Northern Inyo Hospital District (NIHD) appointed Melissa Best-Baker to fill Topah Spoonhunter’s seat at its December 2 special meeting.

At the same meeting, it also introduced Interim CEO Lionel “Chad” Chadwick.

But there’s still one more missing piece to the NIHD puzzle. Zone 5 Board member Robert Sharp did not run for reelection. No one else ran for the open seat either, so the NIHD Board will now have to appoint another board member to fill out the roster.

If the current composition of the NIHD Board serves as a roadmap, one might guess that if you are a past or present employee of the Inyo County Health and Human Services Department, that you may be on the short list.

NIHD Board Treasurer Jean Turner, now retired, is former head of Inyo HHS.

NIHD Board Chair Jody Veenker’s LinkedIn profile indicates she is a current Inyo HHS staffer, serving as Director of First 5 Inyo.

Newest board member

By Lunch

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Newest board member
I greatly enjoyed (and promptly ordered) Bill Heavey’s review of Carmine Gallo’s “The Bezos Blueprint” in the Wall Street Journal last week and promptly ordered a copy at The Booky Joint.

The book talks about the Amazon founder’s unique (and very terse) communication and writing style.

Gallo analyzes 48,000 words written by Bezos over 24 years of shareholder letters, and discovers he uses 16 words per sentence and writes at an 8th grade level (using the Flesch-Kincaid scale.

From Heavey’s review: “There’s a good reason we should value writing that’s easy to read. Our brains are not made to think. “

Mr. Heavey quotes the neuroscientist and author Lisa Feldman Barrett, who says, “Your brain’s most important job is to control your body’s energy needs. In short, your brain’s most important job is not thinking.”

“That’s why I encourage you to turn your brain off and spend some time reading and cool down your communication and writing style.”

Couple other notable observations. Gallo says you have 15 seconds or about 35 words to grab a reader’s attention. If you don’t, you’ll lose half of them.

Bezos banned the use of PowerPoint amongst his senior staff in 2004 - local bureaucrats please take heed. Putting together a PowerPoint and then reading the slides back to people is boring as hell and a massive waste of time.

Stop it.

Finally, at Amazon, Gallo says it’s always Day One, “a metaphor for creating and sustaining a culture of innovation.”

So what’s Day Two? Stasis, followed by irrelevance, an excruciating, painful decline and then death.

About five years ago on his way off Council, Shields Richardson invented the Mayor’s Spirit of Mammoth (whatever the hell that is) award. And I told Shields at the time, “This is stupid, because within about three years, you’re gonna run out of ideas.”

And Shields laughed and said, “In three years it won’t be my problem.”

This year, outgoing Mayor Salcido, almost as a parting reminder of her wishy-washy lack of decisiveness, gave the award to the Town employees.

So everyone gets a trophy.

Barf.

My feeling is you can’t have a Spirit of Mammoth award unless Alicia Olson’s name is engraved on it.

As Wendi Grasseschi has departed the Mammoth Times (see page six), I wonder who will fill in and write the weekly weather story (because it’s just impossible to readily find that information online).

I told Pike to find me some weather. Had to endure several dumb jokes to get it.

“Pike, with the weather forecast ahead of this weekend’s storm. In Mammoth, snow expected to begin Saturday. 11 to 17 inches during the day. After dark, forecasters anticipate the storm will dump an additional 16 to 22 inches.

Come Sunday, 10 to 16 inches of flakes are expected to land on our turf. That’s 37 to 54 inches of fresh powder on which to surf, stomp, and slide.

If my new habit of not washing my hair continues (preserve the natural oils!) then a few additional flakes can be expected over the weekend.

Monday will be partly sunny.

Over in Bishop, much to Garcia and Grisman’s delight, dreadful wind and rain can be expected throughout the weekend. 69% chance of rain on Saturday. 69% chance of rain on Sunday. Cancel your foursome.

A high of 54 on Saturday and 43 on Sunday compete with respective lows of 34 and 16.”

Sign of the times. Presser this afternoon from Inyo County Asst. Board Clerk Darcy Ellis regarding the numerous vacancies on several boards, committees, and commissions.

Letters of interest are currently being accepted for positions on the Big Pine Cemetery District, the Bishop Rural Fire Protection District, the Inyo Fish & Wildlife Commission, the Child Care Planning Council, Eastern Sierra Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, and the Inyo County Water Commission. Appointments to fill the vacancies will be made by the Board of Supervisors.

Letters of interest should be sent to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at P.O. Drawer N, Independence, CA 93526 or dellis@inyo county.us.

Deadlines for submission come up as early as December 15.

Finally, Mammoth named #1 ski town in the U.S. The cynic in me can’t help but ask, “I wonder how much that cost?” I’ll bet you they had every MLT employee on a strict protocol to send in at least fifty votes per day.
While Mammoth Lakes Tourism as an organization doesn’t come across as thrifty or spartan, it’s committed to bringing Spartan to town. Spartan Race, that is.

But as the saying goes, you’ve got to spend money to make money.

At MLT’s monthly board meeting held Wednesday in Suite Z, MLT Marketing and Events Manager Dakota Snider announced that MLT will ink a deal to bring a Spartan Race to Mammoth starting next October.

“So don’t shut down your business [during that period for shoulder season] the first two weeks of October!” he exclaimed.

Spartan Race is an obstacle course event of varying distances, and Snider said Spartan wishes to hold its world championships in Mammoth.

Best part of hosting this event - “weather is not an issue for people who love to suffer,” Snider added.

The event is expected to draw at least 7,000 domestic and 2,000 international attendees, and book approximately 20,000 room nights over the four-day event.

Projected economic impact to the Town of Mammoth Lakes: $5.5 million.

The cost to play for MLT; A five-year contract with Spartan guaranteeing the company $450,000/year.

As MLT board member John Morris pointed out, this event alone, if projections prove accurate, would increase October T.O.T. revenue by 50%.

In other MLT news ...

MLT Executive Director John Urdi counseled patience for those locals interested in purchasing a 10-pack of flight tix from Advanced Airlines.

After The Sheet ran a front page story on upcoming winter flight service in its Thanksgiving issue, Local Marketing Manager Emily Bryant said Advanced Air searches on MLT’s website spiked 185%.

But Advanced has experienced some technical difficulty getting the locals’ deal up on its website.

Urdi said the company hopes to have it ready to go within a week.

The locals’ special is directionally restricted - in other words, you fly out the opposite direction of tourist traffic, leaving Friday/Saturday and returning Sunday/Monday.

Flight bookings for 2022-2023 are still pacing at about double of last year, according to Urdi.

Communications Manager Lara Kaylor announced that a USA Today readers’ poll tapped Mammoth as the best ski town in the U.S. Number 2: Banff, in Canada. Number 3: North Conway, New Hampshire.

John Morris said “pacing” at Snowcreek Resorts for this winter is up 40% over last year, which was a very good year. He said Night of Lights weekend is almost sold out.

Board Chair Jeremy Goico of Black Tie Ski Rentals noted anecdotally that he’s been seeing more New York City addresses coming through in his reservations, a sign of east coast market penetration.

Director of Marketing Brian Wright has been swimming (drowning?) in data of late. One item he shared - Mammoth has historically hosted 7.5 million total visitor days per year. But that number spiked to an estimated 12.4 million in 2021-2022. The guess is that Yosemite’s reservation policy may have pushed folks out of the park and into surrounding communities.

Wright said Yosemite plans to drop its reservation system for 2023.
By A Human I Swear

Dear Editor:

According to The Atlantic, the college essay is dead. Not that it was ever alive. With all the respect the dead are due, I remind you the college essay was, after all, for a grade, and what did a grade matter except to advance the academic resumé of a kid bent on getting into a graduate program his success crazed and dazed parents approved of or at least could bring up in casual conversation and illicit a sigh of admiration from one of their friends they are hell-bent on beating at The Most Important Game In The Whole Wide World: having kids that are more impressive than their friends’ kids. Bean counters. All of them. But labels are dangerously pointless. We all count beans in our own way. It’s the fact that now anyone can use AI to write a book to write a poem and claim it as their own and potentially get the money and fame I so badly desire. But that’s actually not the worst part. The worst part is that one day, and that day may have already passed by the time anybody lays eyes on this, I’ll read something written by Artificial Intelligence by An Algorithm by A Computer and I’ll know it was by Artificial Intelligence by An Algorithm by A Computer and I’ll like it because it’s better than anything a mere mortal could write and then writing will be dead with the rest of art close on its heels. What will come for human medical doctors? What will kill the analyst? I don’t know. But I’ve got a pretty good idea. What will we do with all that time?

Jack Benham
San Francisco

We Prefer Not To

To the Editor:

I resent charges reported in The Sheet by wanna-be boosters that Lone Pine has “stagnated” and thus needs a VRBO or two on every street. Lone Pine is steady-state, a desirable status, sustainable and beneficial to the intelligent-life-on-Earth experiment. According to the U.S. Census, Lone Pine is down about 200 residents from the year 2000. This town has what people need. It doesn’t have everything they want. That looks like leadership in the Climate Change Century. Our vision statement: “Neighborhoods are not business districts.” Our mission statement: “Zero flights daily out of Lone Pine Yosemite Airport.” Our tourism business district tax: stable at 0%. Our motto: “Lone Pine: We Prefer Not To.”

Jeff Putman
Lone Pine

MBE continued from page 1

doors in 1995. In 2018, Marcia and Craig Hansen approached Taylor, who’d been working for the store for about three and a half years. He was a manager and notary at the time. “They said, ‘Hey, we’re looking to sell the business, and we wanted to start by asking someone who’s been here.’” So, we worked out a deal for me to take over, and I’ve been the owner since the beginning of 2019. Taylor was a bit shocked. “I grew up here… and I loved the area and I just wanted to be able to be here and be able to have a steady job where I’d be able to pay my rent … and do all the things I loved to do in Mammoth.” Now, he’s been running Mammoth Business Essentials for three years. The shop’s secret sauce that makes it last? Casting a wide and indispensable net. “One week, we’ll be making keys. One week, it’ll be a whole bunch of copies. One week, it’ll be a bunch of notarizations – it’s just kind of all over the place how it falls, but it always will keep us busy,” says Taylor. “And, being the main port to ship anything out – where the next closest one is really Bishop – also helps keep us busy in here.”

Taking ownership of a store with a more than two decade local history is a daring feat. There’s culture to preserve and customers to keep happy. “I didn’t want to let the old owners down,” says Taylor. “I didn’t want to let the community down. There’s definitely a balance when a business has been around for so long… there’s a certain kind of expectation of what long-time customers are going to get.” Taylor made sure not to implement changes that would disrupt that expectation. But, often, change is necessary. Taylor’s implemented “little changes in pricing that we feel are a little bit more fair” alongside “a waitlist for mailboxes” at the store. “Kind of small things that aren’t huge but make a difference,” Taylor says. “Little changes, like how we check in packages to keep ourselves organized so we know where everything is.” With the rise in online shopping sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic, getting on top of package logistics has been a top priority. As for the labor shortage that has proved a challenge for many businesses in Mammoth, Taylor’s been lucky. He’s found local employees looking for year-round work, which, luckily, MBE can provide. “It really helps us out that we’re not a seasonal business, and that we are open steadily Monday through Friday and Saturday, and we’re here all year long.”

While the business sees some smaller season in October, the package boom come Christmas time is more than enough business to stay afloat. “I think the community really appreciates what we do.”

-Sam Taylor

I think the community really appreciates what we do.

Sam Taylor behind the counter at Mammoth Business Essentials.

Our motto: “Lone Pine: We Prefer Not To.”

Our tourism business district tax: stable at 0%.

Congratulations, Mammoth Business Essentials. I’ll be picking up a package soon.
Team to stamp the Community Rec Center’s ice rink

Press Release

Team to stamp the Community Rec Center’s ice rink

KINGS STAKE CLAIM

Mammoth Lakes, CA (MLT) – The Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT), and Mammoth Lakes Recreation teamed up with the LA Kings to launch “LA Kings Ice at Mammoth Lakes” - the Town’s first indoor Olympic-sized ice rink.

The forthcoming “LA Kings Ice at Mammoth Lakes” will operate within a newly constructed, multi-use Community Recreation Center (CRC), aka The MUIC, that is set to open to the public in 2023.

Additionally, as part of the agreement, MLT will continue its long-standing relationship as an official partner of the LA Kings.

“We could not be prouder ... to bring LA Kings Ice to Mammoth Lakes,” said LA Kings President and NHL Hall-of-Famer Luc Robitaille. “We know this project will have a lasting and positive effect on the Mammoth Lakes community, and we are delighted to help elevate the quality and experience of ice sports for its residents and visitors, many of whom are also avid hockey fans and players.”

The CRC, located at Mammoth School, will be a 40,000 square foot Sprung Performance Arena enclosing the brand new “LA Kings Ice at Mammoth Lakes.” The CRC will be open and available to the public year-round, with the new ice rink operating annually each winter season between the months of October and April. During the summer months, the Olympic-sized rink will be transformed into a fully programmable, multi-use RecZone, which will serve as the hub for the expanding Parks and Recreation Department’s summer camps and programs.

To maximize operational efficiencies and to assist in the development of year-round programming, American Sports Entertainment Company, LLC (ASEC), one of the largest independent owner/operators of ice rink facilities in the United States, has been contracted by the Town to deliver year-round technical and operational consulting services for the facility.

“This partnership with the LA Kings, an iconic NHL franchise, represents an incredible opportunity for the community of Mammoth Lakes,” said Dan Holler, Town Manager. “The powerful collaboration with Mammoth Lakes Tourism and Mammoth Lakes Recreation to bring the LA Kings to Mammoth Lakes reflects the Town’s commitment to deliver world-class recreation amenities for both residents and visitors by strategically partnering with the best of the best.”

Under the agreement, the LA Kings brand will be prominently featured at “LA Kings Ice at Mammoth Lakes” including distinctive signage throughout the facility and in center-ice. The LA Kings will also advance its youth hockey development initiatives via LA Kings Youth Hockey camps hosted at the rink as well as unique on-site programming designed to promote hockey and increase accessibility of the sport among local youth.

As an official partner of the LA Kings, MLT will have prominent brand exposure during March and April LA Kings home games at Crypto.com Arena, and across the team’s digital channels. The partnership also provides a significant opportunity for MLT to introduce visitors from Los Angeles and around the world to Mammoth, along with some of its best sights and attractions.

This partnership further promotes MLT’s “The Real Unreal” marketing campaign and reinforces the Town’s position as a world-class travel destination.

“We are honored to be a part of the team helping to bring LA Kings Ice at Mammoth Lakes to life,” said Scott Emery, Vice President, AEG Global Partnerships. “This project and partnership has been many years in the packaging and will be an invaluable resource for so many. We look forward to the positive impact it will have on the community for years to come.”

Notice of Vacancy

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Inyo County Board of Supervisors is accepting applications to fill one vacancy on the Eastern Sierra Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council ending December 31, 2023.

The County is specifically recruiting for a family caregiver from Inyo or Mono counties. A family caregiver is defined as either (1) an adult family member, or other individual, who is an informal provider of in-home and community care to an older individual with Alzheimer’s disease or a related disorder with neurologic and organic brain dysfunction; or (2) a grandparent or step-grandparent of a child, or a relative of a child by blood, marriage, or adoption who is 55 years of age or older and who lives with the child, is the primary caregiver of the child, and has a legal relationship with the child such legal custody, guardianship or raising the child informally. If you are a family caregiver interested in serving on the Eastern Sierra Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, have interest in the welfare of the region’s seniors, and are not employed by an entity currently in a subcontracting relationship with ESAAA, please submit your request for appointment on or before Wednesday, December 21 at 5:00 p.m. to the Board of Supervisors at P.O. Box N, Independence, CA 93526 or delios@inyocounty.us.

For more information about the Advisory Council, contact the ESAAA Administration at (760) 873-3305.
CBD sues BLM

The Center for Biological Diversity sued the U.S. Bureau of Land Management last Tuesday to protect highly imperiled Amargosa voles from unmanaged recreational use within their federally protected critical habitat.

The voles’ small range is limited to dense brulsh marshes near a popular hot spring in the Mojave Desert outside Tecopa, Calif. “Amargosa voles are on the brink of extinction, but federal officials are looking the other way while people party around the clock in these little animals’ only home,” said Patrick Donnelly, Great Basin director at the Center and a local resident. “Many visitors to this hot spring have an anything-goes mentality, and without thoughtful management their activities threaten the voles’ continued existence.”

Amargosa voles are mouselike mammals, among the most endangered small mammals in the country. Their numbers have fallen as low as a few dozen in recent years, and current estimates are that just a couple hundred remain.

An eight-year monitoring project in the voles’ habitat near the hot springs has revealed unsustainable recreational use. Unauthorized off-road vehicles, unattended campfires, off-leash dogs, unauthorized camping, litter, and a lack of bathroom facilities have led to severe degradation of the animals’ habitat.

The Center for Biological Diversity has already made a request for a lawsuit to prevent degradation of that habitat. The Center is suing as a representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated critical habitat for the vole after protecting it under the federal Act. The Center has also filed a notice of intent to sue the BLM, saying the BLM is violating the Endangered Species Act by failing to adequately manage the activities threatening the vole’s habitat.

Amargosa voles live most of their lives in a very small home range of about one-quarter of an acre. They have been known to “surf” rare flash-flood waters, traveling long distances between suitable habitat patches. The marsh created by the hot spring is the vole’s stronghold: at times it has held as much as 90% of the global population of the rare creature. Recent studies have concluded that the subspecies has an 85% chance of going extinct by 2026 if nothing is done to protect its habitat.

“If people are going to keep descending on the Amargosa vole’s home, the BLM must adequately manage the activities there, including providing bathroom facilities,” said Donnelly. “Federal and state agencies have spent millions of dollars trying to save this special creature, and we commend them for the progress they’ve made. But it will all be for nothing, and the voles will vanish, if they don’t get use of the hot spring under control.”

Banner for Bridgeport

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Mono County Board of Supervisors voted to approve a bid package and authorize the Public Works Department to advertise bids for a project long-anticipated by Bridgeport locals: the creation of a banner structure over US Highway 395 in Bridgeport.

Per the county’s staff report, the project has been bolstered by “more than a decade’s worth of community discussion and advocacy.”

Total available project funds are $197,000. Funds come from CalTrans’s Clean California Program, which funds, among other things, “local beautification.” A bidder has yet to be selected for contracting.

All Things Wildfire

Last Tuesday at the Mono County Board of Supervisors meeting, Wendily Grasseschi was named Mono County’s Wildlife Mitigation Coordinator under the county’s Office of Emergency Management.

The position – which pays Grasseschi $6,000/month until February, 2024 – is funded by a California Fire Safe Council’s Cal Fire County Coordinator Grant, which was awarded in 2022.

Per a Dec. 7th Mono County press release published by Sierra Wave, as Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator Grasseschi’s responsibilities include “organizing, coordinating, and assessing county wide activities related to wildfire mitigation.”

Grasseschi will also “complete a comprehensive review of existing mitigation groups and their project, and identify opportunities to improve partnerships, communication, and cooperation.”

Grasseschi – who defines herself as having a background in fire, explaining fire, and being worried about wildfires – has much fire and leadership experience. She’s worked as a firefighter, a crew supervisor, and news editor for the Mammoth Times.

During the meeting, Director of Emergency Management Chris Mokracek said the community are difficult to quantify. Residents and visitors are asked to report their positive at-home COVID-19 tests via the CDPH portal: https://primary.health.ca.gov/ to more accurately track local COVID-19 infection.

It remains safe to receive COVID-19 vaccines and flu shots at the same time. For more information, questions, or concerns, please call Mono County Public Health at (760) 924-1830 or follow up with your pediatrician or medical provider.

Press Release

MONO COUNTY, Calif. (DECEMBER 06, 2022) – Mono County has recently seen a surge in both Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and Influenza (Flu) disease activity. In addition, Mono County Public Health is anticipating an additional increase in COVID-19 infections heading into the holiday season.

As a result, Mono County Public Health is urging residents and visitors to take precautions and seek appropriate care when ill.

“The winter viruses have arrived earlier than expected, and are trending to remain active longer than usual this winter season,” said Dr. Caryn Slack, MD, MPH, Mono County Health Officer. “A triple threat of Flu, COVID-19, and RSV has descended upon Mono County, and simple proactive measures can help prevent and reduce local spread.”

Craig Burrows, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Mammoth Hospital adds, “Masking is a very simple intervention to prevent the spread of other viral illnesses besides COVID-19. If you are symptomatic with congestion, sneezing and coughing, and have to go out in public, please wear a mask to protect other people you come in contact with.”
From Holly Acree at High Country Lumber:

High Country Lumber recently hosted a Loyal Customer Traeger & Whistle Pig Thanksgiving Raffle. And the winner was none other than Mr. Mitch Ellis. Mitch is the proud new owner of a Traeger Ironwood 650 and all the fixings including Traeger’s “Whistle Pig Whiskey” Barrel Blend Pellets, “Whistle Pig Whiskey” Dust Seasoning, “Whistle Pig Whiskey” Hog BBQ Sauce, and it wouldn’t have been complete without a bottle of Whistle Pig Whiskey!

Not sure if you have tried any of Traeger’s Whistle Pig products, but they are pretty tasty additions to the smoker and all available at High Country Lumber – ACE (excluding the bottle of whiskey).
HOLIDAY PARADE IN BISHOP

By Gayla Wolf

There's only one person we know who could have captured Bishop's annual Christmas Parade last Saturday evening in lousy, dark, gray December light and make it work - local photographer Gayla Wolf.
BINGO NIGHT

DECEMBER 13
at The Warming Hut
343 Old Mammoth Rd
DOORS open at 5:30 pm
First BINGO game at 6:00 pm
raffle prizes & winnings galore!

This month’s proceeds go to: Mammoth Unified School District Music Programs, under the direction of Mike Hammers, will support the cost of new music, instruments, supplies, and travel expenses for our local student musicians. instagram.com/mammothlakesmusic/
givebutter.com/december-bingo

Not Your Grandma’s

Serving the Eastern Sierra
Two convenient locations to better serve you
2784 Highway 158, June Lake
323 Main St. Bridgeport
We look forward to seeing you soon!

Lynn Morton, Broker Realtor
Lydia March, Realtor
Robin Shelton, Realtor
760.648.7304
www.SierraCrestRealEstate.com
DRE License #01857043

PARADE
continued from page 8
**Calendar of Events**

**BARS & MUSIC**

**Happy Hour**/ The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill  
Pursuit of Happiness Hour Daily  
3-8 p.m. and extended Pursuit of happiness hour Mon & Thur. 3-8 p.m.  
More info: see ad p. 2

**Austria Hof Happy Hour**  
4-6 p.m. Sun-Thurs./4-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

**Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour**  
every day from 4-7 p.m.  
Monday happy hour all day.  
And Taco Tuesdays are back!  
More info: see ad p. 7

**Clocktower Cellar Happy Hour**  
4-6 p.m. daily.  
$6 dollar menu items,  
drink specials.  
More info: see ad p. 15

**Petra’s happy hour until 6 p.m.**

**Robert’s Happy Hour**  
2-5 p.m. daily.

**The Mogul happy hour**  
5:30-6:30 p.m.  
in the bar with food and drink specials.

**Lakanuki happy hour**  
3-6 p.m. daily.

**Mammoth Tavern Happy hour**  
4-5:30 p.m.  
1/2 off drinks and appetizer specials.

**Distant Brewing happy hour**  
3-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday

**December 9-10/ Beaux Gris Gris & Apocalpse**  
plays.  
Liberate Sports Bar & Grill at 5:30 p.m.  
Hard hitting modern blues/rock.  
Don’t miss this one! More info: see ad p. 2

**Saturday, December 10/**  
Skii Season Kickoff Concert  
at the T-Bar Social Club in June Lake.  
Featured: Acoustic grunge.  
Time: 8:30 p.m.  
Info: 760.648.7774

**TOWN STUFF**

**December 9-10/**  
Holiday Tunes and Dvorak’s mighty “New World” Symphony  
performed by the E. Sierra Chamber Orchestra and Community Chorus.  
Fri: 7 p.m. at Mammoth’s St. Joseph’s Church.  
Sat: 7 p.m. at Cerro Coso College in Bishop.  
Free.

**Friday, December 9/**  
Photos with Santa Claus at  
High Country Lumber in Bishop from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
More info: see ad p. 3

**Saturday, December 10/**  
June Mountain opening day!  
Auditions for Little Shop of Horrors  
Call or text Lynn at 760-920-8756 to schedule a time or check  

**Sunday, December 11**  
**Tannenhaum 10K Ski Classic**  
@ Tamarack Cross Country Ski Center.  
Starts 10 a.m.  
Info/register online at  
mammothmountain.com.

**Monday, December 12/**  
Bishop City Council Meeting at 6 p.m.  
at the City Council Chambers,  
301 West Line Street.  
Or attend online via cityofbishop.com

**Monday, December 12/**  
**Elevate: Mammoth Hospital Open House**  
at 121 College Pkwy from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Come for free food,  
guided meditations, yoga, Tai Chi,  
and more! For more info,  
and a full schedule of events, see ad p. 5

**Wednesday, December 14/**  
**Bishop Chamber of Commerce Full Board Meeting** at 10:30 a.m. at Alta One Federal Credit Union on Main Street in Bishop.

**December 14-15/**  
**Chamber Music Unbound’s Music School** –  
Upcoming Holiday Concerts! Wed. at 6 p.m. at  
Mammoth’s St. Joseph’s Church:  
Mammoth and Lee Vining Elementary Strings, and the Eastern Sierra Honors Strings.  
And on Thurs., Dec. 15th at 6 p.m. at Cerro Coso College in Bishop: the Bishop Elementary Strings and Eastern Sierra Honors Strings.

**Mono Arts Council Art and Wine**  
two-day event featuring Tray  
Mosaics with Kristi Day.  
Time: 5:30 p.m.  
Class cost: $145.  
Includes all materials and refreshments to inspire creativity.

**Thursday, December 15/**  
**Holiday Mixer @ High Country Lumber** in Bishop.  
Time: 5-7 p.m.  
Refreshments, raffle and more.  
All Chamber members and guests  
welcome.  
Info: 760.873.8405

**Saturday, December 17/**  
**Night of Lights**  
at Canyon Lodge @ 5 p.m.  
A spectacular torchlight parade  
featuring Tray Mosaics with Kristi Day.  
Time: 5:30 p.m.  
Class cost: $145.  
Includes all materials and refreshments to inspire creativity.

**Ongoing**

**The Angel Giving Tree** ensures that low-income children receive gifts for Christmas.  
Select a child’s name at  
Vons from the Tree, then bring your gifts to the Mammoth Fun Shop by December 14 at 5 p.m.  
Mammoth Fun Shop is offering a 30% discount for any gifts purchased for children on the tree and left there for distribution.  
Info/help: Call Carolyn at 760.914.0245.  
40 kids still need gifts.

**MHS Xmas Tree Lot** @ Vons Mall Parking Lot.  
M-F 3:30-7 p.m. Wknd:  
11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
R ecent approvals that will allow mining companies to start exploring for gold at three sites in the Bodie Hills have injected some urgency into long-running efforts to preserve the wild, untrammeled nature of the public lands in the hills.

"It's hard to fight the 1872 Mining Act," noted Jora Fogg, Friends of the Inyo policy director, during a recent Zoom presentation on the threats to the Bodie Hills. All three planned exploratory mining operations were approved based on valid mining claims filed under the 1872-law, which essentially gives miners and mining companies the right to at least explore for gold and precious metals on mining claims on public land.

There are some reasons for optimism that the "unique" hills, which include mostly roadless wild lands that contain significant wildlife, archeological, and historical resources, could finally see long-term protections from mining and other potential environmental threats. The Bureau of Land Management's recently announced goal to "protect" 30% of the nation's lands and waters by 2030 (called the 30x30 Conservation Initiative) and a similar pledge from the state of California should give local preservation efforts for the hills a boost, Fogg said. The state is also budgeting about $1.6 billion to the 30x30 preservation effort in California, which backs up promises and rhetoric with some cold, hard cash.

The key to reaching the 30x30 goal will likely be the Bureau of Land Management, which oversees 247 million acres of public land, most of which is located in the West. The US Forest Service is the second largest federal landowner in the west.

Both agencies will be involved in any conservation or mining effort in the Bodie Hills.

The Bodie Hills stretch from the Nevada border on the east to just north of Mono Lake and then run north past Bridgeport. In all, the Bodie Hills area is roughly 2,000 buildings thanks to rich mineral deposits. The Bodie Hills are desolate and the land and water owner, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, has become more involved in public land discussions in the area, which is a positive development, Fogg noted.

The areas are home to the Bi-State Sage Grouse, a distinct species of sage grouse only found in the California/Nevada border area. Although it is not listed as a federally threatened species, numerous management plans are in place to help the species survive, "it is in decline all over," Fogg said. (Including in Long Valley, where the bird is in the middle of a battle over irrigation water between Mono County, environmental groups, and the land and water owner, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.)

The remote Bodie Hills are "highly mineralized," noted Fogg, rather dryly.

Indeed. Bodie boomed in the late 1800s with more than 10,000 residents and nearly 140,000 acres, is managed by the BLM. The hills, as a geographic entity, keep going across the state line into Nevada, prompting a frantic effort to take hold of the town, and it is now an historic site. It was the town in Nevada, effecting claims in the Bodie Hills, along with numerous livestock grazing permits, it was noted.

The three exploratory mining projects, which involve drilling for "core" samples to locate gold, were all approved with a "categorical exclusion," which requires the lowest level of scrutiny under the terms of the National Environmental Policy Act, Fogg said. Any plans to actually start mining would typically require a full Environmental Impact Statement.

The Bald Peak project, located south of Aurora, involves five drill sites, and drilling has been completed on three sites.

The Sawtooth Project, located near the Aurora cemetery, is permitted for 16 drill pads approximately 90x90 feet. About 700-900 mature pinyon trees will be cut down to accommodate the work.

The Bald Peak project will allow 11 drill sites, with the potential for three bore holes drilled from each site. Equipment and personnel will be ferried to the sites by helicopter.

Most of the Bodie Hills are designated as BLM Wilderness Study Areas. But Fogg said current efforts are moving away from a Wilderness designation, which takes an act of Congress, toward some form of "administrative protection." The goal would be to withdraw the lands from mineral exploration or mining for at least 20 years to provide enough time to gather data and support for a more permanent ban on mining.

The Bodie Hills have a number of outstanding features that should help propel the effort to protect and preserve the area.

The hills are home to the Bi-State Sage Grouse, a distinct species of sage grouse only found in the California/Nevada border area. Although it is not listed as a federally threatened species, numerous management plans are in place to help the species survive, "it is in decline all over," Fogg said. (Including in Long Valley, where the bird is in the middle of a battle over irrigation water between Mono County, environmental groups, and the land and water owner, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.)

The remote Bodie Hills are a stronghold for the species," Fogg said.

The area is also a significant wildlife corridor that connects the Sierra Nevada to the Great Basin. It is a migration route for two mule deer herds that move from summer to winter ranges. Black bear, coyotes, the unique pygmy rabbit, and the whole assortment of Eastern Sierra/Great Basin wildlife are also present in the hills.

The historic sites in the hills go beyond just the town of Bodie and the abandoned mines around the town. Remnants of the Bodie-Bento Railroad will still exist, as do other roads, trails and buildings from the area's mining era.

The area is also rich with archeological sites dating from prehistoric indigenous petroglyphs and cultural sites. The Bridgeport Indian Colony has become more involved" in public land discussions in the area, which is a positive development, Fogg noted.

The hills also were a prime area for sheep grazing and sheep drives, dating from the 1860s to the 1960s. The Basque sheepherders tending the herds left their mark with distinctive petroglyphs carved into trees.

Taken together, the hills contain one of the highest concentrations of archeological resources in the Great Basin, Fogg said.

The Bodie Hills are mostly roadless, but four or five winding, 4WD drives traverse the landscape, which contributes to bringing visitors, and their money, to north Mono County, Fogg said. In addition, one of the key elements in the 30x30 initiative is protecting public land that can be accessed by the public, she added. Thus the roads could help the hills gain traction for consideration for the program.

Fogg concluded that, like most public land tussles, the effort to protect the Bodie Hills remains a long-running battle. For more, see www.bodiehills.org.
Help Wanted

Mammoth Hospital is Now Hiring!
Visit www.mammothhospital.org and apply, please visit our website at https://mammoth-hospital.breezyhr.com/

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

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760-924-0523 760-873-8599

Mammoth Gear Exchange in Bishop and Alpine Approach in Mammoth seek team members, no experience required. Can use the Gear Exchange ski park or Alpine Approach to train. Interested send resumes to: dave@mammothgear.com

HOA General Manager Large HOA & Rental Company seeking Full Time General Manager to oversee all operations with a seasoned staff in place. Looking for someone with HOA experience. The ideal candidate should be adaptive in team building, hotel operations, HR, budgeting, etc. Please send resumes to POB 658 or info@huntheroahservices.com

Vacasa is hiring for the following positions:
- Front Desk Clerk
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Mammoth Ski Area is hiring Restau-
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- Good Earth Yogurt

Mammoth is hiring Restau-
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- Sweetwater Plumbing Inc.
- Double Eagle Resort & Spa
- Good Earth Yogurt

Greenhouse Supervisor is looking for a business tenant – Duplex in Mammoth, CA. Must have a valid drivers license, great pay and perks. Full or part time available, housing! One unit is a self contained 1 bedroom, full bath and private deck. 6 month lease from $2,950 per month + security deposit. Visit www.RentBishop.com to see listing and photos or call 760-872-3188 for showing and pass option available. We are a drama-free environment! Please stop by 826 Lakeview Ave., Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Beautiful and secluded.

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Hiring motivated candidates, experience preferred but not essential, job training will be provided. Must have a valid drivers license. Great pay and perks. Full or part time available, housing! One unit is a self contained 1 bedroom, full bath and private deck. 6 month lease from $2,950 per month + security deposit. Visit www.RentBishop.com to see listing and photos or call 760-872-3188 for showing and pass option available. We are a drama-free environment! Please stop by 826 Lakeview Ave., Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Beautiful and secluded.
Late spring, 1991. Mammoth High School Graduation. Andrew Jones throws his cap into the air. Maybe he steps back and puts some English on it – jumpshot, from deep. Or, he lines his fingers along the wrinkled fabric and sends the cap like a lateral into the hands of a back-cutting wide receiver. Maybe he didn’t throw his cap at all.

“I didn’t ask, so I don’t know. One thing I do know: Jones – the second-year head coach for Mammoth Varsity Boys Basketball – knows a thing or two about athletics.

He’s been coaching sports at Mammoth for the past 14 years. 4 years of football, then 10 years of basketball. For 5 of those basketball years, Jones was an assistant varsity coach alongside Robbie Presson. For three of them, he was the Varsity Girls coach. He’s back with the boys. And his assistant? Robbie Presson.

“Robbie has been developing the program for a long time,” said Jones. “We work hard together to try and put together a program that is consistent year in and year out.”

“They’re on the right path.

This year, 26 Mammoth boys are playing basketball. “That’s the most I can remember in a long, long time,” said Jones. He’s got a full varsity squad of 12 players, and JVs have 14.

With the numbers right, Jones’s focus is developing a strong base in his players. “We’re really still trying to catch up from COVID,” said Jones. “This year’s juniors – it’s really their second year because they had to miss their freshman year, which is that development stage.”

Coach Jones’s solution: fill the schedule with games. Plus, summer training.

“I took 16 guys to a summer camp in Utah where we played 10 games,” Jones said. Nothing beats in-game experience when it comes to building up that base.

Which the Huskies will need as they head into their second year in the High Desert League, where bigger schools like Bishop and Rosamond are armed with a draft pool of a couple hundred more students. A lesson they learned the hard way in the first round of the playoffs last year when the 16-8 Huskies lost to Highland High School out of Bakersfield. 2,500 enrollment to Mammoth’s 350.

Coach Jones is optimistic about this season. “Last year, we started three sophomores and two seniors, and those sophomores developed quite a bit,” Jones said. This year, the Huskies have one senior and four juniors in their starting five: Sam Boyer-Tolley (Sr.), Tyler Jones (Coach’s son, Jr.), Matt Petroni (Jr.), Forrest Daniels (Jr.), and Matt Toomey (Jr.).

The team plays an up-tempo, run-and-gun brand of ball. “We like to get out in transition,” said Jones. “We try not to run set plays. We want to let the kids just play basketball.”

That’s been their big motto lately. “Just play basketball.” “Play within yourself, play as a team, and let the chips fall where they may,” said Jones. “And I think good things will happen.”

The team is 3-0 headed into league play next week. Last Tuesday, they had a big win at home over Trona (61-18). Tyler Jones and Matt Petroni lead the team in points per game at 12.5, with Sam Boyer-Tolley clocking in at 10. Toomey’s got 10 rebounds per game.

The Huskies will play at home next Tuesday (12/13) against Kern Valley at 7 p.m.
MHS VARSITY GIRLS HOOPS

Led by Head Coach Charlene Andrews, Mammoth’s Varsity Girls team has had two close games against Trona this season. Nov. 30, the Huskies lost 31-28 at Trona.

On Tuesday, the Girls had their chance at redemption, facing Trona again at home.

The first half was electric. The Huskies couldn’t miss, and ended the half up by double digits.

Then, in the second half, the Huskies lost their charge. Trona made some layups. Then, they made some more. Mammoth battled hard, but the shots weren’t falling, and neither were the free throws.

The buzzer blew.

Trona: 35.
Mammoth: 32.

The team tips off at home against Kern Valley on December 13th.

Jr. Nicole Smyth shoots from deep.

Jr. Jenna Lynch takes the rock to the hoop.

Sr. Ashley Borunda D’s up against Trona.

DECEMBER 17, 2022
CANYON LODGE • 5PM

Celebrate the magic of the holidays with a spectacular torchlight parade and fireworks show at Canyon Lodge. There’s something the whole family will enjoy at this free event with live music, kids activities, and a fireworks finale that lights up the Sierra sky.

For more info on the event schedule, public transportation options and more visit: MAMMOTHMOUNTAIN.COM

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TRASH GETS RAISE
Increased transfer station costs lead to higher waste rates
By Pike

Oh, is that you in the red hat?” Mike Smith asks on the phone. I’m standing behind the new transfer station. The dumpsters are back here, too. “CARDBOARD,” “GLASS,” “TRASH,” et cetera.

“I’ll be there in a second,” Smith says. He’s the District Manager of Mammoth Disposal. Which means the new transfer station being built adjacent to the old one – off 59 Old Commerce Dr. in Mammoth Lakes – falls under his jurisdiction.

The transfer station was set to cost $5 million to complete.

Then, a mix of inflation and supply chain issues courtesy of a global pandemic upped the cost.

By $1.8 million.

Smith gives me an example of the chaos: “The doors we ordered, for example – the company said, ‘That’ll be $23,000 more,’ right before they were about to ship.”

What’s Smith supposed to do? Not have doors on the transfer station?

This increase in cost across the board – it’s why Smith asked Mammoth’s Town Council for a 4% rate increase on waste management over the course of the next few years. Which Council formally approved last Wednesday.

The 4% is “for everything,” Smith says. “It’s tires, parts, trucks, chassis...” He mentions the labor pool. The town-wide shortage. Even the mountain is feeling it.

Smith tells me his labor costs have risen 12.2%. Fuel’s gone up nearly 60% since the initial cost projection of the project. “No one likes asking for money. It sucks,” says Smith. “The easiest explanation: just look at fuel.” The great equalizer. From consumer to contractor, California’s high fuel prices are being felt by everybody with a car and a place they need to go.

“Nothing’s going to go backwards,” Smith says. Companies that have raised their prices 20% – why would they lower them? He thinks the high prices are here to stay.

As a consumer, here’s what to expect for the new transfer station. Come springtime – because the task is impossible to get done in the winter, says Smith – the location of the buyback center and the district’s maintenance shop will switch places. All recycling will be a few hundred feet up the road from where it is now. “I’m really excited,” says Smith. “Traffic flow will be easy. There will be better access, easier access, and bigger programs for the town, as well as surrounding areas if they wish to be included.”

The opening of the transfer station comes on the eve of the Benton Crossing Landfill closure on December 31. The LA Department of Water and Power didn’t want to renew the lease out of fear of potential aquifer contamination from the landfill. Now, Mammoth and surrounding communities will truck waste to the Russell Pass landfill in Nevada.

Which is a little over two hours away. Because of California’s strict permitting process for the construction of new landfills (the last waste landfill to be built, per Town Attorney Andrew Morris, took a decade to get permitted), it’s easier to truck waste to Nevada than to initiate the construction of a new landfill altogether. As more landfills close in California, this is becoming common practice, Morris explained.

The transfer station is expected to open either on or before December 23rd.

EASTERN SIERRA
GREEN GIFT-GIVING
Guide

‘Tis the Season for Sustainable Gift Giving!

Shouldn’t gift giving be more meaningful than big box “Black Friday” sales? Check out over 30 local Eastern Sierra Green Businesses to find the right gift for you or a friend, fuel the local economy, and feel better about your environmental impact.

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