

One Facebook post about the campaign has nearly 300 comments about the song on it, the vast majority coming from locals with staunch opposition to the Bleephole concept.

The Sheet spoke with Mono County Supervisor Stacy Corless, who said of the campaign “It’s an enormous embarrassment. It’s just awful.”

“We can’t let cynicism win,” she continued. “We’re doomed if we do and this bleephole thing seems incredibly cynical.”

“We need to swallow our pride, extend our hands and say ‘hey we’re in this together’” Corless added. “We have to stop being the bleepholes.”

Any links to the website now direct viewers to Mammoth Lakes Tourism’s “Hug What You Love campaign.”
THE JOA-Q-ING DEAD

Get ready for some peripatetic bumbling here.

In regard to the Mammoth Lakes Tourism Bleephole campaign walk-back ... I'm not too worked up over a creative misfire. That stuff happens.

They should have called me to vet this thing, I would have told them as a general rule, no asshole likes it when another asshole tells him not to be an asshole.

This can be construed as fairly condescending.

Which is why, when I write editorial, the people I write about generally do the opposite of whatever I might advocate or recommend - they don’t like it when asshole Lunch questions their thought (or lack of thought) process. They find it condescending.

Sometimes it is. I get frustrated. They get frustrated. Politics is about the proper allocation of resources. Which is something worth fighting about.

My issue here is not with the creative misfire so much as the budgeting misfire. MLT has a $7 million budget without the obligation of a summer airline subsidy (normally an $800,000 expense). So you just get the feeling they’re spending money because they have to do something, not because it’s wise and/or necessary.

The other thing I have an issue with: Mammoth Lakes Tourism Executive Director John Urdi would be far better served just telling the whole truth versus challenging the community to play whack-a-mole with his half-truths.

In his open letter to the community, he says the Bleephole campaign set MLT back maybe $6,000. Caveat: Small detail. The $6,000 refers to "media spend."

Then at the MLT Board meeting Wednesday, he comes up with another number.

You engaged an ad agency and a PR firm, as well as on-air talent and production. You acknowledged that this was your “baby” during the July board meeting, and we know your time costs approximately $5,000/week in salary and benefits.

You engaged an ad agency and a PR firm, as well as on-air talent and production.

For comparison’s sake, two weeks ago MLT Communications Director Lara Kaylor told us the Mammoth Lakes Love Song and Hug What You Love campaign incurred $44,000 in production costs with an approximate $400,000 overall spend.

In my next line of notes from the meeting, I then show John Wentworth suggesting a $5.7 million budget for 100 units. It appears Council is committed to spending more than half that $5.7 million on a proposed 4-6 unit development on Joaquin Street.

Let’s break down all the ways this represents a poor allocation of dollars better leveraged elsewhere.

It mostly illustrates that Council is so desperate for a near-term “win” that it would sacrifice its long-term strategy as a result.

The Town recently purchased a quarter-acre on Joaquin for $200,000. If one builds affordable on the site, it would have maximum allowable density of six units.

But double density on a quarter-acre with parking and snow storage? Meridian Court has double-density of 24 units on one acre with many studio and one bedroom units - and has had a long, crammed history of lack of parking, no visitor parking, illegal street parking.

Within a year of occupancy, the Meridian Court HOA ditched its playground area. Why? It needed snow storage.

But not knowing the lot’s capacity is only the first of many unanswered questions.

There’s no financial model, no plan on who it’s for - is it for-sale? For-rent? What income target?

Who commits $3 million without a plan? Why not gather some information first. For the cost of staff time to write a design-build RFP they could copy from another jurisdiction ... or just rip off the one Mammoth Lakes Housing wrote for Meridian Court ... they could see who might be willing to take on the development and at what cost? Whatever response they get would provide a financial model to the town.

Or, let’s talk about the alternative, which is really the primary.

The Pacific Companies (the town’s development partner on The Parcel), outlined Wednesday that it will cost the Town $16.5 million over the course of the next 4-5 years in order to build out the parcel to 450 units and receive the full $20 million committed to Parcel infrastructure from the state.

Not one councilmember paused to consider, “Hey, wait a minute. If I put the $3 million toward The Parcel, I’m 18% of the way towards funding 450 units, versus maybe 100% of the way towards funding six (max).

18% of 450 is 81, by the way.

Mammoth Mountain Vice-President of Resort Development (and Mammoth Lakes Housing Board President) Tom Hodges expressed support for putting dollars now towards Phase II Parcel planning, because it’s a lot more cost-effective to build units aimed at higher income levels (between 120% and 150% of AMI - Area Median Income).

The thought also being that the more units you can construct right now, the more pressure you can alleviate throughout the chain.

As the chart below put together by Pacific Cos. illustrates, $3 million could get you 16 for-sale units (approx. $2.7 million) at 120% and another 15 at 150% ($300,000).

The Town’s own 2017 housing needs study showed a shortfall of 55 units in that price range.

Council simply can’t afford to sacrifice its long-term strategy as a result.

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At Council Wednesday, I asked directly what would bring a better bang for the buck, Joaquin or Parcel Phase II. Crickets.

In my next line of notes from the meeting, I then show John Wentworth suggesting the Town float a bond to cover its nut for Parcel development.

Given what we’ve seen over the past two meetings, who the hell would vote for that?
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Mammoth Lakes Community,

Tourism is the lifeblood of our economy in Mammoth Lakes and truly our only industry, no one recognizes this more than the team at Mammoth Lakes Tourism.

Roughly three months ago I set out to work with our advertising agency to create a very direct campaign message to accompany our main stewardship and educational campaigns of “Hug What You Love” and “Mammoth Lakes Love Song” that are meant to help people understand how they can protect our town and surroundings.

The idea for Bleephole came after hearing feedback from residents regarding disrespectful visitors, as well as increasing anti-tourism sentiment, locally and around the world. We recognized an opportunity to add a new layer to the plan, a much more direct message that was viral in nature (minimal investment) and had the ability to break through and gain the needed dialogue around how our visitors should respect our community and the environment.

Through that effort, we could drive more attention and traffic to the “Hug What You Love” campaign.

The strategy was intended as a response to a growing community outcry to educate, and frankly discourage disrespectful visitors to Mammoth Lakes. This was never meant to be a major campaign initiative, but rather a viral marketing effort designed to break through and draw consumers attention to our other stewardship campaigns.

At a paid media cost of just over $6,000 (not hundreds of thousands as some have commented) it was intended to be an attention grabber, directing people to our main campaigns.

For comparison, we spent just over $380,000 on paid media in FY 20/21 all with a tie into responsible and sustainable tourism efforts, with $375,000 more planned through the end of Summer and into the Fall. To put it another way, 99.5% of the paid media budget works to promote good behavior, responsible and sustainable tourism in and to Mammoth Lakes.

I realize now that the Bleephole campaign was too direct and offensive to some. We made a mistake, Bleephole will be discontinued immediately, and we will continue directing all our efforts to the “Hug What You Love” and “Mammoth Lakes Love Song” campaigns, exclusively. We encourage everyone to view our main Hug and Love Song campaigns at www.VisitMammoth.com/Hug.

We appreciate everyone’s feedback and passion for our community and look forward to continuing to educate visitors on how to behave when they come to enjoy all that Mammoth Lakes has to offer.

John Urdi, Exec. Director
Mammoth Lakes Tourism

Crossed line
Dear Editor:

During my 45 years as a resident of the eastside I have seen many changes occur, including impacts from increased visitation and general use of our unique and wonderful landscape. I have been involved in numerous planning, visioning, and other community processes to help keep our communities vibrant, our economies viable, and our environment healthy. I have done my share of promoting the delights of the eastside. Through it all I have personally tried my best to guide, educate, and patiently nurture peoples’ understanding of how to interact with our environment. This hasn’t always been easy, but I have felt a deep responsibility as a resident to espouse these ideals. We all share this responsibility.

Mammoth Lakes Tourism is an effective organization at marketing our area and promoting tourism. To a degree your organization has been sharing in the responsibility of dealing with the effects of the successes in marketing our area. Kudos to you for that work.

However, the “Don’t Be a Bleephole” campaign crossed the line. I know its hard trying to get the message out and yet still seeing abuses out there, but Mammoth Lakes Tourism and all of us have a bigger responsibility to take the high ground. Patience and wisdom rule, not insults and degrading labels and name calling of the very people you are spending millions of dollars to bring here to recreate. As the board and the executive director you all should be ashamed of this campaign. Yes, it’s been pulled from the website and the billboard is supposedly being taken down, but what remains, and is indisputable, is the sentiment you all endorsed in going ahead with this insulting promotion.

The campaign is demeaning, and by association because we are all part of the community, it damages the reputations and credibility of residents, business owners, visitors, governmental entities, land managers, and on and on. This damage cannot be easily reversed. It’s done.

Regardless, I suggest some introspection is in order and a deep look at what you are all about in this organization. Perhaps you have truly lost your way and maybe are victims of your own marketing success. Maybe you all can’t reap what you sow and should consider scaling back your marketing and promotion until you get a handle on how to really and fully deal with the consequences.

How about putting even more resources and energy into education and outreach? What about allocating more money to infrastructure maintenance and upkeep?

I am saddened and dismayed that at any time you though this “Don’t Be a Bleephole” campaign had any merit. You have done a disservice to the communities on the eastside and I feel sorry any of you thought this was a good idea.

Allan Pietrasanta
Bishop

PERVERTED HIKERS BEWARE

On Wednesday, August 4, the Mono County Sheriff’s Department launched a search and rescue mission in response to a call reporting a self-inflicted gunshot wound at Alger Lakes.

The incident involved a group of 17-18 year olds who had backpacked up to the location, one of whom decided to bring a gun.

He was accidentally shot through the finger and the thigh by one of the other teenagers. Search and Rescue got him out and he was brought to Mammoth Hospital where he is recovering.

Meanwhile, the Mono County Sheriff’s Office posted on Facebook about a personal locator beacon (POB) would’ve been a more useful hand-held device to bring along for a hike, as opposed to a gun.

The post included the statement, “most people who choose to carry in the backcountry say it’s for protection against bears. Bear attacks are almost unheard of, and the caliber necessary to stop a bear would not fit in a backpack. A spot device is lighter than a handgun, and it can be used to summon help with the push of a button.”

What was meant to be an educational post about backcountry safety erupted into a gun rights debate.

The post got so over-union with comments that the Sheriff’s Office eventually disabled the commenting feature.

The 66 comments made before commenting was disabled included:

- “I’ll take my 10mm and bring you back the skull of the bear that tries to attack me. Let’s not forget that the handgun can also help you get away should you come lost and stranded in the woods for several days. It can also take care of those perverted hikers we have in California.”

- “What handheld device is more useful in the backcountry to defend against bad apes who are responsible for more murder and crime throughout human history? There, I fixed your post.”

- “So you’re telling me, if I’m jumped by a lion (which has happened in Mono County in the last 10 years) pushing that button is going to get someone to me fast enough to help? No thanks. I’ll keep my gun rights.”

- “That’s okay, 2nd Amendment of the United States says you can own a firearm... but the Communist state of California thinks it’s above the Constitution.”

The Sheet caught up with Sheriff Ingrid Braun on Thursday to get her take.

“I didn’t say don’t carry a gun in the backcountry, I just said it is more helpful to have a POB,” said Braun. “However, I shouldn’t have posted it to begin with. The attention should’ve been on this kid, on this human life that could’ve been in jeopardy.”
BUSINESS STRONG, SUPPLY CHAIN SHAKY
By Crocetti and Page

After an up-and-down summer season in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and wildfire season, local businesses were looking forward to a much more stable and profitable summer in 2021.

With the relaxing of Covid-19 guidelines and no fires inundating the area with smoke, visitors have flocked back to the Eastern Sierra in search of an outdoor getaway. The Sheet talked to a number of local businesses about how the summer has been so far.

The verdict: things are pretty darn good across the board, although the availability (or lack thereof) of employees and product have created stress on the back end.

Stacy Shaubmayer from the Alpenhof Lodge said that business has been quite consistent and good so far. “It’s definitely different kind of busy than last summer. I’d say businesses are on par with good summer months.”

Mammoth Holistics manager Sean Doherty also described business as steady. “Ours is tricky because we actually opened up during December, in the middle of the shutdown. We definitely had a slow start, but the last 3-4 months have dramatically increased in business,” he explained.

Mammoth Holistics has seen a pretty steady mix between locals and tourists. “I will say that the pool of resumes for potential workers when we first opened was the smallest I have ever seen, and I’ve worked at dispensaries for a while,” he added. “It’s been really hard to find good staff, but not hard to get business. Luckily, cannabis is pretty recession-proof.”

Sun & Ski manager Aidan Rogowski said that traffic through their store seems to be more than it was at this time last year. “People kept more to themselves last year and weren’t necessarily shopping for apparel. But now people are more out and about,” he said. “We haven’t seen a slowdown in business, and if anything we have better numbers now than we did at this time last year.”

Employees at Rick’s Sport Center said that it has been a “normal summer” for the store, which sells fishing equipment and links guests with local guides. “There’s been a lot of new fishermen coming in to look for gear and tips as well,” he said.

Owner Rick Flammson said that the supply shortages experienced in other businesses are affecting the fishing industry as well. Flammson is up 2 or 3 a.m. some mornings to take advantage of stock that becomes available at that time.

He told one anecdote about receiving notice of available rods for purchase one morning. When he checked the stock two minutes later, 20 rods remained out of the original 300.

Victoria Farber, who runs Giovanni’s Pizza and The Stove with her husband John, said “We’ve been busier than ever” at both restaurants. She said that staff shortages have affected both businesses, primarily due to the shortage of available housing.

“Your big concern is we’ll get through this summer and be okay as a business, but I’m terrified of what’s on the horizon if the workforce can’t live here,” Farber said.

She’s resorted to closing Giovanni’s from 2-5 p.m. each day to give staff a break and closing one day a week at The Stove.

Farber said they have thrown around the idea of closing for an entire month at some point and telling employees to take vacation, but noted “I don’t know if that’s necessarily going to solve any issues for us.”

LOCAL BRIEFS

Hiker found dead in Death Valley

A hiker, identified as Douglas Branham, 68, of Tukwilla, WA, was found dead in Death Valley National Park, on Wednesday, July 24.

Family members told authorities that Branham had planned to hike from Badwater to West Side Road and back, a 12-mile round-trip hike across salt flats.

He was supposed to fly home to Tukwilla on Tuesday, July 27 but missed his flight. On Wednesday morning, a concerned family member member called The Inn at Death Valley where he was staying, and a check of his room found his belongings still there. Later, National Park Service rangers found his vehicle and belongings still there. Later, National Park Service rangers found his vehicle in the Badwater parking lot.

The hiker is thought to have set off on Sunday or Monday in 118 degree Fahrenheit heat with up to 91 percent humidity due to scattered showers. To give readers some idea of how “hot” that combination of extreme hot temperature and very high humidity “feels,” according to the National Weather Service Heat Index Calculator, it is the equivalent to the body feeling the temperature of 320°F (160.4°C).

Around 2:25 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24, a California Highway Patrol Helicopter H-82, found Branham’s body about two miles from the closest road according to a joint statement issued from the park and the Inyo County Sheriff’s Office.

At that time, the temperature was around 115-degrees Fahrenheit. Inyo County Search and Rescue offered the following advice to hikers: If you’re hiking alone, leave a detailed itinerary with someone who understands where you’re going and what you plan to do. Give your emergency contact a reasonable timeframe for your return and explain how to call for help if you’re significantly overdue.

Obernolte secures the bag

U.S. Congressman Jay Obernolte (CA-08) secured $11 million in funding for projects in California’s 8th District that passed the U.S. House of Representatives as part of this week’s major appropriations package. This includes $1 million for a street and sidewalk improvement project in the City of Bishop.

“Securing funds for projects like this is critical to improving the quality of life in rural California and supporting the needs of the people who call our community home,” said Rep. Obernolte. “We are extremely grateful for Congressman Obernolte’s strong support for this project and for his continued commitment to improving the quality of life economic development of rural towns in this district. This is wonderful news for our small city as our budget is very limited and this safe route to school project is desperately needed,” said Bishop Mayor Stephen Muchovej.

The $1 million for street and sidewalk improvements in the City of Bishop will help to revitalize the downtown area and eliminate congestion and unsafe sidewalks along Main Street. The Member Designated Funding Request made in partnership with the City of Bishop was included in this week’s major appropriations package voted on before the House of Representatives.
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COVID: THE SEQUEL

Well, it was nice while it lasted. The Covid-19 pandemic has officially returned to the Eastside, boosted by the high transmission rates of the Delta variant that now accounts for the vast majority of Covid-19 cases in the United States.

Earlier this week, Mono County announced that it would be returning to a mask mandate, regardless of vaccination status, for all indoor activities. The county held a Covid-19 Community Conversation over Zoom on Thursday evening, the first in months, to address the rise in cases in the area.

"Sad to be back here for a meeting to discuss the critical situation we find ourselves in," Mono County Public Health director Bryan Wheeler said at the outset of the meeting. "We are pretty close to, if not at, a crisis point. The Delta variant is rapidly spreading through Mono County, wreaking havoc."

"Do you care about your neighbors? Do you care about your community?" Wheeler asked, "If so, please please wear a mask, get vaccinated, get tested."

Emily Janoff, an epidemiologist for Mono County, said that as of Thursday, the county had surpassed 1,100 cases total.

She said the county is reporting 15.3 new cases per 100,000 residents per day, with 37 new cases in since Monday, August 2.

The overall positivity rate is up to 7.5(542,728),(764,749) according to the state of California, and rising.

Those numbers put the county at in a "high transmission" category, which means masks mandatory indoors for everyone.

"Optumserve did 59 tests," Janoff said, "we already 28 positives out of that... with some still pending."

"This is now a strain that you can transmit whether you are vaccinated or not," Mammoth Hospital Chief Medical Officer Craig Burrows added. "The advantage of being vaccinated is that it drastically reduces your chance of getting hospitalized or dying from this virus."

Janoff said that the county is up to 33 breakthrough cases in fully vaccinated residents, although none have what could be considered severe cases of virus, meaning no hospitalizations or extreme symptoms.

That figure accounts for less than 1% of vaccinated residents in the county, Janoff explained.

She added that there has been a noticeable decline in cooperation with contact tracing efforts; those being contacted are withholding information about contacts, their workplaces, or even refusing the interview altogether.

"Our only goal is to control spread of virus in the community," Janoff said, "going forward, everyone’s cooperation is going to be much appreciated." Staff cutbacks earlier in the year during a decline in local cases have further exacerbated efforts to keep up with contact tracing.

"With the clusters that we’ve seen, there’s going be a need for testing," Janoff said, adding that current testing efforts are much less invasive than those previously experienced. Instead of going all the way up the nose, the current swabs are only required to go about an inch.

"If you are exposed to someone, there is an incubation period before you should test," Wheeler added. "We recommend waiting 3-5 days before getting a test."

Janoff said mid-meeting that she had just received news of 11 more positive tests from Thursday, August 5, bringing the total for the day up to 37 and near to 50 on the entire week.

California reports that 44 million doses of vaccine have been administered with 75% of the eligible population receiving at least one dose. Despite that statistic, Covid rates have quadrupled since the end of May/beginning of June.

The vast majority of new cases are among the unvaccinated, with 600% higher case rates among the unvaccinated than for those who are vaccinated. Wheeler reminded the audience that the rise in case rates will lead to a subsequent rise in hospitalizations and then deaths.

"I desperately want to be wrong about this," Burrows said, "if you want to hate me for raising the alarm and saying this could be a disaster, I’m willing to live with the hate as long as it doesn’t happen.

"To me," he continued, "this feels very much like a tsunami: everything feels terrific up until your entire city is flooded with ocean water."

Wheeler displayed a graphic showing the Delta Variant’s transmissibility rate compared to earlier strains and other infectious illnesses, terming it “one of the more transmissable viruses known to man.”

Of Bluesapalooza, Wheeler said, “It does have potential to become a mega-spreader event... Please, if you’re going to Bluesapalooza, please wear a mask.”

Mono County Unified School District Superintendent Jennifer Wildman took over at one point to say that the district will be opening to in-person classes and that students will be required to wear masks when indoors.

Schools will not be allowing visitors, with larger in-person events to be held virtually.

During the question and answer section of the meeting, one viewer asked why Bluesapalooza is still being held given the rise in cases. Wheeler said that it was too close to ask organizers to reduce capacity or cancel tickets, as people are already in town for the event.

One notable change: beer will be poured into pitchers instead of directly into glasses to limit points of contact.

Public health will have a presence at the event offering Covid-19 tests and vaccines to any interested.

In response to one question about what constitutes a large event, Wheeler and Burrows classified “large” as anything over 12 peoples or more than three families.

“Everyone wants to think this is over, we’ve been dealing with it well over a year and a half,” Burrows said, “this is a real threat right now and the rules changed... and if the rules change and you don’t adapt, you’ll lose.”

“Getting fatigued and tired of a situation is not an excuse to ignore it.”
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9/4 NEW! TRI-COUNTY FAIR PARADE & CATTLE DRIVE
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I am not willing to go any lower, for the sake of my kids. I want them to have a safe area to live in. They were born here. They were raised here. And unfortunately, we haven’t been able to afford buying a home, so we will be leaving."

Q: What have you seen change in Mammoth during your 24 years here?
A: “The nature. Although the nature has remained, it has definitely changed. And now since more people know about Mammoth and Mono County, I’m worried about it changing even more. Back in the day when I used to come visit my parents, it would not get very warm. It would be at the highest, maybe, in the ’70s. And now we are having weather in the 80s. Our trees used to be a much darker and more vivid green, and now there’s much more brown. There’s just a lot more dryness to this area than there was before, which is due to Los Angeles taking all the water from this area. You also don’t see as many animals as you used to. And as far as humans go, things have definitely changed. We started as a working population who chose to live in a remote area to enjoy hiking and the outdoors. Of course we had people coming and going, but it wasn’t as touristic as it is now. But with Dave McCoy selling his business - who was such a great man, a simple, down-to-earth human who really loved this area- things changed. People started finding out about Mammoth. As far as I know, it’s now owned by international ski areas (it’s now part of a larger conglomerate). So that brings even more visitors from around the world.”

Q: What about housing has changed?
A: “Most of the older buildings ... we’re now getting rid of them to make smaller housing for more people. What I’m seeing is, where there used to be one house, there are now condominiums. We’re growing upwards in all the ways that we can. And with the ‘Mammoth lifestyle’ being very attractive to high status, rich people wanting to have a second or third home here, locals are losing out on the possibility of owning something. To live here and be able to afford to live here, you now have to have 2-3 jobs, because the cost of living goes up, but our wages don’t. And the funny thing is, we all saw it coming. A lot of us chose to leave before things were going to get this bad. But I love this area. I was hoping I would die in this area, in

WRAPAROUND SERVICES
Coordinator

Mono County Behavioral Health
Salary Range 62: $25.01-$30.40/hour
$52,023-$63,234/year

Job Description
Mono County is recruiting for a Behavioral Health Specialist to fill the role of Wraparound Coordinator. Wraparound is a unique partnership between agencies and families with youth who may be at risk of placement in foster care or residential treatment. Wraparound is built on the philosophy that families deserve individualized care and compassion, and consistent support to create lasting, positive change. Job duties include facilitating Wraparound and Child and Family Team Meetings where strengths and needs are focused upon, and working with the community and natural supports to provide holistic and long-term support for families. The Wraparound Coordinator works directly with families that come from all different types of backgrounds, as well as frequent team collaboration with social workers, therapists, probation officers, and other formal support systems. The position will deliver Intensive Care Coordination.

Training and Experience
The desired candidate would have knowledge of trauma-informed care and basic knowledge of the Wraparound principles. Excellent communication skills are a must with a team-player attitude. Education in a behavioral health or human services preferred. Bilingual Spanish-English skills preferred. Previous experience in facilitation of team meetings is a plus.

About Mono County & Mono County Wraparound
Mono County is a rural community in the Eastern Sierra of California. It is subject to harsh winters, rejuvenating springtime, wonderful summers, and colorful falls. It is known for winter sports, and has a plethora of hiking trails, fishing opportunities and campgrounds.

Mono County’s Wraparound team is unique in the deep and meaningful connections formed with families and peers.

Position requires 1-2 weeks/mo. after-hours “on-call” coverage.

Apply At:
https://www.mono county.ca.gov/jobs

Click on: “Behavioral Health Services Coordinator 1”
Hernandez has done all she can to try and stay here. Her last 4 rentals have consistently been downgrades, and it has gotten to the point where she refuses to go any lower (conditions were bad to begin with - in fact, she attributes her teenage daughter's pediatric asthma to unchecked mold that was growing in their apartment).

“Currently I am renting at a condominium, in a lower unit, and there are nightly rentals all around me. For the working population this is a nightmare, because you have to work and the kids have to go to school in the morning, but the people next door are partying. Our manager can’t do anything about it. You call the police, and they don’t do anything. There are times when tourists will come and cram 15-20 people in a unit for 3 or 4 nights and you feel like you’re in the room with them. So it’s really hard. And the rentals cheaper than mine are rampant with drugs and extremely bad living conditions. I cannot take my kids into that. I am currently begging my landlord to switch the short-term rentals back to long-term ones like he had before, so that both he as a 4th homeowner as well as the locals looking for housing can prosper.”

Q: What have you seen from other community members in similar positions?

A: “Many workers are pushed out of Mammoth and are forced to commute from as far as Lone Pine, which is crazy. Mammoth is still where the working businesses are in the Sierras though, so people are forced to have to commute all the way here. I’ve also never seen so many of our community members living in their cars. And you might not know that they’re living in their cars - you might see them at the library all dressed up fine. But they’re living out of their cars and they’re struggling. We’ve had an increase in suicides because of the crisis. And I can totally understand why - imagine living here, working constantly to cater to tourists, and walking by enormous, beautiful condominums that are empty and not being used, whose owners come here maybe once or twice a year. It’s just become a grim reality. It’s starting to look more like Hell on Earth, when it should be Heaven.”

Q: What do you hope to see change in the community?

A: “They need to find a balance between second/third home owners/investors who want a piece of this beautiful part of the world, and the local workforce who actually live here. A balance between community and tourism. I worry about this beautiful area, that if there’s no working force, no children, no families around, it might be the future Bowdie. I just wish the best for Mammoth. I truly don’t know how the town will survive if we all leave. I mean, it will survive- it’ll just be a destination, it won’t be a home.”

Although Hernandez is leaving Mammoth, she is doing everything in her power to stay in the county. “My daughter wants to graduate from Mammoth High School with her friends, so I am doing everything I can to not have to leave the county completely, but I have to leave Mammoth. We have 3 more years, and I think I can make it. It just hurts to be third generation in this area and have to leave. Because I love this area, like I said, it’s my Heaven on Earth. And I have to leave my Heaven on Earth.”

LATTE & LEARN

Featuring Pediatrics

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12
7:30-8:30AM
STARBUCKS ON MAIN

First 25 People Receive a Signature Insulated Tote Bag
Complimentary Coffee
Giveaways
Bishop Country Club hosted a Golf Fun Day last Saturday. By the photos, the event was as advertised - fun.

Peyton Tetrick and Blake Davidson

Kiara Cox, Clark McKinney, and Brandy Cox

Steve Shibley

Tim Haines with assistant Jasper

Jon Thayer and Sean Jackson celebrate a successful day

Chalfant Big Trees

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Bleehole continued from page 1

ARE YOU A BLEEPHOLE?
NoBleepholes.com

The $6,000 billboard in Mojave, visible for all northbound travelers

where it was first described as a "playful song" that would be promoted through "Easter Eggs" found via the Mojave billboard, stickers, and posters. The idea was to catch people's attention and drive the message of how to recreate responsibly.

The promotion was described as "John [Urdi]'s baby" by Senior Content Marketing Manager Meghan Miranda. Urdi said at the July meeting, "The idea is that we wanna let people know that when they come here, to be respectful."

"The goal is not to be offensive," he explained, "The only people who are going to be offended are people we don't want here anyway.

The only member of the board or staff who expressed uncertainty at the July meeting was John Mendel, who asked if the campaign would be tested before a full release to gauge general reaction. He was told that doing so would "set us back time-wise."

Urdi put out a letter on Tuesday, August 3 (reprinted on page four), in which he explained the thought process behind the song, writing "The idea for Bleehole came after hearing feedback from residents regarding disrespectful visitors, as well as increasing anti-tourism sentiment, locally and around the world. We recognized an opportunity to add a new layer to the plan, a much more direct message that was viral in nature (minimum investment) and had the ability to break through and begin the needed dialogue around how our visitors should respect our community and the environment.

The paid media cost clocked in at just over $6,000, per the letter, which concludes with the recognition that MLT made a mistake, that the campaign was too direct and offensive for some, and all efforts would be directed to the "Hug What You Love" campaign.

The campaign was the first topic of discussion at MLT's board meeting on Wednesday, August 4. Prompted by board chair Jeremy Goico, Urdi reiterated much of the sentiment contained in the letter, saying "the intent was to have something more direct on expectations of visitors, a way to get people's attention."

Goico also took time to remind attendees of the positive impact the organization has on the community.

"Making a mistake is one thing, recovering from it is another," Mendel said during his comments; he referenced guests reporting negative interactions with locals as a reason to continue to work towards a reconciliation of the responsible tourism issue.

"We have work on both sides of this coin to do this," he said, "On one hand, our guests are our lifeblood, on the other, it's the solution we love to hate."

Pat Foster said that when he first heard the song, he had internal doubts but didn't express them after seeing none of his fellow board members offer a response short of Mendel's.

"We didn't have a lot of discussion," Foster said, "As a board, each one of us needs to accept responsibility."

Board treasurer John Morris saw things a little bit differently.

"I had several phone calls with people that said that it was the best $6,000 MLT has ever spent," he said, "I'd hope the community would have a little more humor about thing… Personally I think it was funny and serves a purpose, personally I feel sometimes people need a kick in the butt."

Morris said that he was "ticked off at people in the community" for "the way that MLT's staff personally have been affected and attacked."

"It is not appropriate in my opinion for this to fall on Mr. Urdi or his staff because we have as much culpability as anybody else," Morris said, inviting the public to reach out to him if they wanted to talk about MLT.

"The folks that work for this organization are simply trying to make Mammoth a better place to live... [the reaction]’s disgusting as far I'm concerned."

Urdi closed out the board/staff comments portion saying "One of the Facebook posts out there commented on facts that we spent 100’s of thousands and millions of dollars... the only paid media placement was the billboard in Mojave."

There were production and other costs associated with the billboard, he said, "In total it's about $23,000 that we're into for the campaign."

Corless called in during the public comment portion of the item.

"Thank you for making this quick course correction with a campaign that was in my opinion discordant with the message we want to extend to the rest of the world," she said, adding "Don't tell people to reach out to you, please reach into the community."

THE SHEET | Saturday, August 7, 2021 LOCAL NEWS | 13
BARS & MUSIC

Happy Hour / The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill. Pursuit of Happiness Hour Daily 3-6 p.m. and extended Pursuit of Happiness hour 3-8 p.m. Monday and Thursday 1/2 off Sliders, $5 Flatbread and more ... More info: see ad p. 2
Austria Hof Happy Hour 4-6 p.m. Sun-Thurs/4-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday.
Bevi Bene has 20% off wines by the glass Wednesday-Saturday 5-6 p.m.
Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour Mon-Fri., Happy Hour from 4-6 p.m.
Mammoth Rock 'N Bowl Mon. D9/3:00 p.m., Thurs, DJ 10 p.m.
Clocktower Cellar Happy Hour: 4-7 p.m. daily. $6 dollar menu items, drink specials. More info: see ad p. 4
Peta's happy hour until 6 p.m. Signature cocktails, special menu.
Roberto's Happy Hour: 2-5 p.m. daily.
Side Door Cafe & Wine Bar. Happy Hour: 3-6 p.m. daily. 20+ wines by the glass.
The Mogul happy hour 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the bar with food and drink specials. 53 Kitchen & Cocktails happy hour weekdays: 3-5 p.m. weekends: 4-5 p.m.
Lakanuki happy hour 3-6 p.m. daily.
Mammoth Tavern Happy hour 4-5:30 p.m. Half off draft beer, well drinks and wine. App specials
Distant Brewing happy hour 3-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday
Loco Frijole happy hour 3-6 p.m. daily.
Black Velvet Coffee Wine Tastings every Friday and Saturday at 4 p.m.
Wanaaha Casino happy hour 4-6 p.m. daily
Dish Bistro Check their socials for daily specials

August 6-7/
Cedar Teeth plays at the Red Lantern as part of the Summer Jam Concert series. Tickets are $15, music starts at 8 p.m.
Bluesapalooza After Party at the Liberty Bar in Mammoth with a VIP after party hosted by Crooked Eye Tommy. No cover, doors at 9:30 p.m.
August 6-8/
Bluesapalooza Festival of Beers returns to Mammoth with a stacked line-up of performers over four days. For a list of acts, breweries, and tickets, visit mammothbluesbrewsfest.com. More info: see p.15 for lineup

Saturday, August 7/
Rival Peaks plays at Distant Brewing. Time: 7-9 p.m.
Monday, August 9/
Bowling 'n Beats @ Mammoth Rock 'n Bowl. Time: 9 p.m. All ages, but bar 21+
Open Mic Night at Distant Brewing. Time: 6-10 p.m.
Tuesday, August 10/
Karaoke is back at the Public House in Mammoth. 7:30 pm.-close.
Wednesday, August 11/
Wine Wednesdays @ Liberty Bar in Mammoth. Drizzling live jazz (Eddy Evans) and wine tastings. Time: 4-7 p.m.
Thursday, August 12/
Collectivity plays at the Red Lantern as part of the Summer Jam Concert series. Tickets are $15, music starts at 9 p.m.
MPM Phase II review process

As part of the federal environmental review process, the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") is seeking public comments on Mojave Precious Metals' ("MPM") proposed modification to its Plan of Operations for Phase II exploration.

The proposed Plan of Operations contains key zones within MPM's existing claims using the alignment of prior exploration roads to access and drill up to 30 sites with approximately four drill holes per site.

MPM intends on continuing its efforts to use cultural monitors selected by the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe and the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe to be present during exploration efforts, just as it did for Phase I.

The proposed Plan of Operations includes a detailed reclamation plan for Phase I. Exploration efforts, just as it did for Phase I.

The deadline to submit comments on the proposed exploration plan at https://go.usa.gov/xFkVv.

The title deadline  public comment is Monday, August 30.

For further information about Mojave Precious Metals, visit www.mojavepreciousmetals.com, or contact its office in Lone Pine at (760) 614-5605.

MLFF early bird sale

We are so excited to announce the 7th annual Mammoth Lakes Film Festival on Sept 22-26th will be live and in person. Get your Early Bird Passes at a great savings! We will announce the line-up on Aug 20th.

Get ready to meet some amazing filmmakers! Early Bird Passes go on sale Monday, July 19th through Aug 16th. To purchase tickets, go on sale Monday, July 19th and in person. Get your Early Bird Passes at a great savings! We will announce the line-up on Aug 20th.

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

- Class B Driver - ML @ $24,
- AP Clerk - ML @ $18,
- Housekeepers - ML @ $17.25,
- Desk Clerk - B @ $15,
- Hsdp/Laundry/Janitor - B @ $15.18,
- Medical Assistant - B @ $18,
- General Laborers - B & ML @ $15-22
- House Hotelman - ML @ 17
- Framing Carpenters - ML $35+ DOE
- Graphic Writer/Art Mnt.
- Medical Secretary - B @ $17 - $24

Call Us Today
760-924-0523 or 760-873-8599
www.SierraEmployment.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 - City of Bishop

- Technician
  - Performing maintenance tasks associated with the City's building and equipment.
  - Must have a valid California driver's license with a clean driving record.
  - Must possess strong mechanical skills and ability to read and use tools.

- Maintenance Assistant
  - Performing building maintenance, groundskeeping, and custodial tasks.
  - Must have good physical strength and be able to lift 50 pounds.
  - Willingness to work weekends and holidays.

- Appliance Lodge is accepting applications for maintenance, housekeeping, front desk and night audit positions. We are looking for full and part-time team members to fill year round and seasonal positions. Applicants must be able to work weekends and holidays. Please apply in person at 6085 Minaret Rd, Mammoth.

- Shilo Inn is accepting applications for: Full-time Housekeepers, Front Desk, Night Auditor, and Housekeeping Valet. Please call 760-934-8518.

- Mammoth Hospital is seeking a Housekeeper. This position is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the hospital environment. Must have good physical strength, be able to lift 50 pounds, and be able to stand for long periods of time. Previous experience in a hospital setting is preferred.

- Mammoth Five Star Lodging is seeking a Maintenance Assistant. This position requires high attention to detail and involves doing pre-arrival and departure inspections in rental units, housekeeping quality checks and reporting. Must possess strong organizational skills, ability to handle multiple tasks, and be able to work independently.

- ASCENT: THE ART OF CANNABIS is now hiring retail sales assistants. Please email resume to info@ascentmammoth.com

- Mammoth 80|50 PRC is hiring for the following positions:
  - A $20.00 per hour, full-time, responsible maintenance assistant is needed to perform general maintenance tasks as directed.
  - A part-time office assistant is also needed to perform various administrative tasks.

- Two seasonal workers (estimated work duration three months). One worker for mosquito abatement and one laborer for street work. High School diploma or equivalent required. Must be able to lift 50 pounds and work outdoors in varied weather conditions. Must possess and show proof of a valid CA driver’s license and a satisfactory driving record. Attach résumé and three (3) references. Hourly wage is $20.00/hour. Start date: July 19. For more information or to apply, call 760.648.7778 or email info@junelakepud.com.
Notice of Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 17-21
AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MAMMOTH COMMUNITY WATER DISTRICT TO DECLARE THE END OF THE DELINQUENT WATER AND SEWER CHARGES AS OF MAY 31, 2021

WHEREAS, staff of the Mammuth Community Water District (“District”) has prepared the Report on Delinquent Water and Sewer Charges as of May 31, 2021; and
WHEREAS, the Report on Delinquent Water and Sewer Charges is attached hereto as Exhibit “A”;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Mammuth Community Water District that a public hearing on the Report on Delinquent Water and Sewer Charges is set for August 19, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. depending on the status of the COVID-19 emergency and reopening of public places, the hearing will take place either virtually or at the District office located at 1335 Meridian Boulevard, Mammoth Lakes, California. At the public hearing, interested persons and others will hear and consider objections and protests to said written report. If the Board of Directors agrees to the findings in the report, the report will be published in the local newspapers and at the District website. If the report is not amended, the Board of Directors will adopt the report, and the property will be turned over to the County Tax Collector for collection. Any properties not declared delinquent in the report will be closed out by the District and the property will no longer be a delinquent property as described in the adopted report, and shall be included by the County Tax Collector in his tax rolls levied against the respective parcels of real property and collected in the same manner, at the same time, and by the same person as taxes for the Mammuth Community Water District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Board of Directors hereby directs the publication of this resolution in a newspaper of general circulation within the boundaries of the District. Such publication shall be not less than once a week for two weeks prior to the date set for the hearing with the first publication at least fifteen (15) days prior to the public hearing. A notice of the public hearing shall be sent to each person listed on the Report. The published and mailed hearing notices shall detail the method by which the hearing will be held.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Mammuth Community Water District at its regular meeting held on Tuesday, August 17, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. at the Board of Supervisors Office, 415 North Main Street, Mammoth Lakes, California.

A. Y. Creasy, Board President
Mark Bube, Secretary
Board of Directors

MAMMOTH COMMUNITY WATER DISTRICT
ABSENT: None
AYES: Directors Cage, Creasy, Domaille, Smith, and Thompson
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Those searching for an eclectic, uptempo musical fusion experience this weekend will need to look no further than Elektric Voodoo, the project headlined by Scott Tournet, playing at Bluesapalooza on Saturday.

Elektric Voodoo’s style is described on the band’s website as “World Beat Rock and Roll comprised of layered sounds, intriguing, disparate musical genres and timely, inspiring lyrics.” It comes from Tournet’s passion for varied musical styles and cultures.

Tournet hails from Vermont; “When I was 10, my family moved to a place with no electricity,” he explained. He first picked up a guitar at 18 while attending college. “I had no clue what I was doing,” he said, with a laugh, “Everybody in the dorm had a guitar, it seemed like, and I learned a little something different from everyone.”

But where his passion for music truly took off was at Goddard College, a “very free and artsy school” in Vermont where Tournet studied “far-out free jazz and free and artsy school” in Vermont where Tournet said, “When I got to Goddard, I actually became someone who liked to learn … I said, “When I got to Goddard, I actually became someone who liked to learn … I kind of just stumbled on it, “ he explained, “I realized I’d cut off my musical connections were outside of my base in San Diego.

So he put out feelers to put together a band. He found a percussionist in Tyrone Kierman, who has an extensive background in Afro-Cuban and rhythms of Santeria; Matt Bazzone, a drummer in “love with funk, Afro beat, and Latin music; and through Bazzone, brought in brass and horn influences via classically-trained multi-instrumentalists Bradley Nash and Travis Klein. They in turn brought in bassist Luke Henning, who came up playing ska, pop punk, and indie music, and “is a student of Motown at heart.”

The band has been touring since 2017, hitting venues all over the country, and is about to embark on its third tour this August. On the tour, they’ll eventually stop in a place Tournet calls their adopted home, New Orleans.

“Dr. John was a big influence,” Tournet said; he listened to the New Orleans singer-songwriter’s first record extensively while working on Elektric Voodoo’s first album, and drew from “how he created a world of his own.”

Tournet even got to meet the man himself on tour in Australia through an old tour manager. “He was cool as hell,” Tournet said of meeting John, who proceeded to tell Tournet the story of how he shot his finger off.

The band’s upcoming album, Tele-Mammoth, was written before the Covid-19 pandemic. Tournet said the writing process was the longest he’s undertaken: “I would go into the studio space and just write songs everyday. I wrote like 60 songs,” he said, “We put a lot of time and energy into it, rehearsed it really hard for about 2 months and did a few small under the radar shows.” After recording the album in February 2020, “Two weeks later, it all hit the fans.”

Telescope was mixed and just about ready to go in summer 2020, but “we worked so hard on it that we wanted to tour behind it,” said Tournet.

Elektric Voodoo’s music doesn’t come roaring out the speakers in the way that other acts might. It unfurls like fog, the sections forming contrasting and complementing layers. It’s a groove that never seems to let up until the last note.

“You’re gonna dance,” Tournet said of the band’s shows, “The whole thing is propelled by rhythm, that’s the impetus of the band…without rhythm there is no song. That was a bit of a mission statement in a way for me.”

“It’s going to be rhythmic. Going to be dynamic, going to be ecstatic at points…there’s going to be songs to grab on to and hold on to,” he said, “There’s going to be songs to grab on to and hold on to.”

“I love the way things combine,” Tournet said of the music, “Really, an underlying theme with us is depth and nuance and contrast.”

“Mammoth is going to be our first show,” Tournet said, “I’m so excited, it was nice to have some time away from it all as much as it sucked. I feel it can be a bit of a rebirth now especially for me having done it for so long and so many years.”
TURN UP THE HEAT
College friends collaborate to create Caldera Hot Sauce
By Page I

It takes a certain type of person to be a hot sauce enthusiast, let alone someone who goes into business selling the stuff. But when there's two people with passion for the condiment and a willingness to invest serious time into the finished product, you get Caldera Hot Sauce, founded in Mammoth Lakes in 2020.

Co-founders Augie Houlemard and Byron Roos-Collins are college friends who met at Santa Barbara through the outdoor adventure club and followed their passion for the great outdoors in and around California and beyond.

The company was an unexpected side-effect of the Covid-19 pandemic; "Both Byron and I had pretty violent returns to society because of Covid," Houlemard said, "Byron was in Peru, I was in Ecuador, we were trying to figure out where we were going to end up after that."

The pair settled on Mammoth Lakes, arriving in October 2020. During the pandemic, "Caldera burst through a bunch of random things, mostly us making hot sauces together a lot," he explained; the name is an homage to the Long Valley Caldera.

Roos-Collins "grew up in a hot sauce family." "I've been loving and making hot sauces for many many years," he said. They learned the business side of the industry from the ground up, a challenge given the location.

"I had worked for a start up before as a member of 5-6 person team, Houlemard said, "but I wasn’t learning the nitty gritty background and all the tax chaos … I said it was pretty new for both of us."

Roos-Collins said that the duo’s background in the service industry gave them the people skills needed to be salesmen. "The process of getting the product on shelves and in front of customers was ‘door-to-door. ‘" The duo did plenty of legwork in the Bay Area and Los Angeles with marginal success. Back home in the small communities of the Eastside, however, "you can walk up and talk to owners directly."

"It’s reaffirming," Roos-Collins said, "It makes us feel stoked to be part of this community."

He said that while challenging, building the business beyond condiment creation wasn’t a ‘rude awakening.’ "It’s all very straightforward in a lot of ways," he said, from building a social media profile to sourcing ingredients and developing a client network.

"There’s been no major shocks so far," he added.

In terms of the sauces, the original habanero sauce was "a recipe I’d been working on for a long time," Roos-Collins said, "and I continued to tweak it and tweak it and tweak it."

The company’s recently released Sierra-bleu, The Stove and a host of other local flavors come from Mammoth, the resources required for large-scale production simply can’t be met in a domestic kitchen. The two work with a co-packer, Preserve Farm Kitchens in Petaluma, to make large batches.

Beyond production, Houlemard and Roos-Collins said that the staff at Preserve Farm has also had a hand in the feedback process. "There couldn’t be a better place to ask for feedback," Houlemard said of Preserve Farm, adding that the culinary backgrounds and experience of the staff lends itself to hot sauce.

Caldera emphasizes the outdoors in their branding, drawing on the founders passion for getting outside. Photos on the company Instagram page feature climbing, backpacking, and kayaking, all with a bottle at the ready. "I’m happy with the way we chose to our branding because we don’t have to fabricate anything," Houlemard said.

Caldera has a pledge to donate a percentage of proceeds to local conservation groups to reinforce the outdoor lifestyle the company promotes.

The next step is expanding shelf presence and distribution. While "new flavors are always fun to do," Houlemard said, "We working on current inventory, trying to get as many eyeballs on that stuff as possible."

Both are working jobs outside the company while they get it off the ground. Find Caldera products at Mammoth Liquor, Stellar Brew, Mammoth Chevron, Bleu, The Stove and a host of other locations.

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