

the sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra



Santa and the missus @ last Saturday's Laws Railroad Express. For more event photos by Gayla Wolf, see pages 14 & 15.

Saturday, December 21, 2024

FREE

Vol. 22, No. 51

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

Lunch tours Limelight - the future is near
By Lunch

Every time I drive up Main Street these days, I can't help but think these Aspen folks know what they're doing. Because the new Limelight Hotel simply dominates the frame. It has already become the entry marker to town - the 'there' there - overtaking Elizabeth Tenney's town entrance signs and the police department (leave it to Mammoth to showcase a police department as the first building you see on your entrance to town) as the true signal that one has arrived in Mammoth.

This past Tuesday, I had a chance to tour the hotel on-site

with Limelight Residences Sales Director Nikki Elmore and Project Senior Superintendent Vince Pickles of the PENTA Building Group (Las Vegas).

While the hotel won't open until next December, ten of the fifteen exclusive private residences (one top floor, five-bedroom, 3,500-square foot unit selling for \$6.55 million) have already sold.

The first five residences were offered in March, 2024. And sold out in eight minutes.

Overall, the first ten buyers bought on the strength of the brand - they bought on faith.

They've seen renderings, but not actuals.

Lunch saw actuals.

These folks have good instincts. And, of course, a few bucks to spare.

One five-bedroom, three four-bedrooms and one three-bedroom remain.

On the service elevator, I asked Pickles how many workers he had on the job.

250.

Sheet: And what does a project like this cost to build?

Pickles: We're at about 200 to date.

That's \$200 million.

see THE LIGHT, pg. 16

NO CASH, NO PROBLEM

Greenbacks no longer spend at MMSA

By Fisher

Once upon a time, hitting the slopes meant heading to the ticket window, digging through your wallet for a few crumpled bills in exchange for a paper ticket. Now, lift tickets are stored on your phone, rental shops operate through apps, and cash is becoming increasingly obsolete.

Case in point.

This summer, Mammoth and June Mountain Ski Areas decided to only accept digital payments, phasing out cash as a payment method, effective July 8. This policy affects not only lift ticket purchases but also extends to all businesses operated by or affiliated with the resorts, including restaurants and rental shops.

Though Mammoth Mountain frames the transition as a way to increase security and streamline transactions, it has sparked frustration among employees, especially those working in food and beverage.

I spoke to four employees at Mammoth Mountain's various restaurants. They asked to remain anonymous, for fear of jeopardizing their jobs, but they said the transition to cashless payments slows down their work and reduces their cash-on tips.

According to these employees, the mountain's point-of-sale (POS) system for credit cards, designed by Accesso Technology Group, is significantly buggier than the cash

alternative. Rather than speeding up transactions, they say it slows them down.

The system is marketed as a one-size-fits-all solution, "from the initial ticket purchase online, to ensuring guests get the right gear before they hit the hill, to charging meals to an account while they unwind in the lodge," Accesso's website touts.

Restaurant employees, however, say it's clear the system was initially designed for equipment sales and rentals. As a result, they said the system glitches during common operations, is missing products in the inventory list, and even "breaks down" when servers try to split a bill or divide it across three or more cards.

The system is also internet-dependent, which means it's vulnerable to delays or failures in web-based infrastructure.

"I just know there's going to be a day when a storm comes and the system won't work, and people can't leave [the restaurant] until it's back on," one server said.

There's also a tipping issue for employees: while cash tips are not entirely a thing of the past (the mountain still permits them), with fewer people carrying cash, tips are more likely to be given via card.

Servers tend to prefer cash tips for a couple reasons:

First, cash tips are more immediately accessible, meaning servers don't have to wait until

more CASH, pg. 7



Just your run-of-the-mill view from the penthouse master bedroom ...

Let them eat Fruitcake

SoLi chic

Russian roulette

Where 21 is a bust

Gardner variety

p. 21/

p. 8/

p. 23/

p. 2/

p. 6/

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WHERE 21 IS A BUST

Unfortunately, some stories send you right down the rabbit hole. Like last week's Mammoth PEDC (Planning and Economic Development Commission) story regarding Outbound Mammoth's (formerly Sierra Nevada Resort) effort to sell off five fourplex "villas" within its "hotel" at market rate.

The vote was 2-1 in favor. Unfortunately for Outbound Mammoth, when it comes to specific plan amendments, state code says you've got to count to three. So the vote was invalid and the matter must be rescheduled.

Commissioner Cynthia Fleming is conflicted out (she is lined up to sell the units if the amendment passes). Commissioner Lana Grand was absent at the hearing. She'll represent the deciding vote at the next one.

Dissenting PEDC Commissioner Greg Eckert expressed concern at the Dec. 11 hearing that selling off the twenty units (built in the middle of the 6.09-acre development) risks forever piecemealing/hamstringing the property. It threatens a more cohesive, more integrated vision.

Further, he recalled post-meeting (as best as any of us old folks can recall these days) that the development was supposed to be "interim" at the meeting where the villas were approved.

Of course, he couldn't remember when that was was. "Sometime after 2021" was his best guess.

So I went fishing on the town website and found the recording of the meeting from February, 2022. And proceeded to watch it.

It was like sitting through a video of one's own root canal.

Indeed, the staff report stated, "The proposed interim development standards accommodate a less intensive expansion and upgrade of the hotel, restaurant and public space than is envisioned by the Clearwater Specific Plan/Old Mammoth Place entitlements while still allowing for the future development of the Old Mammoth Place project consistent with the Clearwater Specific Plan's long-term vision and goal."

Eckert, in his comments that day, said he was "not real fired up" on the proposed development. Though architectural plans for the modular buildings were "dolled up as best they can," Eckert said the whole thing reminded him of the temporary classrooms at the high school (which sat 'temporarily' for decade upon decade).

the
sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra

"These are people of the land. The common clay of the New West. You know ... morons."

-The Waco Kid
from Blazing Saddles

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Again, he used the term "interim development."

Commissioner Paul Chang expressed some doubt about the parking plan, given the anticipated 15% reduction in parking.

But sure enough, the applicant (which had 16 consultants on the Zoom call) said it could not afford delay. Delaying the vote would mean another 7-8 months of staring at forlorn and dilapidated Frosty's Miniature Golf - which unfortunately was forlorn and dilapidated the day it opened.

Talk about a passive-aggressive threat!

Attorney Mark Carney, speaking for the developer, waxed philosophic about the "devastating consequences" of not moving forward.

*Wink, nudge, cough ... bullshit. Oldest trick in the book.

PEDC Chair Michael Vanderhurst, a self-described "fan of the project" (Is there a project he's not a fan of?) suggested getting the vote done and then having staff and the developer hash out the pesky details later.

Now here's where it gets fun.

Then-Community Development Director Sandra Moberly specifically interjected to say a 2-1 vote would not constitute approval (again, there were only three available commissioners that day). Note who was at the meeting and how many people heard that.

more LUNCH, pg. 4



253 Snowcreek - \$579,000

This cozy 1-bedroom, 1-bath corner retreat provides a perfect escape. It features a re-modeled kitchen & bath with quartz counter-tops, plus a bunk area for extra sleeping space.

CONDO
BEDS: 1
BATHS: 1
SQ FT: 852



1105 Pyramid Peak Dr - \$1,049,000

This beautiful single-story, two-bedroom home offers a spacious floor plan, a gourmet kitchen, stunning views of the Sherwin Mountains and is one of the biggest two bedrooms in Mammoth!

TOWNHOUSE
BEDS: 2
BATHS: 2.5
SQ FT: 1867



Lot #25, Swall Meadows - \$220,000

Nestled in picturesque Swall Meadows, this 2-acre equestrian lot offers breathtaking mountain and valley views. Don't miss building your dream home in this amazing community!

LOT/LAND
ACRES: 2.00



1163 Pyramid Peak Dr - \$1,469,000

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TOWNHOUSE
BEDS: 3
BATHS: 3.5
SQ FT: 2,059



1590 Clear Creek Rd - \$1,675,000

New construction! Almost sold out! Located in the serene **CreekHouse** development this 3 bed/flex room/3.5 bath Sequoia Plan 9 boasts a rustic-modern interior and two-car garage.

TOWNHOUSE
BEDS: 3/Flex
BATHS: 3.5
SQ FT: 2,152



758 Fairway Circle - \$1,795,000

This spacious townhome, bordering Forest Service land, offers stunning views of the Sherwin Mountains. Relax on the upper or lower deck and enjoy the breathtaking scenery.

CONDO
BEDS: 3
BATHS: 3.5
SQ FT: 2375



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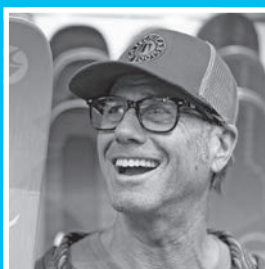
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3043 MAIN ST | MAMMOTH LAKES

DAVID MARK HANDLEY

1954-2024

Dave was born on September 8, 1954 in Kansas City, Missouri to James Mark and Betty (Wales) Handley, while his father was attending medical school at the University of Kansas.

His family moved to Colorado in 1960 and then to Glendale, Calif. in 1962 and then onto Santa Maria in 1965. He graduated from Ernest Righetti High School in Santa Maria in 1972.

He started calling the Eastern Sierra home when he was 19. He spent most of his working years working as a metal fabricator for Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

In 1990 he married Elizabeth (Beth) Marten. They lived in Mammoth Lakes and raised daughters there. He had a deep love of the mountains and driving down that random dirt road, just to see where it would go. Upon retirement he moved to Bishop.

He passed away November 9, 2024 at Renown Hospital in Reno. He is preceded in death by his parents and stepmother. He is survived by his daughters, Stori Plush and Allie Handley, Stori's husband



Jake and their sons, Maverick and Laramie; his brothers, Scott Handley and wife Melanie, Mike and wife Virginia, his sisters, Laurie Handley, and Judy Purdin and husband Kenny, and numerous nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held on April 12, 2025 at Bishop City Park at 12 p.m.

WITH HONORS



Chamber Music Unbound held its winter holiday concerts on Tuesday and Wednesday in Bishop and Mammoth. The Honors Strings (6th through 12th graders) are pictured here performing on Wednesday.

RARE MAIN STREET FRONTAGE!

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Monday - Wednesday
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Thursday
11:15am 1:30pm 4:15pm 7:00pm



Friday
2:00pm 4:45pm 7:30pm

Saturday - Sunday
11:00am 2:00pm 4:45pm 7:30pm

Monday - Wednesday
2:00pm 4:45pm 7:30pm

Thursday
11:00am 2:00pm 4:45pm 7:30pm

*I bring you good news of great joy
that will be for all the people...*

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INYO RETIREMENTS

Press Release

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors joined fellow employees and community members on Tuesday in recognizing Chairperson Matt Kingsley and District Attorney Tom Hardy prior to their respective retirements at the end of the month.

Treasurer-Tax Collector Alisha McMurtrie was honored earlier this month.

The Board presented Hardy with a Certificate of Appreciation for his service to the County, including the last 12 years as D.A. The certificate noted that Hardy has served the County for a total of 19 years, “with honor, integrity, and dedication.”

Hardy served as an Assistant District Attorney from 1997-2002, and then as a Deputy District Attorney IV from 2004-2006. He was appointed to the Office of the District Attorney by the Board of Supervisors in September 2013, subsequently winning election to the post in 2014 and winning re-election twice thereafter.

Among those present to celebrate Hardy was his father and entire staff, who he recognized as being the very best of the best.

Kingsley has served on the Board for the past 12 years, winning election to the office in 2012 and two subsequent elections for a total of three terms. He was presented Tuesday with a Pinnacle Achievement Award – only the second one bestowed since the award’s creation earlier this year – which is intended to honor “select Inyo County employees who exemplify public service in a way

which directly contributes to the success of the organization and furthers its goal of supporting the community.”

Kingsley opted to retire rather than run for a fourth term. His successor, Will Wadelton, won election to the post in November and will be sworn in on January 6.

Hardy’s replacement is expected to be selected by the Board of Supervisors in mid-January following public interviews. The chosen candidate will serve out the remainder of Hardy’s term until the 2028 election.

Another elected official, Treasurer-Tax Collector McMurtrie, is also retiring this month. McMurtrie was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation on December 3 for more than 25 years of service to the residents and visitors of Inyo County, 18 of them as Treasurer-Tax Collector.

She too, was met with best wishes, thank-yous, and accolades.

“I’ve always been so appreciative of your integrity and your openness and your love of our County. It is important that as elected officials, we hold the trust of the people who elect us, and you exemplify being able to do that,” said District 1 Supervisor Trina Orrill, while CAO Nate Greenberg credited McMurtrie’s leadership for helping keep the county in a stable financial position now and in the future.

McMurtrie’s successor will also be appointed in mid-January, and will serve out the remainder of her term until the 2026 election.

MONO RETIREMENT

Reflections on My Time with the Mono County Board of Supervisors

As my time with the Mono County Board of Supervisors comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on the past eight years with immense pride and gratitude. Serving this community has been one of the most fulfilling chapters of my life, and it is an honor I will always cherish.

My career in government, spanning over 30 years, shaped my approach to serving Mono County. My philosophy has always been to make government better and to simply “get it done.” From the start, my goal was to strengthen Mono County’s financial standing, and I am proud of the strides we’ve made. The completion of the Civic Center and the current Jail project stands out as a testament to our commitment to modernizing infrastructure.

One of our most significant accomplishments was establishing the Office of Emergency Management. It was critical to ensuring our community remained safe and well-coordinated during emergencies, including the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, and the ongoing extreme weather events that we experience each winter. Through stability and thoughtful leadership, we avoided much of the turmoil that other counties experienced during the pandemic, and we have established an emergency operations plan that supports residents and visitors during our most severe weather events and the

resulting impacts.

Housing has also been a top priority for the county. While there is still work ahead, I am encouraged by the progress we’ve made in securing a housing coordinator, contributing to local projects, acquiring land, and addressing workforce housing, which is vital for Mono County’s future. Additionally, recent budget allocations to childcare programs reflect our commitment to supporting families and creating a brighter future for the next generation.

I am particularly proud of our efforts to stabilize staff and leadership, foster regional collaboration, and work with the Kootzaduka’a Tribe to advance their quest for federal recognition. These efforts exemplify our shared goal of treating Mono County as one unified community.

Although I had previously served in elected office, when I first came to Mono County with my family, I never imagined I’d one day serve as a Supervisor. I’m thankful for the chance to give back to a place that has given me so much. Public service is ultimately about listening—ensuring every voice is heard and every resident knows where their tax dollars are going.

While my time on the Board is ending, my commitment to Mono County remains unwavering. Thank you for the privilege of serving.

-Bob Gardner

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CASH

continued from page 1

payday to spend a portion of their earnings. In a town as expensive as Mammoth, that's a significant advantage.

Second, although both cash and credit card tips are considered taxable income and are supposed to be reported to the IRS, cash tips often go unreported because they're harder to track, whereas credit card tips are automatically recorded by the system.

"We have signs everywhere saying 'we are now cashless,'" one server said. "I'm not going to go up to a table and specifically tell them they can still tip in cash unless they ask."

And without cash drawers, servers can't make change, which, once again, makes it harder to tip using cash.

I also spoke with an employee who works with children at Mammoth Mountain. While the cashless policy hasn't really affected her job yet, she recalled an instance when a child had been sent to the mountain with cash for lunch but couldn't buy anything because he didn't have a card.

Mammoth Mountain's website suggests parents prepay those purchases

using a Mammoth Mountain gift card. However, this requires advance planning, as the purchase must either be shipped to the consumer or picked up at a ticket window, where a valid photo ID is required at the time of pickup.

Alterra's main competitor, Vail Resorts, transitioned to a cashless system in late 2022, with the pandemic accelerating the change and there's no indication they will switch back.

Across the nation, businesses outside the ski industry are also going cashless. It's a widespread trend, but a controversial one.

While cashless operations are legally permissible — there is no federal statute mandating that a private business must accept currency or coin as payment for goods or services — some cities have moved to ban cashless retail services on a local scale.

The city of Los Angeles is considering such a policy. On March 8, the city's Chief Legislative Analyst, Sharon Tso, submitted a report to the city council on potential cashless retail bans.

Tso cited a significant portion of American residents who don't have bank

I'm not going up to a table and specifically telling them they can still tip in cash unless they ask.

-MMSA server



So much cash, but nowhere to spend it. May as well feed it to some goats ...

accounts. Specifically, 11% of African-American households and 9% of Latino households in the U.S. are unbanked, making it difficult for them to make cashless payments, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

Given these findings, the goal of improving customer experience may not resonate with all customers—particularly those who have historically been excluded from the ski industry. And although they might not be tourists, these are people who are part of the local community and the employee base at Mammoth.

Ultimately, the case for cash raises important questions about accessibility,

employee satisfaction, and inclusion—values that Alterra promotes as part of its corporate philosophy, yet are sometimes overlooked in its rush toward modernization.



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HOLIDAY



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6-7:30pm | 8-9:30pm

*Christmas Day, December 25

4-5:30pm | 6-7:30pm | 8-9:30pm



HOLIDAY PUBLIC SKATE RATES

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KLUSMIRE

A COZY SoLi CHRISTMAS

Christmas is supposed to be happy, right?

Ho, ho, ho. Tidings of great joy. Merry St. Nick. A holly jolly Christmas. Toss in happy Hanukkah and happy holidays and it's a veritable mush-fest of giggles and smiles.

In an effort to put some fun back in the season, a cluster of businesses on the south side of Line Street in Bishop is tossing a bit of a party called "A Cozy Christmas, SoLi Style," on Sunday, Dec. 22 from 3 to 8 p.m.

And what is a "SoLi" you ask. It's a clever little name tag for the downtown businesses in the "SOuth of LIne District. Get it? Good. You deserve some hot chocolate.

The evening will include more than last-minute shopping (ahem, savvy Christmas shoppers always wait to shop until a few days before Christmas to minimize the commercialized frenzy/freak out/stress of the shopping season). There will be "yummy holiday treats and drinks" offered by participating businesses. There will also be deals to reward the savvy procrastinators and the, "we forgot to get Aunt Bertha a present" folks making a final present push. You want to dress up and wear goofy stuff or your pajamas out in public? Here's your chance.

**That or you already attend middle school.*

Maybe more important, according to organizers, is the evening will give folks a chance to roam around and enjoy a casual and, yes, fun night on the town. The Cozy Christmas could be considered a relaxing little community party celebrating making it through one more Christmas/Hanukkah season with a smile.

This is the first year for the Cozy Christmas effort, but if it's deemed a success, it could join the Bishop Christmas lineup.

However, organizers recognize that it's hard to sustain a holiday tradition. At one time, downtown hosted a Night of Lights that was lit with flaming fire barrels on Main Street's sidewalks (yes, children, there was a time when no one batted an eye at the prospect of walking past blazing, open fires on the sidewalk in order to get a deal on socks and books.)

The Chocolate Art Walk let people stroll around to the downtown's many "arty" businesses, which was a pretty loose definition, and be served chocolate. Over time those traditions faded away, despite the presence of fire and chocolate, which remains an unsolved mystery.

The annual Christmas Parade is still going strong, but it leads people north to the city park for the big Christmas Tree Lighting and Santa festivities, leaving the SoLi folks sort of abandoned.

So on Dec. 22, SoLi will be in the spotlight.

Participating businesses so far include:

Spellbinder Books, the erstwhile anchor of the district for 50 years, will be offering a discount on books and gifts to anyone appearing in "silly holiday garb."

The Pupfish Café will provide a musical interlude by hosting a record player party where people can bring in their records to share. Dancing may break out.

Next door, Mammoth Gear Exchange will be open late, and upstairs there will be a chance to roam around in two fairly new businesses. Magick Nature recently moved into a spot in the Root Down Community Hub, which also hosts a number of other businesses. On Sunday, Magick Nature will highlight how to make simmer pots and offer Tarot card readings. Oh, and pajamas, with or without a holiday theme, are encouraged.

Mountain Rambler Brewery, which just celebrated its 10-year anniversary, will also be open for food and drink.

The evening will be a coming out party of sorts for Crearee (formerly Mercado Mexico) which recently reopened after being completely and stylishly remodeled. Next store, the C5 Community Art Studio will be offering kids a free "surprise gift" for visiting. The new, eye-popping Aspen tree mural on the west side of the studio is complete and worth a good long look.

Speaking of looking good, Luxe Salon will be offering steep discounts on select hair care lines

Jon Klusmire of Bishop is taking comfort in his ability to buy gift certificates for the always forgotten Aunt Bertha.



JUNE LAKE BREWING

LIMELIGHT

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Aspen Hospitality and Limelight Mammoth want to extend our deepest gratitude to the Mammoth Lakes community for the warm welcome.

Our company values are aligned with Mammoth in so many ways—and this hotel and residences bring those values to life. We embrace living fully, honoring people and place, taking the long view, and pursuing excellence. Staying true to our values has created an amazing company and culture, and we're proud to be a small part of the wonderful Mammoth Lakes community.

A special thank you to the staff and elected officials of the Town of Mammoth Lakes, who have worked tirelessly to help bring this vision to life.

Additionally, thank you to our valued broker partners who were instrumental in the success of our initial sales efforts. We have 10 of our 15 residences under contract: only four residences and one estate home remain.

OUR VALUED BROKER PARTNERS

Jennifer Barker
Destination Real Estate

Jay Cole
NextHome Mammoth Lakes

DeeDee Cortese
The Agency RE

Teresa Frazier-Clark
Mammoth Realty Group

Allison McDonnell-Page
The Snowcreek Property Company

Tara Peterson
Mammoth Realty Group

Verena Robinson
Mammoth Lakes Resort Realty

We look forward to welcoming the entire community into our living room in late 2025.

For information on the hotel and the Mammoth Lakes Mountain Club, visit LimelightHotels.com/Mammoth. For information on the residences, visit LimelightResidencesMammoth.com or call 760.501.2801.



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FILLING THE ‘CARE GAPS’ FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

By Lauren DeLaunay Miller

Katrina Otten was nearly seven months pregnant with twins when she started struggling to breathe. It was March of 2020. Afraid she might have COVID-19, she went to the hospital near her home in Bishop. There, they found something worse: She was bleeding internally, and the doctors told her that she needed an emergency C-section. Soon, Otten was loaded onto a fixed-wing plane and flown to a larger hospital in Loma Linda, more than 250 miles south. It took her 10 days to recover, but it took her twins even longer.

Two months passed before her newborns were strong enough to go home and join Otten, her husband, and their three older sons in Bishop. Otten and her family were ready to put that scary episode behind them, but in September of 2020, she started suspecting that something wasn’t quite right with Hudson, one of the twins. He wasn’t responding as quickly, and compared to his brother, Grayson, he seemed different.

The Ottens had already traveled back to Loma Linda three times that summer so their specialists could check up on the twins’ development, and at their September appointment, they learned that Hudson had cerebral palsy. By this time, Otten had realized there was a price to pay for living in such a rural area — limited access to specialty care. Knowing that Hudson would continue to need specialized medical attention as he grew, she and her husband, Adam,



Dr. Lindsey Ricci

felt they had only one choice. “We started gathering boxes,” said Otten.

Amidst a nationwide shortage of pediatric subspecialty physicians, families caring for children with special health care needs in rural areas are often forced to travel long distances for care. For those in California’s remote Eastern Sierra, including the Otten family, that means hundreds of miles of driving, often at their own expense. Navigating the complicated network of specialists, insurance companies, and state and county agencies can take a large toll on families.

For some families, the burden is too great to bear, and moving closer to care feels like the only option. For others, the

burden is shared by parents for whom managing the bureaucracy while advocating for their families feels like a full-time job. Physicians and parents agree that on top of bringing more specialists to rural areas, increasing the flow of information between agencies and making travel reimbursements easier to attain would ease some of this burden on families.

Pediatric specialists often earn less than general pediatricians, even though they have undergone three years of additional training, leading fewer future physicians to seek out this line of work. General pediatricians are among the lowest-paid doctors in the country, largely because of low federal reim-

bursement for care. The result is a physician shortage, with children in rural areas suffering disproportionately.

Children with special health care needs, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, include those with physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities, in addition to those with medical conditions like asthma, diabetes and blood disorders. Nearly 1 in 5 American children have a special health care need, and while they are distributed equally in urban and rural areas, children in rural areas face increased barriers to care.

Dr. Lindsey Ricci is currently the only full-time pediatrician at Northern Inyo Hospital in Bishop. Northern Inyo’s other full-time pediatrician is currently on maternity leave, and another pediatrician travels to the area occasionally. She said that while this small team, plus the family medicine providers at the nearby rural health clinic, has typically been able to manage the community’s routine pediatric needs, they do not have the resources to manage the complex requirements of treating children with special needs. But, “because we’re the only pediatric clinic in town, we do see a lot of the medically complex kids,” Ricci said.

Mammoth Hospital, 45 miles north of where Ricci works, employs three full-time pediatricians, but they, too, are in short supply of specialists. Ricci believes that the reason for this mostly comes

more CARE, page 11

MONO COUNTY
CATHOLIC MISSION COMMUNITY

CHRISTMAS

MASS TIMES

December 24th

6:00 PM Carols
7:00 PM Mass

St. Joseph Church
58 Ranch Road
Mammoth Lakes, CA

December 25th

10:00 AM Mass

Our Lady of the Valley
112903 US-395
Coleville, CA

3:30 PM Carols
4:00 PM Mass

Our Savior of the Mountains
85 Mono Lake Ave
Lee Vining, CA 93541

6:00 PM

St. Joseph Church
58 Ranch Road
Mammoth Lakes, CA

“We invite you to
celebrate this joyous
season with us.”

-Father Marcelino

A warm welcome to Father
Marcelino M. Malana, a Roman
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assigned by the Bishop of the
Diocese of Stockton, as the
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CARE

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down to numbers. Inyo and Mono are two of the least densely populated counties in the state, and compounding factors like a lack of reliable public transportation make the distance even more difficult to manage. Northern Inyo does occasionally receive visits from out-of-town specialists who can see patients, and she believes that making these visits more frequent and reliable would help ease the burden of travel on families. Telehealth appointments with specialists can also help reduce families' need to travel, she said.

A change in plans

After Hudson's cerebral palsy diagnosis, the Ottens assumed they'd need to move to a more urban area. But as they considered where to relocate, they also began to discover travel reimbursement options that made staying put more viable. Four years after the birth of their twins, the Otten family still travels to Loma Linda regularly for care, but they've decided to put away the moving boxes — for now.

Otten believes travel reimbursement, whether it's through a local transit agency, insurance companies, or private funding should be easier to get for families like hers. For two years, her family was able to get some travel expenses reimbursed through the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority, but now the agency's website says that "the funds for this program have been exhausted." Otten hopes the program might resume, but the agency hasn't been able to give her any estimates of when that might be.

The Ottens have also obtained some travel reimbursement through California Children Services (CCS). CCS is a state-wide program that helps arrange and pay for medical care, equipment and rehabilitation for children with certain conditions. The Ottens have insurance through their employers, and it did not originally occur to them that their son might have more resources as a Medi-Cal patient than he would on their Anthem Blue Cross plan. But Otten said that enrolling Hudson in Medi-Cal made navigating CCS reimbursements significantly easier, though she has also received a number of claim rejections.

A 2017 California law requires Medi-Cal managed-care health plans to include reimbursement for travel arrangements, but data on how many patients have made use of this benefit are sparse. Medi-Cal typically requires that patients use public transportation or ride-share services before being reimbursed for their private vehicles, putting the burden of proving that a private vehicle is their only option on rural families who often live in areas without public transportation.

Besides connecting its patients with CCS, Northern Inyo Hospital does not have any reimbursement programs of its own, but Mammoth Hospital does. Rhannon's Kids is a program administered by the Mammoth Hospital Foundation that helps its patients get reimbursed for travel funds. The foundation said that last year, it helped 18 families; the year before, 23. Their funding is only available to Mammoth Hospital patients, however, which makes the Ottens ineligible.

Navigating all this bureaucracy, from private insurance companies to

Medi-Cal, CCS to Kern Regional Center, Northern Inyo Hospital to Inyo County Health and Human Services, has forced Otten to become an expert advocate. She says that the many offices that help her family do not often communicate well with one another, and it's up to her to file a constant stream of paperwork. "It was like another job," Otten said. Now, she helps other families in her community navigate these agencies, but she wishes that there was a professional to do that.

And, Otten said, it's not just the financial cost of routine travel that adds up for families — it's also the time. Otten has spent innumerable hours traveling back and forth to Los Angeles, and she's not the only one.

For V. and her family, the frequency of their travel to Children's Hospital Los Angeles made staying in the Eastern Sierra even more complicated. V., whose full name is being withheld at her request to protect her family's privacy, has two children with special health care needs. Her son, born in 2009, has a heart condition, and her daughter, born in 2015, has a seizure disorder. Both have spent significant time in the hospital and, in 2017, V. and her husband contemplated the same big decision that the Ottens once did. The 250 miles that separated them from their children's specialists became too much to bear, and they moved to Los Angeles.

A few years later, V's children's health conditions had stabilized and they didn't require as much medical help. So in 2020, when her work offered her a chance to move back to the Eastern



The Ottens

Sierra, the family decided it was time to go home. They missed the quiet, calm environment of Bishop, and thought that getting away from the hustle and bustle of the city would be good for them all. They packed up, again, and moved back to Bishop.

And yet, the medical hurdles kept coming. In the summer of 2022, two years after moving back to Bishop, V's daughter needed two surgeries that resulted in her being flown to Los Angeles. And while she has since stabilized, next year, V's son will face a difficult heart surgery, one that was too complicated for their doctors in Los Angeles to perform. Instead, the family will use their summer break to stay temporarily in Palo Alto while their son undergoes care at Stanford Medical Center.

Meanwhile, many other families of children with special health care needs choose to leave the area permanently

once they realize the enormity of the struggle ahead of them, said Ricci, Northern Inyo's pediatrician. That makes the number of these children in the Eastern Sierra seem disproportionately low compared to more urban locations, she said.

For the V's and the Ottens, the decision to stay in Bishop is one they make daily. They love the community and want to stay as long as they can. Their hope is that the state and local agencies take steps to increase access to doctors in rural areas, including Bishop, and step up reimbursements for travel costs. That would make it easier for them to remain.

"This is where we want to be," Otten said.

This story was originally published by California Health Report, and is reprinted here with permission.

Seeking Participants:
Mammoth Hospital Physical Therapy/
Occupational Therapy Focus Group

Mammoth Hospital is committed to enhancing the care we provide to our Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy patients. We invite you to participate in a focus group to share your insights and suggestions.

Please submit a brief application via the link below or scan the QR code to be considered for the group. The focus group will meet in person on the following dates and dinner will be provided:

- Monday, January 13, 2025, 5:30 – 7:00 PM
 - Mammoth Hospital, Conference Room A/B
- Monday, March 3, 2025, 5:30 – 7:00 PM
 - Mammoth Hospital, Conference Room A/B

Applications are due by Friday, December 27, 2024.
Participants will be notified by Friday, January 3, 2025.
If you have any questions please contact 760-965-9954.

Thank you for your interest in helping us improve our services!

MammothHospital.com



HAPPY NEW YEAR ... AND HAND IT OVER!

By Fisher

The campaign to raise the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) rate in Mammoth was a saga in itself, but here lies the sequel: How does a town go about telling tourists they'll soon be paying two points more on their bed taxes in the new year?

The Mammoth Lakes Town Council discussed the dilemma for the first time during its regular meeting on Wednesday evening in Suite Z. The initiative to raise the tax, known as Measure L, was passed by voters on November 5, increasing the TOT rate from 13% to 15%. The town plans to implement the new rate starting January 1.

In doing so, the Council voted 5-0 to base the tax rate on the date of booking, rather than the payment date, a recommendation detailed in a staff report prepared by Town Manager Rob Patterson.

"These visits and stays are booked months in advance, and when someone books a stay, they receive a portfolio detailing the cost of that stay," Patterson said. "We did not want to have to go back to those booked transactions and say, 'Oh, by the way, because of the town's increase in rate, you have to pay more money for this visit.'"

Currently, the Town collects TOT based on the date of departure, so no tax is due until the completion of the stay, according to the staff report. If this rule continued, it would mean that taxes collected on or after the rate change, regardless of the stay dates, would be at the new tax rate. Visits booked prior to the rate change would require additional tax

collection for all prepaid transactions.

This mid-transaction rate change would also create challenges for lodging operations in managing existing bookings to ensure that the proper rate adjustments are made, the staff report states.

By collection based on the booking date, the Town anticipates it will collect less revenue than owed during this implementation period, but the staff report states that "this loss would be insignificant over the life of the tax measure."

"I agree with this completely," Councilmember Bill Sauser said. "It is the fair thing to do for customers who have already contracted or booked rooms."

In the public comment section of the item, John Morris, Chairman of the Mammoth Lakes Lodging Association, said there may be "bumps and bruises" with trying to implement the incremental tax at this time of year, when people are busy with holidays and the town's traffic is high.

During this transition period, staff will consider errors during any future audits for potential leniency, Patterson wrote in the report.

"Staff is not advocating for blanket leniency but the promise of consideration of each instance individually," he stated.

One of those bumps: in the case that someone may not have booked the rooms prior to the change, but has a contract for a specific event and a quote, staff will offer the TOT rate as it was originally quoted, with the old 13% rate.

These instances would be events, such as weddings or ski team events, where

the organizer has worked with the lodging operation to occupy several rooms but has not necessarily booked them yet.

"There are, at least I know of some hoteliers, who have contracts into 2026 that have already been inked, so there may be a few that have those preexisting contracts in place," Morris said.

Sauser instructed Patterson and his staff to call such hoteliers to draw up a list of existing contracts so that they may be forgiven directly, and said he didn't want to write something up where people could "cheat it."

Mayor Bubser added that there must be a deadline for such a list, and suggested they make that deadline December 18, the same day as their vote. Patterson said he plans to go through each of the existing contracts with the lodging operations.

"I'm not too concerned about some sort of a mass process between now and the end of the year just to save the 2%,"

he said.

Sawyer finally filled

In other news, the 81 units in the first phase of the Parcel, the Sawyer, are finally occupied, Nolan Bobroff, the town's Community & Economic Development Director announced at the meeting. He had received the notice on Friday.

"You must be very pleased, you and your team and the entire staff have worked so hard to make that project come to fruition and to think that people are all in for the holidays warms my heart," Bubser said.

Buckingham Property Management, the company overseeing the building, began leasing in the new building on Wednesday, Aug. 21, and was originally planning to have the Sawyer fully leased by the end of September.

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Magick Nature @ Root Down Community Hub ~ Mammoth Gear Exchange



Sunday, December 22nd 3:00 pm - 8:00 pm

A COZY CHRISTMAS ... SOLI* STYLE!





- Record player party at Pupfish - bring your faves to share, spin and dance
- Wear your silliest holiday garb to Spellbinder to get a discount
- **More activities and festive fun to be added - watch your social media and emails or see stores for details**

Yummy Holiday Treats and Drinks at All Participating Locations! Open late for last-minute shopping!

- 50% off select haircare lines at Luxe; plus special offer on new R+Co luxury line
- Kids get a free surprise gift at C5
- Root Down Community Hub: Make a simmer pot kit with Magick Nature; tarot readings too! Pajama attire encouraged.

*Soli = Bishop's "South of Line" District!

Pupfish Cafe ~ Spellbinder Books ~ Mountain Rambler Brewery

Black Sheep Roastery ~ Luxe Salon ~ Crearee (formerly Mercado Mexico) ~ C5



JANUARY

- 4 WOOLLY'S DANCE PARTY Saturdays through 3/9
- 18-19 CHAMBER MUSIC UNBOUND: R-E-S-P-E-C-T WITH THE FELICI PIANO TRIO

FEBRUARY

- 9 IKON PASS EARLY UPS
- 20-24 MAMMOTH FILM FESTIVAL
- 21 JLA BANKED SLALOM

MARCH

- 2 IKON PASS EARLY UPS
- 7-9 ARC'TERYX BACKCOUNTRY ACADEMY
- 8-9 CHAMBER MUSIC UNBOUND: GREAT EXPECTATIONS WITH THE FELICI PIANO TRIO
- 12-16 ELEVATION: MAMMOTH
- 16-21 U.S. REVOLUTION TOUR

APRIL

- 12-13 CHAMBER MUSIC UNBOUND: A SPRING MORNING WITH THE FELICI PIANO TRIO
- 20 ANNUAL POND SKIM
- 26 FISHMAS: OPENING DAY OF FISHING SEASON IN MONO COUNTY

MAY

- 3-4 B4BC LOVE YOUR PEAKS
- 3 UNBOUND PARTY IN THE PARK
- 21-25 MAMMOTH LAKES FILM FESTIVAL
- 31 THE PAMPER PEDAL

JUNE

- 20-29 MONSTER ENERGY MAMMOTH MOTOCROSS
- 27-28 MAMMOTH FEEL GOOD FESTIVAL

JULY

- 3-6 ARTS ON THE 4TH AND CELEBRATIONS
- 4 4TH OF JULY PARADE
- 4-5 GIDDYUP COUNTRY MUSIC
- 5 SUMMIT SUNSET PARTY
- 11-12 MAMMOTH JAZZFEST
- 18-20 MAMMOTH REGGAE FESTIVAL
- 25-26 MAMMOTH VILLAGEFEST
- 25-27 MAMMOTH LAKES OPEN AIR ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR
- 26 ANNUAL KIDS FISHING FESTIVAL

AUGUST

- 7/31-3 MAMMOTH FESTIVAL OF BEERS AND BLUESAPALOOZA
- 6 FAMILY FUN DAY AT THE VILLAGE
- 8-9 MAMMOTH MARGARITA FESTIVAL
- 15-16 MAMMOTH WINE WEEKEND
- 16 MAMMOTH 50K PEDALPALOOZA
- 22-23 MAMMOTH ROCKS
- 29-31 MAMMOTH ROCK N RYE
- 31 ANNUAL WAVE RAVE SKATE CONTEST
- 31 SUMMIT SUNSET PARTY

SEPTEMBER

- 6 MAMMOTH GRAN FONDO
- 12-14 MAMMOTH TUFF
- 18-21 MAMMOTH TRAILFEST

OCTOBER

- 4-5 SPARTAN SUPER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
- 8 REBELLE RALLY



FOR FULL DETAILS SCAN THE QR CODE OR GO TO:

VisitMammoth.com/Events
#MammothLakesEvents

ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND/OR CANCELLATION



R.R. EXPRESS

By Gayla Wolf

The annual Laws Railroad Express featuring rides on the Death Valley Brill Car took place last Saturday at Laws Museum off Highway 6 just east of Bishop. Gayla Wolf outdid herself on this one - these portraits are really fantastic. Merry Christmas!



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DID YOU KNOW?

→ Did you know that Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) in Mammoth Lakes is increasing?

• Measure L was placed on the ballot by the Mammoth Lakes Town Council in November 2024 to raise TOT from 13% to 15% and required a majority vote to pass. The measure was approved with a nearly 64% yes vote.

• The increase will go into effect on January 1, 2025.

• The tourism business improvement district assessment of 1% for lodging businesses will remain unchanged, making the total amount due for short-term rentals 16% beginning January 1, 2025.

• The purpose of the measure is to allocate funding toward the Town's Housing Now! program so that service and trade workers, teachers, nurses, hospitality workers, and other working families can afford to live in the community they serve.

• Measure L funding can also be used to:

- Improve disaster preparedness by equipping our town with the necessary resources to prevent and address disaster threats.

- Maintain public trails, parks, and open spaces to ensure these areas remain safe, beautiful and accessible for recreation activities.

- Repair roads, maintain sidewalks, and fund high-quality snow removal equipment to promote efficient and safe transportation throughout Mammoth Lakes.

• The Mammoth Lakes Town Council will decide how to allocate the funds raised to specific projects as part of the budgeting process, and those decisions are required to be made at public meetings with opportunities for public involvement.

• Measure L will sunset after 10 years, expiring January 1, 2035, unless extended by Mammoth Lakes voters.

If you have questions about Measure L, TOT, or short-term rentals in Mammoth Lakes please contact the Finance Department at 760-965-3660.

TownofMammothLakes.ca.gov

Town of Mammoth Lakes

THE LIGHT
continued from page 1

I asked Pickles how the scope of the project stacks up to other projects he's shepherded.
It's on the smaller side. After all, he's from Vegas.

Over the weekend, I spoke to John Curnow, Limelight's Regional GM.
His refrain, similar to a previous interview we did in February, 2023, focused

on Limelight's desire to serve as a community partner, and as host to a "community living room."
When you can accommodate more than 200 people in your lobby, it's not as farfetched as it sounds.
He talked about Limelight's philanthropy. In Sun Valley, the company has donated more than \$300,000 over eight years to various community causes and organizations. It also provides each employee two full-paid volunteer days per year.
We also discussed the sensitive topic of labor and workforce housing.
He anticipates the property will employ a staff of one hundred, and that the first employee, the General Manager, will be installed by March.



2nd floor view looking down valley/down Main Street. As you drive up Main, the Residences are located on the left side of the building and the 149-room hotel occupies the right. The hotel's main entrance is off Lake Mary Road.

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In terms of where that staff will live, Curnow says, "We're looking at everything." That means lease, buy and build opportunities.
Both in Aspen and Sun Valley, the company owns a significant amount of housing stock.

If you're not in the market for a \$5 million residence, there is another avenue towards buying into the Limelight multiverse.
And that is via its members-only club.
The club features ski lockers, valet service, a host of other amenities, and most important, parking access.
There is also a collaboration with Mammoth's Black Pass so members will have access to Parallax Restaurant, as well as cut-the-line lift access privileges.
Of course, both those perks come for a small fee.
Club membership requires a \$150,000 deposit. Stop by the Limelight sales office in the Village at Mammoth if you'd like to learn more, visit limelightresidencesmammoth.com, or contact the sales team at 760.501.2801

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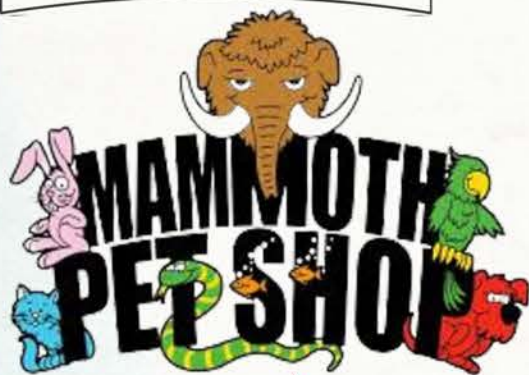
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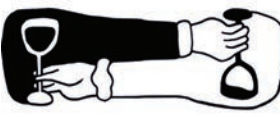
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BARS & MUSIC

Happy Hour/
The Liberty Sports Bar and Grill
Pursuit of Happiness Hour Daily 3-6 p.m. extended to 8 p.m. for football on Mondays and Thursdays. Live Music. Best viewing spot in town for **live sports**, other than across the parking lot @ **Main Street Pizza and Tap**.
More Liberty info: See ad p. 23
Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour Monday through Friday from 4-6 p.m. *More info: See ad p. 12*
The Mogul happy hour 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the bar. Food and drink specials.
Lakanuki happy hour 3-6 p.m. daily AND karaoke every Sunday, starting at 8:30 p.m.
Main Street Pizza - See ad this page for details.
Distant Brewing happy hour Monday-Thursday from 3-5pm. \$1/off beer/wine/cider/seltzer/kombucha

December 20-21/
Renegades of Rage play Liberty. Starts 9:30 p.m. No cover

December 20-22/
Weekend Apres Ski parties kick off for the season @ Canyon Lodge. Starts 1 p.m. all days.

Saturday, December 21/
Karaoke @ Rusty's Saloon in Bishop featuring the annual ugly sweater contest! Starts 9 p.m.

Sunday, December 22/
NFL Sunday Football @ the Bishop Elks Lodge, 151 E. Line St. Starts 9:30 a.m. Bar open! Public welcome!
Karaoke @ Lakanuki. Starts 8:30 p.m.

Monday, December 23/
Open mic night @ Distant Brewing. Time: 6-9 p.m.

Tuesday, December 24/
Christmas Eve karaoke @ Liberty.
More info, see ad p. 22

December 27-29/
Weekend Apres Ski parties @ Canyon

TOWN STUFF

Friday, December 20/
Bishop hosts Mammoth for high school basketball. Girls play 5:30 p.m. with Boys @ 7.

Saturday, December 21/
Free guided snowshoe hike courtesy of Sierra Forever. Meet Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center @ 11 a.m. *Info: sierraforever.org/events*

December 21-22/
Holiday Marketplace at the Minaret Mall in Mammoth. Time: 10 a.m. 'til 6 p.m. both days. Santa, crafting station, treats and more.
Holiday Market @ the Owens Valley Paiute Shoshone Cultural Center on West Line (2300) St. 8:30 a.m. 'til 4 p.m. both days.
If you're looking for Santa ... and you haven't found him yet, that may be because he's hanging out @ Mammoth Sports in the Village at Mammoth. Time: 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 22/
Forget SoHo! In Bishop, you've got SoLi, and its gonna be a **Cozy Christmas party South of Line St.** from 3-8 p.m. Participating businesses include Spellbinder, Luxe Salon,

TOWN STUFF

Sunday, December 22 (cont.)/
Mountain Rambler and more. *For more, see Klusmire column on p. 8 and ad p. 23*
Take me to Church! Coffee church @ the Indy Coffee Roasting Co. in Bishop. Corner of Lagoon/Main next to Luxe Salon. Time: 8 a.m. 'til noon.

Tuesday, December 24/
Sunset Snowshoe Tour @ Tamarack Cross Country Ski Center. Starts 3 p.m. \$\$\$. Advance reservations required. *Visit book.mammothmountain.com*
Tuesday, Decmber 24 (cont.)/
Join Mammoth Christian Fellowship for its Christmas Eve service. Time: 6:30 p.m. Location: Mammoth Middle School on Meridian. *Info: See ad p. 5*
Christmas Eve Carols and Mass starting 6 p.m. @ St. Joseph's Church in Mammoth. Location: 58 Ranch Rd. Other locations and times include:
Dec. 24, Lee Vining, 3:30 p.m.
Dec. 25, Coleville, 10 a.m.
Dec. 25, St. Joseph's in Mammoth, 6 p.m. *More info, see ad p. 10*

Wednesday, December 25/
Looking for a Christmas Day dining option in Mammoth? Consult the Mammoth Lakes Chamber ad on page four for options.
Bishop Community Christmas Dinner @ the Tri-County Fairgrounds. Free dinner. Dessert potluck. All welcome. Dinner served 2-4 p.m. Work off Christmas Dinner by enjoying a **public skate @ the Mammoth Ice**

TOWN STUFF

Wednesday, December 25 (cont.)/
Rink! Three sessions available, the first starting 4 p.m. *Info: See ad p. 8*

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Lakanuki New Year's Eve party with DJ Kalli. \$75 for late night ticket. Bottle service \$150/person (4-person minimum). Tables go quick - reserve now at lakanuki.com/760.934.7447
A Clocktower Cellar New Year's. Midnight toast, party favors, and affordable cover charge TBD.
DJ Onezie spins @ Liberty. No cover!
Distant Brewing will feature two bands - Mammoth All-Stars and Big Smooth - starting 9 p.m. 21+ NO COVER. Champagne splits available to purchase for midnight toast.
New Year's Eve fireworks in the Village at Mammoth. Time: 9 p.m.
New Year's Eve party @ Bishop Elks Lodge. \$25 for meal, dancing, raffle, fun. Call Carmen @ 760.873.3221 for tix/info.

mammoth

**GEAR
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106 S. Main St, Bishop (760) 873-4300

**MAIN STREET
PIZZA & TAP**



Superlative East Coast, Thin-Crust Pizza

LUNCH SPECIALS

Monday-Thursday, 11am-2pm

- \$2 Off All 10" Pizzas
- 1/2 Off All Salads

Lunch Specials!

HAPPY HOUR

Mon-Fri: 3:30-6:30 pm
Sat-Sun: 8pm-Close

- \$3 Cheese Slice \$4 Pepperoni Slice
- \$1 off all Pints & Tasting Flights
- \$1 off all Wines By the Glass

Happy Hour Specials!

3399 Main Street, Mammoth Lakes, Family Friendly!
(760) 965-0321 | orderonline|mainstreetpizzaandtap.com

NO CLASS-IFIEDS

Help Wanted



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

Electrician (Must have own tools/rig)

-Mammoth \$30-40

FT/PT Maint. Tech

-Mammoth \$20-22

Line Cook

-Mammoth \$22

Prep/Dishwasher

-Mammoth \$20.77

Housekeeper(s)

-Mammoth \$20

Journeyman Plumber

-Mammoth \$30-45

Snow shovelers

-Mammoth \$25-30 seasonal

Community Integration Partner

Bishop/Mammoth \$20-25 + potential mileage reimbursement

Radio ad sales

-Bishop \$20/hr. plus commission (after probationary period)

Call or text 760-924-0523

Sweetwater Plumbing Inc. FT position for Journeyman Plumber and/or Apprentice Plumber. Full Benefits. Job is located in Mammoth Lakes. Contact 760-914-1266 info@sweetwaterplumbing.com

John's Pizza Works seeks energetic, motivated, reliable individuals, to work in the FOH or cashier position. Oppty. for year-round employment. PT/FT positions. Experience preferred. Come in for application.

FRONT DESK PERSON NEEDED FOR BOOKKEEPING OFFICE. Customer service, secretarial and computer skills necessary. Heavy phone duties. Competitive pay, 401(k) profit sharing, paid vacation, holidays. Please send resume to info@butnerhoaservices.com

NOMADNESS SEEKS FT maintenance techs. \$26-28/hour. And a **PT quality control person** - Call Michelle @ 970.837.6720

State Farm Insurance seeks FT, career-minded, bilingual professional. Willing to train. Call Dave @ 760.934.7575.



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF MONO

The Superior Court of California for Mono County invites application s for the position of

Family Law Facilitator and Self-Help Center Program Coordinator

This is a part-time independent contractor position for a licensed attorney

Annual Salary:
\$89,243

A job description and application instructions may be obtained on the court's website, https://www.mono.courts.ca.gov/ge_neralinfo/employment.htm, or contact the court at (760)923-2321
hr@mono.courts.ca.gov
Closing Date: Open until filled
EOE/AEE/ADAE

Help Wanted



Elevate Your Career At Mammoth Hospital! We have an immediate need for the following positions:

Radiologic Technologist II – Starting wage \$44.42 to \$53.84 based on qualifications. \$5,000 Retention Bonus.

Clinical Scribe - Starting wage \$23.85 to \$28.91 based on qualification.

Physical Therapist – Starting wage \$48.72 to \$59.05 based on qualifications. \$5,000 Retention Bonus

Hospital Social Worker – Starting wage \$43.69 to \$52.96 based on qualifications.

To view more open positions and apply, please visit www.mammothhospital.org/jobs

Shilo Inn is accepting applications for FT housekeepers, FT maintenance worker and Front desk/night auditor. Immediate Front Desk opportunity starting at \$18/hour. Please call Human Resources (Sarina Quintero) at 925.813.2331 or email your resume to squintero@marquishotelsgroup.com.

Help wanted **PT/FT retail sporting goods and clothing sales.** Housing may be available. Ski pass may be available. Apply by email, dave@mammothgear.com with resume if you have one.



MAMMOTH COMMUNITY WATER DISTRICT Maintenance Dept. is currently recruiting for **one permanent Line Maintenance Worker I/II/III (DOQ) position.** FOR APPLICATION INFORMATION/ TO APPLY: Please see the District website <https://mcwd.dst.ca.us/employment/>.



Mammoth Mountain Reservations is Looking for a part time office help in Mammoth. Must live in Mammoth. At least 20 hours/week. Please email resume/work experience to info@mammothres.com.

MARKETING AMBASSADOR
MAMMOTH LAKES

H&G Marketing seeks energetic individuals for local events and customer engagement. Must be 21+, valid driver's license required. Weekend/evening availability needed. Duties include: distributing promotional materials, booth setup, event photography, customer engagement, and promoting local business and deals. CA min wage plus success bonuses, fun and flexible schedule. Email resume to Doug@hallandgans.com and ruthie@hallandgans.com.



Eastern Sierra Counseling is recruiting a **licensed psychotherapist** for in-person practice in our Mammoth Lakes office. Make your own schedule and practice the way you want. We value flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance so that you can be the best therapist to your patients. We are the highest paid insurance-based practice in the United States. Contact: EASTERNSIERRACOUNSELING@outlook.com

Help Wanted



Reservations Desk Clerk immediate opening at the Double Eagle Resort and Spa in June Lake CA (20 min from mammoth). Must have excellent customer service and computer skills. Full or part time, health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. Great place to work! Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com

P/T Wedding Coordinator asst. Great computer/communication skills essential. Please email interest to: weddingevents.doubleeagleresort@gmail.com

Creekside Spa and Fitness Desk at the Double Eagle Resort and Spa, immediate opening for enthusiast team member. Help in creating a wonderful experience for our spa and fitness center guests. Customer service, computer, cleaning, food service. Full or part time, health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. Great place to work! Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com

Restaurant Server for Eagles Landing

The **Alpenhof Lodge**, Mammoth Lakes, has openings for customer service minded people and we are looking to add to our **front desk team.** Both full-time year-round positions, as well as seasonal winter positions, are available. Applicant must be able to work evenings, weekends, and some holidays. We offer competitive wages, a 401(k) option and possible housing option, as well as many other perks. If interested, please apply in person at 6080 Minaret Road.



Storage Spaces for Rent at the Nomadness building, corner of Laurel Mountain and Sierra Nevada Rds.

Secure, heated units available in these sizes:

85-square ft.

38-square ft.

130-square ft.

357-square ft.

340-square ft. (perfect for office use)

Features: 24-hour access, security cameras, parking, and competitive pricing. Call now to reserve!

Mishelle Hernandez
970-837-6720
tenants@nomadnessrentals.com

PERSONALS

I heard you ... mention that watching “The Grinch” gives you PTSD. Which totally makes sense, having met your father.

I heard your ... favorite Christmas movie is “Christmas Vacation.” Which again, makes total sense, given how much you have in common with Cousin Eddie.

I saw your ... Christmas wish list. You know, I don't think they take Robux on OnlyFans, but I appreciate the pubescent, out-of-the-box thinking.

In search of ... a gift for my sister. Something that says, “Sure, we don't have much in common, but I respect you for how you turned out, growing up with the parents you had.”

Help Wanted

Restaurant at the popular Double Eagle Resort and Spa in June Lake CA. Experience in restaurant service, computers and working as team member are essential. Full and part time available, health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. Great place to work. Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com

Maintenance Supervisor needed to manage a small maintenance team at the Double Eagle Resort & Spa in June Lake. You will be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of upkeep and repair. Must be reliable, have technical skills and knowledge of various crafts such as carpentry, plumbing etc. Leadership and knowledge of administrative tasks such as scheduling are also essential. The goal is to ensure that facilities are in good condition at all times. Compensation based on experience and references. We offer health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. A great place to work! Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com

Cooks and Dishwasher jobs available at the famous Eagles Landing Restaurant in June Lake. We offer health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. A great place to work! Email lodging@doubleeagle.com

For Sale



Scarcely-driven (4,000 miles) 2023 RAV4 Hybrid. Owner can no longer drive. \$34K OBO. Call Lunch to inquire 760.937.4613



Mammoth Five Star Lodging is seeking a skilled and reliable Maintenance Tech/Property Inspector to join our dynamic team!

As a Maintenance Inspector, your primary responsibility will be to perform detailed maintenance inspections in residential homes, after guests have checked out. Additionally, you will perform Quality Control (QC) checks to grade the quality and completeness of the cleaning by our housekeepers.

We're looking for team players who are eager to learn, with strong attention to detail, problem-solving abilities, and familiarity with consumer electronic systems, including audio/video/home theater, iOS mobile devices, and wifi/Internet troubleshooting skills. Maintenance and repair experience is a strong plus, but not required - we're willing to train. A current driver's license with a clean, insurable driving record is required. Our company provides all equipment required, including vehicles.

The pay for this position starts at \$23/ hour (depending on skills and experience). Weekend availability required.

If you're ready to join our team and help us deliver outstanding service to our owners and guests, please fill out our online job application today at www.fivestarlodging.com.

For Rent

MAMMOTH TWO BDR/ONE BA, one-car garage, woodstove, one-year lease only. \$2,850/mo. 760.937.7569.

Two bay shop space for rent. Approx. 1,800-sq. feet. No auto repair. Next to Starbucks. \$3,000/mo. 760.937.7569

Office space available on Old Mammoth Rd., ranging in size and price starting at just \$300. Call 760.914.1500.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of Petition to Administer Estate

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF JAMES SHEARER KEATING

MONO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT CASE NO.: 24PRM23

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of JAMES SHEARER KEATING. A Petition for Probate has been filed by THOMAS KEATING, JR. in the Superior Court of California, County of Inyo. The Petition for Probate requests that THOMAS KEATING, JR. be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of decedent.

The petition requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court. The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the executor to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interest-

ed persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows: January 2, 2025, 9:30 a.m., Mammoth Courthouse, Department 2, 100 Thompson Way, PO Box 1037, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney. If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for Petitioner: Gian Carlo Simonetti, Esq. (SBN.: 279468), Wood Law Group, 126 Old Mammoth Road, Suite 203, P.O. Box 3837, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546; (760) 934-5821.

TS #2024-0157

Notice of Ordinance

ORD 24-008
AN ORDINANCE OF THE MONO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AMENDING MONO COUNTY CODE SECTION 3.28.060 TO INCREASE THE TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX RATE FROM TWELVE PERCENT TO FIFTEEN PERCENT

WHEREAS, Revenue and Taxation Code Section 7280 authorizes the board of supervisors of any county to levy in the unincorporated areas of the county a tax on the privilege of occupying a room or rooms, or other living space, in a hotel, inn, tourist home or house, motel, or other lodging unless the occupancy is for any period of more than 30 days or unless the occupancy is expressly exempt from such taxation by Section 7280 or other provision of state law; and

WHEREAS, such taxation is commonly referred to as "transient occupancy tax" or "TOT"; and

WHEREAS, Mono County voters previously enacted The Tourists' Fair Share Act in Mono County Code Chapter 3.28, which currently levies a transient occupancy tax of 12% of the nightly rent charged; and

WHEREAS, the County provides essential services such as affordable and workforce housing, economic diversification and development, public safety and emergency services, road maintenance and pothole repair, public health and healthcare, and maintenance of county parks; and

WHEREAS, tourists make use of essential county services, such as parks, emergency response, and roads; and

WHEREAS, tourism, while critically essential to Mono County's economy, has contributed to the lack of affordable and workforce housing for those living and working in Mono County; and

WHEREAS, an increase in the transient occupancy rate by 3%, from 12% to 15% would raise an additional \$1.1 million in general fund revenues to supplement County services, including affordable and workforce housing development; and

WHEREAS, the County seeks to amend Chapter 3.28 of the Mono County Code to enact such an increase to the transient occupancy rate.
NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF MONO ORDAINS that:

SECTION ONE: Section 3.28.060 of the Mono County Code is hereby amended to read as follows:
"For the privilege of occupancy of any transient occupancy facility, each transient is subject to and shall pay a tax in the amount of fifteen percent of the rent charged. The tax constitutes a debt owed by the transient to the county which is extinguished only by payment to the operator or to the county. The transient shall pay the tax to the operator of the transient occupancy facility at the time the rent is paid. If the rent is paid in installments, a proportionate share of the tax shall be paid with each installment. The unpaid tax shall be due upon the transient's ceasing to occupy space in the transient occupancy facility. If for any reason the tax due is not paid to the operator of the transient occupancy facility, the tax collector may require that such tax shall be paid directly to the tax collector."

SECTION TWO: Pursuant to California Constitution Article XIII C Section 2(b) and California Elections Code Section 9141, this Ordinance shall take effect only if approved by a majority of the eligible voters of the County of Mono voting in the General Election to be held on November 5, 2024 and shall become effective 10 days after the results of said election are certified by the Board of Supervisors.

SECTION THREE:
This ordinance was submitted to the People of Mono County at the November 5, 2024 election and was adopted by the following vote of the People

YES: 3,489 / 5,760; 60.57%
NO: 2,271 / 5,760; 39.43%.
ATTEST: Queenie Bardnard, Clerk of the Board
ATTEST: John Peters, Chair, Mono County Board of Supervisors

TS #2024-0158

Notice of Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan is being updated. See survey below!





WE NEED YOUR
FEEDBACK TO MAKE
OUR COMMUNITY SAFER

TAKE THE SURVEY



NECESITAMOS TU OPINIÓN
PARA HACER NUESTRA
COMUNIDAD MÁS SEGURA

PARTICIPA EN LA ENCUESTA

El plan de mitigación de riesgos del condado de mono y la ciudad de Mammoth Lakes está en el proceso de actualización
TS #2024-0159





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We Are
Hiring!

At mono County, we're always on the lookout for talented individuals to join our team. We pride ourselves on offering exciting career opportunities and a workplace where you can thrive.

Why Work with us?

- Endless Opportunities
- Exceptional Benefits
- Professional Growth
- Working as part of a team
- Be part of something extraordinary

Ready to take the next step in your career? Visit our careers page to explore the current opening and apply today!

Visit:
<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/monocountyca>

This is **TUNDRA!**
He's a beautiful young boy who came into our shelter as a stray. He's very calm in his kennel and shows excellent potential because he's smart, good with people and other dogs, playful and obedient.

Visit Tundra- and others like him that are in search of their forever home – at the Inyo County Animal Shelter, located at 1001 County Road in Big Pine. For more information, call (760) 938-2715. To see more dogs available for adoption, visit www.easternsierradogrescue.com

 Save a life.
Adopt a shelter dog.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BECOME A VOLUNTEER TODAY!



OH, FRUITCAKE!

Where there's a Will ...
By Klusmire

Newly elected Fifth District Inyo County Supervisor, Will Wadelton probably didn't have chewing a chunk of 19-year-old fruitcake on his bingo card or in his orientation folder. Having to eat some "archival fruitcake" in front of a crowd of fawning fruitcake fans just might have made Wadelton reconsider his life choices. Or not. Being embraced by the Independence Fruitcake Festival fanatics was a good political move for the new supervisor.

But he had to earn the crowd's acclaim on Saturday night, Dec. 14. As he chewed and chewed and chewed, folks started to get a little restless as they silently pondered the harsh possibility that maybe, just maybe the 19-year-old fruitcake had been rendered inedible. They reassured themselves with the details: The fruitcake had been stored in a glass casserole dish, doused with generous amounts of rum to kill infections, bugs, mold and taste, then stashed in a basement in a green Civil Defense Cannister with yellow caution signs.

Finally, Wadelton swallowed hard and answered the eternal question: "how was it?"

"Chewy," was his one-word summation. A huge sigh of relief went up as the crowd acknowledged Wadelton's grit and good teeth.

More important, their faith in the holy fruitcake and its sacred place on the traditional Christmas table had been confirmed, upheld and verified. Back into the Civil Defense Canister went the

archival fruitcake, where it will rest until next year.

This year's theme, Back to the Future, celebrated the 1985 Michael J. Fox, time-traveling movie, "Back to the Future." The event, sponsored by the Independence Civic Club, once again proved that when it comes to the Fruitcake Festival, the real theme is "if it's worth doing, it's worth overdoing."

The historic Independence Legion Hall was festooned for the festivities, thanks to the manic creative energy of Mike Lary, wife Jodi, co-conspirator Liz Livermont and a small army of volunteers. A large cardboard courthouse and DeLorean car, like in the movie, was in place, as was the goofy Professor's lab, in all its strange detail and numerous clocks. An impressive and glowing Flux Capacitor was constructed to help with time travel. The ceiling was traversed with sparkly lights and the bar was also aglow.

The attendees played their roles. Plenty of Marty McFlys, decked out in red down vests and jeans. And Doc Emmett Brown (the Professor), complete with lab coat and crazy white hair, also time traveled to the 2024 event. Since Marty traveled back to 1955, poodle skirts, bobby socks and loafers were marks of high fashion. Some people took the time-travel theme seriously and wore what they were wearing in 1985, including a prom dress and maternity clothes covering a big round belly.

They all got a chance to take the stage during the costume contest. The win-



Kym Fraser, left, won the People's Choice award for her pill-form Fruitcake of the Future and Ariel Bohr won the Costume Contest wearing her portable Flux Capacitor.



Mike Lary as Marty McFly.

ner was Ariel Bohr and her personal, cardboard Flux Capacitor, complete with blinking lights. Her alleged prize/punishment was a commercial fruitcake in a tin.

Ah, but the real stars of the show were the fruitcakes. Entry to the event cost a fruitcake or eggnog or a donation. The bakers were creative and got rewarded by turning what starts as flour, molasses, sticks, sugar, weeds, rotting candied fruit, random seasoning, and lots of booze into an allegedly edible baked good.

Are some of the "presentations" over-the-top? You betcha. Consider Rosanne Lampariello's Best of Theme entry, which involved a fruitcake and a compete model of the small-town square and courthouse from the movie. The Most Solids (which is disturbing) went to Jeff Napoles of Cowboy Coffee. Amy Williamson scored the Traveled Furthest award with a fruitcake from Germany. Oldest was an entry by Judy Palmer, with an entry from her mom's 1964 recipe. The Judge's Award went to Jodi Browning for

The Flux, a fruitcake and Flux Capacitor combo.

Taking the theme to its logical conclusion was Kym Fraser's Fruitcake of the Future, which won the People's Choice award. The future fruitcakes, circa 2525 were displayed in a Ziplock bag since they were just colorful capsules that come to life after being placed in the Hydrator Mini. The warning label warned efforts to use the Hydrator Mini could result in "electrical fire, upset stomach, inexplicable hand fading, creation of a parallel universe where you become your own grandpa or destruction of all existence."

Sounds like the warning label on today's fruitcakes.

Jon Klusmire of Bishop is embarrassed to admit that 19 years ago when Nancy Masters said a Fruitcake Festival would be fun, he wrote a scathing article calling that the dumbest event imaginable. So they crowned him the first Fruitcake King and never looked back.



Progress Your Career at Mammoth Hospital!

We're currently looking for:

- Radiologic Technologist II (\$5000 Retention Bonus)
- Physical Therapist (\$5000 Retention Bonus)

- Success Sharing Incentive Program
- Staff Development Programs
- Generous Retirement Match and PTO Accrual



Openings at www.mammothhospital.com | [f](#) [i](#) [t](#) [v](#)



NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS

KICK OFF THE NEW YEAR WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

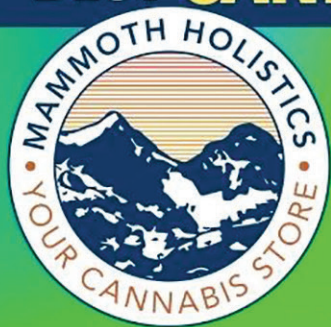
Ring in 2025 with a festive dinner at one of our signature dining spots and finish with a free fireworks show in The Village Plaza.



MAMMOTHMOUNTAIN.COM/NYE

FACILITIES OPERATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INYO NATIONAL FOREST
EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BEST CANNABIS DISPENSARY



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one-time use. C10-0000617-LIC

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12/14 - 12/25

Celebrate the Holidaze

50% OFF
GOOD TIDE



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PAPA & BARKLEY



30% OFF
TURN

15% OFF
UNCLE ARNIE'S



20% OFF
CLAYBOURNE



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EMERALD SKY



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DAILY DEALS EVERY DAY

MUNCHIE MONDAY | THERAPEUTIC TUESDAY | WEED WEDNESDAY | THIRSTY THURSDAY
FRISKY FRIDAY | SMOKIN' SATURDAY | SUNDAY FUNDAY



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\$20 | \$50 | \$100



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Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

C10-0000617-LIC

HARTLEY

ON THE ROAD IN ELK CITY

I must confess I've been a little off on my football viewing of late. Moving from Purgatory Pacific NW to Charleston, South Carolina so the whole week was a mess. More on that later. No. More on that now. As I sit here in a hotel in Elk City, Oklahoma, ranting this segment, I have no reading glasses which I can't seem to find within the plethora of crap I have packed, unpacked, and strewn across this hotel room.

I realize I never want to move again. Which isn't practical, because we are gonna squat at an Airbnb for a month while seeking a "permanent place to live."

Driving across country. Some observations:

Once you get the hell out of the Pacific NW, the sun actually does shine. It was rainy and foggy and overcast and gray until I reached lower Idaho. Just miserable. I lived there almost thirty years. Before that, I was on a nuclear sub. The Pacific NW is better than a nuclear sub - but not by much.

Driving through New Mexico and lower Colorado ... I can see why the government gave that land to Native Americans for reservations. Who would want to live there? It's a barren, ugly land with nothing. At least Washington has trees. Mold and mildew won't even grow in those areas. Good grief. But there is sunshine. That's something.

Navajo Pride. Of what? Those reservations are sad. If I were from there I would be proud to get the heck out. Awful. Nothing there but broken down vehicles and 'homes.' It looked like some homes had holes in the roof or no roof at all. Is that getting in touch with nature, letting the light of the sun and moon bless them all day? No, that is pitiful and poverty. Not much pride there.

Traveling with guinea pigs my girl has. They are finicky. Can't be too cold, can't be too hot. Gotta eat nonstop. What the ... Told her it reminds me of having tropical fish. She starts talking about birds and other "exotics." I am now convinced exotics is another word for PIA - Pain in Ass. Too much work. Why can't we just have dogs? Dog.....eat. Dog walk. Dog.....sit. Done.

Truckers are the worst. They own the road. They see you coming in their mirror and mosey their big asses into the left lane anyway. Now I am stuck behind your ass going uphill while it takes you 3 miles to pass the 8 trucks in front of you.

Driving into the night is better. Why? Well, because all the minivans and fake crossover vehicles full of Karens and kids are off the road. You don't have to sit behind a Chrysler Pacifica in the left lane doing 65 in and 80 MPH zone staring at BE NICE and MEAN PEOPLE SUCK and BABY ON BOARD car art stickers for 5 miles. It's so much nicer at night. Just me and the truckers battling. I roll until 10 or 11. Midnight if Kristin and the guineas can take it.

The next morning you pop up and see the Tesla, Chrysler Pacifica and Subaru drivers choking down that hotel breakfast early so they can hit the road. They

fill up on cardboard toast, some alien eggs made of something they feed astronauts in space and this weird bacon that comes from some animal that I am sure does NOT walk this planet.

Onto football ...

The Chiefs have not scored 30 points all year. Wow. And they are 13-1. How you can say that team is lucky is beyond me. They are good. If **Mahomes** plays this week after suffering a high ankle sprain - HE IS AN ALIEN.

The Bills. If they don't realize defense is part of the game, they are going to lose their first playoff game. They're playing ABA basketball-type defense.

The Jets owner reportedly turned down the idea of trading for **WR Jerry Jeudy** because his Madden rating was too low. How did he know? His kids told him. Okay, Jets fans, these kids will be the next idiots to run your team, which is destined to suck forever.

Aaron Rodgers said he would "mentor the hell out of a young QB." Yeah, right. When **Jordan Love** came to the Packers he said it wasn't his job to mentor him, but now that Rodgers is a sorry ass QB who should be put out to pasture, he wants to mentor? Cut his ass and move on. Why would you want an egomaniacal, broken down, malcontent to mentor anyone?

When will players stop dropping the ball before crossing the goal line? Colts **RB Jonathan Taylor** did it last week - and it completely deflated the team. They were outscored 24-0 afterwards.

If I were the coach, I'd fine the hell out of the player for doing it. I would make sure to let the whole team know he thinks it's more important to celebrate than the team winning. And I would show the replay everywhere within the team facility. All week. It would play on the jumbotron. It would show on the practice field. It would show in the weight room, It would show in the cafeteria, the bathrooms. It would show on the side of the stadium and in billboards all over the city.

A few picks ...

Chiefs -3.5 to Texans. If Mahomes aliens' up and plays, Chiefs 22-19. If he doesn't, Texans 19-13.

Broncos laying 2.5 to the Chargers. Jim Harbaugh should be coach of the year but they lack talent. Sean Payton, much to my chagrin, is getting it done.

Ravens -6.5 to the Steelers. Ravens need this game badly. Steelers offense sucks and TJ Watt is out. Ravens 26-17.

Rams -3.5 to the Jets. This is not cocoon. Aaron Rodgers and Davante Adams did not discover some fountain of youth. Stafford and Nacua are great. Rams 33-20.

Vikings -3 at Seahawks. Two resurrected, bust QBs going to battle. Vikings have more talent. Vikings 26-20.

Dolphins -1 to the 49ers. I wish this game was played in cold weather so both these sorry-ass quarterbacks could show who they really are. Doesn't matter who wins. Both teams going nowhere.

THE LAST WORD

By Lunch
Mogavero makes bail

Per the Orange County District Attorney's Office: The judge granted \$250,000 bail over our objection. He [Mogavero] was required to surrender any firearms and he must reside in Orange, San Diego, or Mono counties. He is still allowed to see patients with both another staff member and parent present. He is not allowed to use the internet except to communicate with his lawyer, for his orthodontic practice and to access patient and financial records of the practice.

Grant or no grant?

This was an interesting one. I received a press release on Wednesday from the Bishop Paiute Tribe regarding a \$6.3 million broadband connectivity grant. Which promised to bring high-speed internet access to 140 homes. Okay, let's do the math here. \$6.3 million divided by 140 = \$45,000 per connection. Mirroring the efficiency of so many government projects these days! Anyway, the headline of the presser reads: "Bishop Paiute Tribe Awarded \$6.3 million Broadband Connectivity Grant." Subhead: Project will provide internet to unserved homes on the Bishop Paiute Reservation. Then, the auspicious opener.

WASHINGTON — Monday, the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has recommended for award \$6,307,410 for the Bishop Paiute Tribe's Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Project ... Whoa. Headline says awarded, but the first line of presser says recommended for award. We learn in paragraph four that "funding from the nearly \$3 billion Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Internet for All Initiative." Hmm. Will this funding go away on January 20, 2025 when Biden-Harris becomes Trump-Vance? I wrote an email back to the Tribe's P.R. specialist Victoria Begay. I then called her at her work and cell numbers. No response. I think I may be getting ghosted. Lol ...

Airbnb in NYC

Two successive stories which appeared in the Wall Street Journal on December 9 & 10 caught my attention. The December 9 story headline: New York City Considers Easing Its Airbnb Crackdown. The story states there were 23,000 Airbnb listings in January, 2023. That number has dwindled to a current count of 3,700.

The legislative crackdown in Sept. 2023 included limitations on number of guests per unit and requirements for hosts having to be on-site. By September of this year, the average New York City hotel room went for \$417/night - a record. Meanwhile, "A large supply of new long-term rental units appeared on the New York market, primarily in Manhattan, after enforcement began, says Jonathan Miller, author of the New York rental reports from the real estate company Douglas Elliman. The units had a modest effect on tempering rent increases, but rents continued to rise, he says." Then the December 10 headline: Tourists in NYC See Record-High Prices. The story says New York's hotel occupancy rate is more than 90%. Interviews with visitors indicated

they were either shortening stays, eating less expensively, or engaging in a combination. As one woman said, "You can get a cheap piece of pizza, you can't get a cheap ticket up to the top of the Empire State Building. Showing that Mammoth isn't the only tourist destination loading up on pizza. The new lineup in Bishop

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