

the sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra



People gathered in the Village in Mammoth on Tuesday night to celebrate the New Year

Saturday, January 4, 2025

FREE

Vol. 23, No. 1

SOME HOLIDAY CHEER

Solid sales for Mammoth businesses

By Fisher

The ebb and flow of consumer behavior in Mammoth is notoriously unpredictable, with factors like snow conditions making or breaking the outcome of holiday sales periods. So, on New Year's Day, I set out to talk to local business owners and learn how they navigate the complexities of running businesses on such fickle ground.

Some owners were eager to share their insights, while others had already left for the day, and a few were too busy to indulge the press.

Silver Chesak, the owner of Footloose Sports, was one of the more forthcoming business owners. We spoke for nearly an hour, during which he revealed that his sales this season are the third highest ever recorded for this time period.

Chesak mainly credited consistent snowfall for the increase. With holiday rain in Tahoe and dry conditions at Big Bear, visitors from the Bay Area and Los Angeles have flocked to Mammoth in search of softer snow, leading to many repeat customers.

"Once people come up here and ski once, we get a pretty consistent customer base," he explained.

Karen Crabb, owner of the decor shop Eastern Sierra Mountain Club, observed similar trends, noting an increase in visitors attracted by the superior snow on Mammoth Mountain compared to Tahoe. She suggested that the election

year might have influenced spending patterns, as many seemed more inclined to open their wallets, perhaps fueled by hopes that inflation could decrease under the new federal administration.

However, research indicates that the relationship between consumer sentiment and actual spending is far more complex. The challenge lies in disentangling perceptions of economic conditions from genuine spending behavior. Consumer sentiment has fluctuated significantly over the past six decades, as documented by the University of Michigan. Their findings show that major events often lead to declines in sentiment, yet the correlation between sentiment data and actual consumer spending remains pretty elusive.

A team of researchers explored this disconnect in the lead-up to the 2016 election, finding little evidence linking sentiment to spending behavior. While individuals may feel pessimistic about economic policies when their political party loses power, this sentiment doesn't significantly impact household spending.

However, socioeconomic conditions cannot be overlooked: factors like personal finances and local environment play a substantial role in driving consumer behavior, the researchers found.

In Mammoth, many retailers sell the same products to the

see BUSINESS, pg. 4

BEAR-Y CHRISTMAS

At approximately 3:30 AM on December 25, 2024, a man encountered a sow with two cubs while taking trash to a dumpster at Bigwood Condominiums in Mammoth Lakes. The sow apparently followed him back to his condo but he was safely able to get back inside, according to a January 2 press release from the Mammoth Lakes Police Department.

Shortly after the incident, Bigwood Condominiums released a statement stating that one of their "neighbors" experienced an attack but was able to "fend off" the mama bear and her two cubs without sustaining serious injury.

As Bear Whisperer Steve Searles told Lunch this week, "I'd bet ten grand there was no 'attack.'"

The man contacted the Mammoth Lakes Police Department, and the information was relayed to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Over the next several days, CDFW decided, based on the interaction, the bears should be captured and relocated. It was successful in capturing one cub and tranquilizing the mother bear on or about December 31.

A collar was placed on the adult bear, while a tag was placed on one cub for monitoring purposes. Since the family was separated, the bears were released in

the area so they can be reunited. With the collar and tag, CDFW Officers plan to continue to track the movement of these bears.

That same day, the Mammoth Lakes Police Department posted a Bear Aware message to its Facebook page, encouraging residents and guests to be diligent in keeping dumpsters locked and removing food from vehicles. "While it is unusual this time of year, we would like to remind residents and guests that the bears have not bedded down for their usual hibernation," the post stated. "They are still quite active in the community."

LAST UPS



Eric Bourne and Sloane Brown enjoy the sunset after taking a final ride to the summit.

2025 predictions

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A lurch right

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Klutmire

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Broken promises

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Jax scores

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STAY A-LIVELY IN ‘25

I looked at the “weird” predictions for 2025 from this week’s photo survey on page 15 and the predictions either seemed to be a.) statements of existing fact, or b.) hardly weird.

If I were being asked the question, I’d say something like ...

Elon Musk and Donald Trump are still besties by the end of the year. Now that would be a longshot.

Or ... The drones hovering above New Jersey are in fact alien spacecraft and the Earth will be colonized by April.

Or ... Donald Trump will not be president by the end of the year.

Or ... LeBron James will retire from basketball.

Or ... Vladimir Putin will launch a nuke.

Or ... the next big earthquake will rock SoCal.

Or ... by the end of the year, I will have watched the film “It Ends With Us” and suddenly give a shit about Blake Lively and/or Justin Baldoni. This, I’m afraid, would be the longest shot of all.

Received the following belated reaction to a house ad we ran during election season which illustrated how little various developments were required to pay in housing mitigation fees.

Reader: Just wondering if there was any reaction to the “Sweetheart Deal” housing mitigation ad that ran during election season, highlighting the ridiculously low housing mitigation fees charged to The Limelight, Rocksprings, FiftyFifty Brewing and Residence Inn projects? I can’t believe that the Town is still letting developers build massive projects and pay so little in impact fees. Is there an investigation into the possibility of payoffs to Town officials in return of such low fees? Seems like a perfect opportunity for massive gift.

Lunch: It’s amazing how little anyone seemed to give a crap about it. I’d suspect a payoff, but I don’t think the council is crafty enough to have thought it through like that. I think people are so used to kowtowing to the rich at this point that there’s not a second thought about it.

Reader: Wow. Just wow. Amazing that no one cares about this - when everyone complains about the lack of workforce housing. Where are 225 new employees (projected from the four cited developments) going to come from, and where are they going to live? Or are these new developments just going

the
sheet

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“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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to steal from the existing workforce by offering better pay and benefits, forcing older businesses to close because they lost their employees?

I showed the ad to my neighbor here in Colorado. She works remotely for Pitkin County as a building and plan inspector. She was shocked by the low fees and said Aspen/Snowmass would have charged many millions in developer impact fees for projects like these.

I remember when Intrawest was supposed to build a big parking structure in The Village as part of the initial developer agreement. That never happened. As I recall, Intrawest got away with a lot of things, threatening to take their ball and go home if they didn’t get their way.

Guess Mammoth will never learn. Is Town Council in a coma? Is Town staff so incompetent that they don’t compare fee schedules with other resorts? Is everyone consuming too many gummies and just don’t give a shit?

Best part about the holidays, for me anyway, is the opportunity to read. I’ve been hopping between two books - neither a lighthearted romp. The first won the National Book Award in 2017 for nonfiction. “The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia” by Masha Gessen.

Good for someone like me who sort of forgot about Russia in the wake of

see more LUNCH, pg. 3

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FACILITIES OPERATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INYO NATIONAL FOREST

LUNCH

continued from page 2

the 1989 fall of communism - I was too busy embarking on my life to focus too much on international affairs.

But now, given Ukraine and Trump's reemergence/weird bromance with Putin, I felt like it was important to catch up.

And the takeaway is really ... once a people is terrorized and benumbed into servitude, it's almost impossible to unlearn that behavior.

Russian sociologist Yuri Levada, writes Gessen, hypothesized a detailed portrait of "Homo Sovieticus," a type of human being the totalitarian regime forms and whom it relies on for stability.

"The successful member of Soviet society, suggested Levada, believed in self-isolation, state paternalism and 'hierarchical egalitarianism' and suffered from an 'imperial syndrome.' Self-isolation was a key strategy for both the state and individual; as the Soviet Union sealed itself off with the Iron Curtain, so did the Soviet citizen separate himself from everyone who was Other and therefore untrustworthy. Ideology supported these separations by stressing class enmity, but keeping one's social circle small was also a sound survival strategy during the era of mass terror, when excessive trust could prove deadly ...

The Soviet state was the ultimate parent: it fed, clothed, housed and educated its citizen; it gave him a job and gave his life meaning; it rewarded him for doing good and punished him

for doing wrong, no matter how small the transgression. By its very design, the Soviet socialist state is totalitarian because it must not leave the individual any independent space."

So what happens when you overturn that apple cart?

It creates utter discombobulation. Rather than the old standard - the state pretends to care, and the citizen pretends to be grateful - there's no standard.

And we all apparently prefer fake tears at a funeral as opposed to no tears at all.

After a few years of flailing about (transitioning to a free market system is no small task), what the Russians really craved was stability.

They were also obsessed with nostalgia. "An entire channel was launched to show Soviet television 24-hours a day. It was called Nostalgia and its logo, shown in a corner of the screen, contained a red hammer and sickle."

They were collectively like a prisoner who's finally been released from prison and finds the outside so unfamiliar and scary that he commits another crime just so he can get back in.

Into this void steps Vladimir Putin, the third prime minister appointed by Boris Yeltsin in less than a year.

So what happened? Within weeks, there were a series of apartment building explosions which killed hundreds.

This gave Russia the excuse to launch a new offensive in Chechnya, one of its

former separatist republics.

Military action!

And in response to the apartment building explosions, Putin said simply, "We will pursue terrorists wherever they are. At the airport, if they are at the airport. And that means, I apologize, that if we catch them going to the bathroom, then we will rub them out in the outhouse, if it comes to that. That's it, the issue is closed."

Putin projected resolve. His job approval ratings went from 31% to 80% within three months.

By New Year's Eve 1999, Yeltsin resigned and Putin took over. And the second half of the book revolves around Putin's consolidation of power in the name of stability.

Stability being achieved by promise of a restoration to glory (see Ukraine) and tapping into the Homo Sovieticus fear of Other (consolidating mainstream support by bullying the LGBTQ and Jewish communities at home).

There's a book called "Blows from the Russian Gods" which becomes essentially required reading in Putin's Russia. Every soldier receives a copy. It purports "to uncover the real crimes of the Jews - and the sexual traits of the Jews ... not only was homosexuality widespread among the ancient Jews but it was known to take over entire cities, such as Sodom and Gomorrah."

Putin also had some luck. Oil prices remained strong for the first several years of Putin's reign. As Gessen writes,

"Money was what the Kremlin used to defuse the protests of the disenfranchised." By dramatically increasing pensions and social program spending.

The promise of stability comes from a familiar playbook.

"The point is that both Hitler and Stalin held out promises of stability in order to hide their intention of creating a state of permanent instability."

And then post-Stalin, order was maintained by punishing a few (just to prove that you still would) in order to neutralize the many.

The parallels to current American society? It sure feels like social media has contributed to a lack of independent space.

"Other" is seen as untrustworthy.

We're a country infatuated with nostalgia (Make America Great Again) and have elected the "stable" genius to lead us once again.

In the book, there's a bargaining that sort of takes place. Russians will live under a dictatorship in exchange for stability so long as it's a "soft" dictatorship.

In America, that dictatorship seems to be taking form in the outsized power and influence of heavy-handed government mandates, and depending upon where you live, those mandates are either culturally oppressive or small business/entrepreneur oppressive.

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BUSINESS

continued from page 1

same audience, all striving to stay competitive—especially in relation to Mammoth Mountain’s services and staff, which can offer high base wages and immediate convenience.

And on top of that, business owners in Mammoth aren’t just competing with local shops; they’re also up against ski retailers nationwide.

Chesak described the competition between outdoor retailers—and with the mountain—as a “friendly” one, where each shop finds its niche and collaborates to strengthen tourism in the town.

To maintain sales at Footloose, Chesak tries to stay acutely aware of the latest trends and innovations in the ski industry, as understanding these dynamics can significantly influence a customer’s purchasing decision. For example, ski boot sales have surged this season, largely due to innovations like the boa lacing system, he said.

However, the pandemic complicated these trend predictions. The industry dipped from 2020 to 2021, then surged in 2022 and 2023, according to data from the National Ski Areas Association. This data correlates with investments and acquisitions from ski conglomerates Vail and Alterra, and aligns with the town’s TOT revenue patterns, which also saw a post-pandemic boom.

The challenge is that what goes up must also come down, and this high isn’t expected to last forever, especially as the pandemic recedes and Uncle Sam tightens the spigot.

This uncertainty complicates demand predictions. Last season, Footloose miscalculated demand and overstocked its

inventory, Chesak said. From his understanding, lots of retailers made the same mistake, and now the market is saturated with new, season-old skis.

Chesak’s staff managed the overstock, but this year, they opted for a more conservative stock approach. Services like ski repairs have become significant and consistent income streams, performing well this winter due to wear and tear from early season conditions.

Rick from Rick’s Sporting Goods offered a more succinct take on the season, stating that business is good and they’ve stayed busy. He relies on word-of-mouth marketing and doesn’t advertise much beyond that.

“The rush started a little later than usual because of school schedules,” he said, noting that repeat customers account for 80% of his business, with some customers remaining loyal across generations—insulating him somewhat from industry fluctuations.

Just a few doors down, Sun & Ski Sports was sold out of rental equipment in every size by the time I visited in the late afternoon. Manager Jose Solorio explained that they base their inventory predictions on historical data.

Certain items, like sleds, sell consistently every year, while others require more guesswork. “Every year, we look at our numbers for brands by style,” Solorio said. “If we sell a lot of a certain brand, we order more from them.”

At the end of the day, I didn’t encounter any businesses complaining about the season’s start, and only time will tell how this momentum carries after the holidays.

A BISHOP ELKS NEW YEAR’S

By Gayla Wolf



New Year’s was for all ages at the Bishop Elks Lodge on Tuesday night



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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



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IN MARK WE TRUST

By Fisher

Mark Drew, Ph.D., is poised to lead the Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) into its next chapter, bringing with him over 25 years of experience in conservation, leadership, and natural resource management. He will officially assume the role of ESLT's Executive Director on January 8.

I spoke with Drew just before the holidays while he was becoming acquainted with the role and meeting the staff. Though his career has taken him across the globe, from Asia and Oceania to the eastern Caribbean, he said he has considered the Eastern Sierra home for some time and is excited to be back.

Yes, "back"—he initially moved to the Eastern Sierra in 2007, where he developed a deep connection to the land and its communities. He served for a decade as the Eastern Sierra Regional Director for California Trout. However, in March 2018, he took on international assignments that kept him away for several years.

"I finished up my work in the Pacific and felt it was time for a change," he

recalls. "I'm looking forward to re-engaging with the community."

Drew holds a B.S. in Forestry and Natural Resources Management, an M.A. in International Development Policy, and a Doctorate in Forestry and Resource Conservation from the University of Florida.

He has always viewed himself as a steward of the environment, believing in the necessity of collaboration between land trusts, private landowners, and the broader community to conserve working farms, natural areas, and cultural resources, he said.

His experience working abroad has encouraged him to consider all the different actors and partners in the public sector and government.

"Working overseas, we were there to support the people and the government and their aspirations for taking care of their lands and stewardship," he said. "Coming back here to California, I think one of the roles we have is to be a good partner and a good steward of the resources in response to the broader



Mark Drew

economic development challenges that we face."

ESLT works with private landowners and the public to conserve working farms and ranches, natural areas, and cultural and biological resources for the benefit of their communities, according to their website. It may acquire lands through donation or purchase, set up voluntary land protection agreements (conservation easements) with willing landowners, or mediate land trades between landowners and public agencies.

Drew is particularly excited about the new conservation strategies currently being developed by ESLT, which the organization aims to complete by June 2025. These strategies will set the future trajectory for the organization's stewardship initiatives, focusing on community needs and ecological health.

"We are in a significant data-gathering phase, looking at what exists in the landscape and identifying opportunities that align with the missions of local tribes," he explained, though he was still onboarding and familiarizing himself with the project.

One of Drew's key goals is to enhance ESLT's collaboration with Native American tribes in the region. He is thrilled about the recent addition of Noah Wil-

liams as the Tribal Partnership Program Manager, who will play a vital role in fostering these relationships.

"Expect to see much more direct engagement with Native American tribes, which is essential for our conservation efforts," he states.

Williams is a member of the Bishop Paiute Tribe and grew up in the Owens River Valley. Prior to joining ESLT, he served as the Water Program Coordinator for the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley, gaining valuable experience in water resource management.

Mark's approach to conservation is informed by the philosophy that ecosystems, economies, and social systems are interrelated. One of his areas of focus is restoring ecological services, particularly within water systems.

"We need to concentrate on restoring floodplains and their functionality," he notes. Reflecting on historical practices, he acknowledges that "50 years ago, we were trying to manipulate and control these systems, but now we need to prioritize ecological health."

In the context of the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power's (DWP) presence in local water systems, Drew said he plans to "look at all sides of the issue."

"They're a smart entity and a key partner in the region. I think they are one of many key players given their historical presence that needs to be engaged with and considered a partner," he said.

Mark believes that a fundamental aspect of successful conservation is fostering resilience in the face of uncertainty.

"I've always felt it's important as an individual to contribute, and my passion for nature and the environment drives me," he said. "There's a real sense of purpose in this work, and I enjoy it immensely."

This adaptability will be crucial as the Eastern Sierra faces ongoing challenges related to politics, climate change, habitat loss, and community needs.

As he embarks on this new chapter, Mark invites the community to reach out and get to know him.

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BRIEFS

Armed Robbery

On the afternoon of Sunday, December 22, 2024, a Mammoth Lakes Police Officer was conducting a patrol check near Mammoth Pacific’s Geothermal Plant and unexpectedly interrupted an armed robbery in progress. The suspect identified as Pablo Ruelas Castro (33-year-old Mammoth Lakes resident) immediately fled on foot into a wooded area, leaving two victims behind.

The victims advised MLPPD Officers their belongings were stolen at gun-point by Castro. Additional Mammoth Lakes Police Officers responded to the area, with the assistance of California Highway Patrol and Mono County Sheriff’s Office personnel. A perimeter was set up in the area and Castro was apprehended without incident.

K9 “Jax” was deployed in the wooded area to conduct an article search for evidence. K9 “Jax” successfully located the victim’s property along with an unregistered loaded firearm allegedly used in the robbery.

Castro was subsequently arrested for violations of robbery, assault with a firearm, criminal threats, possession of undetectable firearm (ghost gun), possession of high-capacity magazine and probation violation.

All suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Reds Meadow Construction

Construction work came to a close for the 2024 season just before the incoming Thanksgiving weekend storm systems, wrapping up the reconstruction project to about halfway complete!

Currently covered in deep snow, Reds Meadow Road is still open for winter recreational use, but closed to vehicle traffic. It will remain this way for the rest of the winter and into the spring.

Construction-related summer road closures are also anticipated for 2025.

Firefighters Respond to Trailer Fire on CA-190

National Park Service (NPS) and Beatty firefighters successfully extinguished a trailer fire in Death Valley National Park on December 29, 2024. The fire began when the brakes of a tractor-trailer overheated while descending nearly 5,000 vertical feet from Towne Pass on California State Route 190 (CA-190). The driver was cited for driving with a suspended license.

“This was the eighth vehicle fire this year in Death Valley National Park, and the sixth fire due to overheated brakes,” said Mike Reynolds, Superintendent of Death Valley National Park. “We want to remind drivers of heavy vehicles to down-shift on steep grades and consider pulling over to allow their brakes to cool down.”

Commercial trucks are not advised on CA-190 due to steep grades. Commercial trucks are prohibited on other roads within Death Valley National Park.

ELKS ON THE SHELVES



Photo Gayla Wolf

The Bishop Elks give Xmas gifts to seniors in Bishop and Lone Pine every year. Here’s a photo of the Bishop Care Center staff in receipt of this year’s haul

We wish you and your family a season filled with health, peace, and joy and may 2025 bring you prosperity.

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HIGHCOUNTRYLUMBER.COM

OBITUARY

ROBERT “BOB” NOCK 1929-2024

If you lived in Mammoth Lakes before the 80s, you might remember a small, sleepy town in the summer where businesses struggled to stay open year-round with few visitors after the winter season. That changed over time partly due to the entrepreneurship of Robert “Bob” Nock, who peacefully passed away on November 17, 2024, at his home in Reno at the tender age of 95.

Bob was born on September 11, 1929, in Long Island, NY, to Robert and Constance Nock. After his mother passed away when he was just eight years old, Bob attended the Kent School in Connecticut during his formative years. His intellect led him to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he was a Phi Gamma Delta fraternity



At age 90, hiking the Mono Lake Fissures

member and earned a master’s degree in Aerospace Engineering, graduating with Phi Beta Kappa academic honors.

Upon graduation, Bob had his first daughter, Cindy, and moved to New Mexico to work for the US Air Force. Three years later, he was hired by the TRW Company and moved to Santa Monica, Calif., to work on the Apollo Rocket Launching System. There, he met Jerry Buss and Frank Mariani.

The Mariani-Buss Associates (Buss later bought the LA Kings, the Forum, and then the Lakers) recruited Bob to become the director of their hospitality business, which included the Ocotillo Lodge in Palm Springs, the Camelback Hotel and a Playboy Club in Phoenix, Ariz., and the Sierra Nevada Inn and Rafters in Mammoth Lakes. Bob later oversaw the development of the Mill City Mining Company restaurant on the Mammoth property.

Bob met his beloved wife, Marjorie Lizza, in 1973, mother of four, on the ski slopes of Mammoth Mountain. They were married in 1975 at Hidden Lake (when it was a large lake prior to the avalanche that filled it in 1983), and he became an integral part of their busy skiing family. With slower summer occupancy at the hotel and restaurants, Bob developed a program to bring bus tours of senior citizens and foreigners to Mammoth to help generate revenue. He, Margie, and their family, along with Barbara Campbell, Barbara Moore, and others, developed guided sightseeing tours filled with natural and human history to enter-



Bob and wife Margie

tain the guests during the day, while evenings were filled with bingo games, local movies, and entertainment after dining at the Rafters. The tours became so popular that overflow groups were shared with other local lodges and restaurants.

Bob retired in the late 1980s to fully appreciate life with Margie. They became avid scuba divers, hikers, backpackers, and even lawn bowlers while continuing their passion for skiing. They learned to speak fluent Russian and traveled several times to Russia to hike the rugged Caucasus Mountains, discover the expansive culture of the country, and build lasting friendships with families there. They often crossed the Pacific as passengers on commercial ships to spend the off-seasons in Fiji and the Sunshine Coast of Australia. On Bob’s 80th birthday he went skydiving there. His quick wit, wry humor, and kind generosity are remembered by his family and friends.

Bob is preceded in death by his beloved, devoted wife, Marjorie Nock. He is lovingly survived by his daughter, Cindy Weaver and her two kids JR Weaver and Carla Egger (Cody); brother, Fred Nock (Pat), sister, Mary Adams (Ron); his step-children, Cathy Clarke, Karl Lizza (Patti), Chris Lizza, and Connie Lizza Moyer (Roy); Megan Massey, Patrick Montague, Conor Montague, Keegan Montague, Brooke Diller, Ellen Teehan, Perry Moyer, Melanie Moyer and Cassidy Moyer; in addition to six great-grandchildren, two nephews and one grand-niece.

Bob’s natural curiosity, vast knowledge, and thoughtful discussions about life on earth and the universe continued to the very end of his life. He was an avid reader of literature, consuming at least three books a week. In honor of his life, he would love for you to think about him while enjoying the great outdoors.

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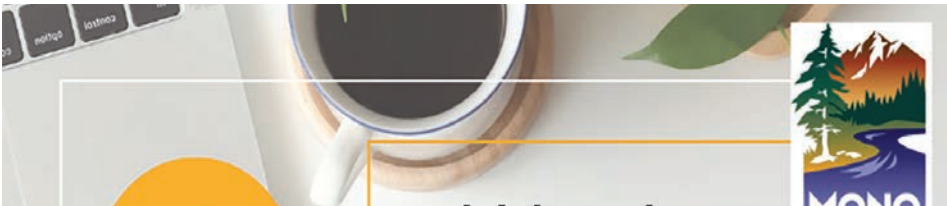




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L.A. ... CITY OF TAKERS

Press Release

Geoff McQuilkin, Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee, wrote the following missive on the Committee's website on December 22 in response to LA's reneging on its promise to limit water diversions.

In 2024, Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) committed to a new collaborative approach to restoring Mono Lake. But the optimism abruptly ended in November, when DWP quietly reversed its plan and began maximizing water exports.

DWP began taking water away from Mono Lake in October, and diversions haven't stopped since. Export volume blew past the planned 4,500 acre-foot amount before Thanksgiving, hit 6,000 acre-feet in early December, and today the water keeps flowing through the Mono Craters tunnel.

The Committee pursued information about the unexpected export activity, making dozens of inquiries to multiple DWP staff that all went unanswered for weeks. Finally, after discussing the problem with DWP's CEO in her Los Angeles office, pieces of information have been shared. It is now clear that DWP, despite the commitments of City leadership, has no collaborative plan in mind for Mono Lake.

DWP's annual operations plan specified that exports would total 4,500 acre-feet of water—the same as in 2023 and 2022, and a meaningful voluntary commitment. Holding exports steady at the same level as the prior two years would

help preserve recent wet year lake level gains, showing commitment to reaching the overdue, state mandated healthy level for Mono Lake, while also providing a stable level of Mono Basin water to the city. "Planned export," DWP wrote to the State Water Board in May, "is 4,500 acre-feet."

As DWP prepared to abandon its 4,500 acre-foot plan, it did not communicate with the State Water Board, Mono Lake Committee, or other Mono Lake parties like the California Department of Fish & Wildlife and Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a Tribe. Nor did DWP communicate its new intentions in a timely way, not even in response to dozens of inquiries from the Committee and concerned agencies.

After inquiries from Los Angeles leaders and significant pressure from the Committee, DWP water operations staff finally revealed on December 16 that DWP intends to take 16,000 acre-feet of water by March 31, 2025. This is the legal limit, and the same old maximization approach to taking Mono Basin water that has chronically impaired the lake's ecological health and kept it well below the 6392' Public Trust lake level.

DWP now intends to take nearly four times as much water as it took last year. And that nearly quadruples the impact on Mono Lake.

In total, DWP's maximized water diversions will artificially lower Mono Lake a quarter foot this year. Losses like that add up, and history shows this is exactly how progress in restoring the lake is lost. Lowering the lake increases salinity, un-

dermines the lake ecosystem, negatively impacts biodiversity and millions of migratory birds, and diminishes scenic and Tribal resources at Mono Lake.

Back in the spring, Los Angeles leadership responded positively to a call from a large coalition led by the Mono Lake Committee. The coalition asked Mayor Karen Bass to consider the low level of Mono Lake and voluntarily not increase water diversions in order to preserve recent gains and make progress toward the state-mandated, healthy 6,392-foot lake level requirement. The LA Times reported the decision as an environmental win in June, quoting Deputy Mayor Nancy Sutley saying, "Mayor Bass has been clear that building a greener Los Angeles is one of her top priorities and protecting water resources certainly falls into that."

Disappointment in DWP's abandonment of the commitment runs far and wide. EPA Regional Administrator Martha Guzman, in a December large group call, called DWP's action "surprising and discouraging."

After DWP abandoned the 4,500 acre-foot commitment, Melanie Paola Torres, representing LA community environmental justice organization Pacoima Beautiful, spoke at the DWP Board of Commissioners public meeting, saying: "These diversions jeopardize the recovery of the lake, harm its ecosystem and worsen air quality in the surrounding region."

The Mono water represents just 1-3% of the city's annual supply. The lake to-

day is a decade late, and nine feet short of achieving the State Water Board's mandated healthy management level.

To explain its actions, DWP has offered that, because the winter might be dry, it needs the water for the city—and, at the same time, because the winter might be wet, it has reservoir management concerns.

Regarding water supply, state reservoir storage is currently above average, and DWP's own staff reported to the DWP Commission in October that "we now have the most water in the Southern California region than we've ever had in history ... there's a lot of water in storage and that is good news for us."

DWP has also claimed the excess water exports are needed to prevent Grant Lake Reservoir in the Mono Basin from overflowing during the winter. Here, too, DWP is disregarding its own operations plan, which contains contingencies for managing the reservoir level by sending additional water to Mono Lake via Rush and Lee Vining creeks. In fact, DWP today is diverting flow from Lee Vining Creek and adding it to Grant Lake Reservoir storage at the same time it claims exports are necessary to reduce storage.

DWP water exports increase day by day, demonstrating a rejection of Mono Lake considerations and collaboration. As 2024 concludes, it is clear that 2025 will be a critical year for all of us concerned about Mono Lake's future to speak up, take action, and make sure real action is achieved to restore Mono Lake to health.

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1 DAY

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1 MONTH

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Risk for heart disease decreases by half.



Sources:

1. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2020). 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Table 2.22B.

2. Hofer BM, et al. (2019). Rural-Urban Variations in Cancer Incidence, Detection, and Survival in California.

3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2004). The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General

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More Liberty info: See ad p. 8
Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour Monday through Friday from 4-6 p.m. *More info: See ad p. 6*
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

January 3-4/
Weekend Apres Ski parties @ Canyon Lodge. Starts 1 p.m. both days.

Sunday, January 5/
NFL Sunday Football @ the Bishop Elks Lodge, 151 E. Line St. Starts 9:30 a.m. Bar open! Public welcome!

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

Tuesday, January 7/
Karaoke @ Liberty. Starts 9 p.m.

Wednesday, January 8/
Weekly Pool Tournament @ Distant Brewing. Hosted by Eastern Sierra Pool from 4:30-9:30 p.m.

January 10-11/
Anthony Cullins (guitar virtuoso) plays Liberty for two nights. No cover. Starts 9:30 p.m.
Weekend Apres Ski parties @ Canyon Lodge. Starts 1 p.m. both days.

TOWN STUFF

Saturday, January 4/
Mammoth Mountain Community Foundation FIRST TRACKS FUNDRAISER. Score an hour of exclusive early access to the slopes! Early access to Chairs 1, 2, and 3 starting 7:30 am! All funds raised go to support MMCF athletic and education programming for youth throughout the Eastern Sierra. \$\$\$. Valid lift ticket for January 4 or proof of Ikon Pass needed for purchase
Sierra Forever offers free guided snowshoe hikes in Mammoth each Saturday @ 11 a.m. Snowshoe loaners available. Leave from Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center at 2510 Main St.
MHS Basketball hosts Immanuel Christian. Girls play 3 p.m.; Boys follow ~4:30 p.m.
Woolly's weekend dance parties start back up @ the Village at Mammoth. Time: 3:45-4:30 p.m.
Bucky's Saturday bonfire @ the June Mountain Chalet. Time: 2 p.m.

Sunday, January 5/
Tamarack Cross-Country Ski Center is hosting FREE Women's Clinics for all abilities that include a trail pass and 50% off rentals. Today's clinic is at 2:15 p.m. Call or visit The Yurt to learn more. 760.934.5293

TOWN STUFF

Monday, January 6/
Eastern Sierra Community Housing Board meets. Time: 9 a.m. Location: Suite Z, Minaret Mall or online via townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.

Tuesday, January 7/
Inyo County Supervisors meet. Location: Board Chambers, 224 N. Edwards St. in Independence or online via inyocounty.us. Starts 10 a.m.
Mono County Supervisors meet. Location: Bridgeport Courthouse or online via monocounty.ca.gov. Starts 9 a.m.
BUHS Soccer hosts Rosamond. Girls play 3 p.m. with the Boys to follow ~5 p.m.

Wednesday, January 8/
Mammoth's Planning and Economic Development Commission meets. Time: 9 a.m. Location: Suite Z, Minaret Mall or online via townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.
Painting workshop (Basic Color Theory with Acrylic Paint) with **Marijke IJff** @ C5 Studios in Bishop. Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m. Location: 210 S. Warren St. *Info/register: c5studios.org*.
MHS Basketball hosts Coleville. Girls play 4:30 p.m.; Boys follow ~6 p.m.

Friday, January 10/
BUHS Basketball hosts Desert. Girls play 4:30 p.m. with Boys to follow ~6 p.m.

TOWN STUFF

Saturday, January 11/
Sage to Summit winter race series @ Millpond County Park. 5K. Register 8 a.m. with race @ 9. Suggested donation \$10.
Sierra Forever Alabama Hills Ranger Programs. Time: 11-12 p.m. and 1-2 p.m. Location: Mobius Arch Trailhead.
Mono Arts Council "Art and Wine" class @ the MAC Gallery inside the Minaret Mall. "Acrylic Landscape painting" with Blair Latos. Time: 3-6 p.m. \$\$\$. *Register at monoarts.org*.

UPCOMING

January 18: The Eastern Sierra People's March for caring, solidarity, kindness and safety. "Books belong in libraries, not on bonfires." Rally begins 1 p.m. with march to follow. Info: Karyle Tong @ 406.224.1572.

mammoth

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-Mammoth \$20-22
Line Cook
-Mammoth \$22
Prep/Dishwasher
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Housekeeper(s)
-Mammoth \$20
Journeyman Plumber
-Mammoth \$30-45
Snow shovellers
-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.

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COUNTY OF MONO

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

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

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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

Crescent 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 Restaurant at the popular Double Eagle Resort and Spa in June Lake CA. Experi-

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.



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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

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PERSONALS

I saw you ... are struggling to come up with a New Year's resolution. Here's an idea. Resolve to be more decisive.

I heard your ... New Year's Resolution is to laugh more. You know Eeyore, I just find that comical.

In search of ... a new squeeze for the new year? If you'll share your soft and plush, I'll be your Mr. Whipple, and if you don't know who Mr. Whipple is, you're probably too young for me.

I saw you ... broke your promise at Mono Lake. Maybe you're having a dyslexic moment. That's MoNo Lake. Not NoMo Lake. Stop looting the water!

NATIONAL

A PIVOT TO THE RIGHT

By Casselman

It appears that major governments are changing hands and public policy directions in many places at the same time.

Most notable perhaps is our own federal government, following an historic national election in which Donald Trump returns to the White House four years after he was defeated for re-election in 2020.

But major governments, have suddenly changed, or are about to change in all regions of the world, including Germany, France, Syria, Canada and South Korea.

This follows recent earlier government changes in Scandinavia, The Netherlands, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Argentina, Brazil and Japan.

In most, but not all, cases, the changes have been the replacement of governments on the left with governments on the right — following the global conservative tide of the past decade among democratic nations. Many significant elections have seen voters responding to center right parties and leaders.

This does not prove that conservatives have all the answers. The failure of some major center-right govern-

ments, such as the Tory government of Great Britain illustrates the growing voter realization that governing any large nation, especially ones with diverse or non-homogeneous populations is becoming harder and harder to do.

It does not seem that the problem is representative democracy whether its form be a republic like the U.S., a constitutional monarchy, parliamentary democratic state, or any other democratic form which enables its citizens to choose their leaders through voting.

The main problem seems to originate in the various current systems of delivering public services and responding to public needs in an effective and timely manner.

The current conservative trend has come primarily from voter reaction the long-term failure of leftist models which arbitrarily redistribute resources, over-regulate enterprise and inhibit free markets with resulting inflation, unemployment and unstable economies.

The most notable example of a new approach is now going on in Argentina, a nation with many natural

resources, but a long-term chaotic economy due to Peronist oligarchial governments which always fail to serve the Argentine public and its interests.

Under President Javier Milei, decades of destructive public economic activity are being rapidly replaced with libertarian conservative policies, and in a remarkably short period of time, his “chainsaw” approach is getting positive economic results, albeit with some short-term hardships.

Incoming U.S. President-elect Trump has promised his own “chainsaw” approach to the progressive economic policies and centralized regulatory delivery of public services, but so far, these are only promises.

Whether his policies will work re-

mains to be seen.

Tax cuts without also lowering public expenditures has not worked in the past. Creating more and more public debt only ensures long-term instability. So-called Keynesian economics, once a fashion, no longer works.

As the new year of 2025 begins, more new changes of government are likely to appear. No government will be perfect, but the quest in democratic nations for better government has not ever been more urgent.

Barry Casselman is a syndicated columnist who has been covering national (and international) politics since 1972. You can find more of his work at barrycasselman.com.



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STILL GETTING PICKETT'D ON

By Hartley

This is it folks. We waited all spring and summer for football season and just like that, Xmas, New Years and the regular season are done. Time for the random holidays and the playoffs. You get some Presidents Day and MLK Day and ... I think I am missing another one that I don't really care about, but appreciate the day off. Fantasy football seasons are over. I had 6 leagues. Got crushed in the Guillotine league - had my head cut off by week 5 I think. Lesson learned. Made the playoffs in 4 of the other 5. Won two leagues and finished second in another league. All in all a good fantasy season. My personal league, I lost the Super Bowl because I benched **Devonta Smith** in the bowl. Figures. After terrorizing me as the QB of the Steelers, **Kenny Pickett** filled in for Jalen Hurts and had the game of his life, feeding Devonta Smith like he was his momma. Damn.

Speaking of that, the Eagles are stupid. They were beating the brakes off the Cowboys and they had **Saquon Barkley** running the ball like crazy late in the game trying to get the all-time rushing record in a season. Stuck on Stupid. Imagine the stupid look on their faces had Barkley gotten hurt.

College football. The NCAA playoffs are underway. And they are underwhelming. No way you need 12 teams to figure out who is the best in college football. And you should NOT get a first round bye by being in a conference where you get to play Lone Pine High School and Incarnate Word. Cut it back to 6 teams and be done with it.

Cam Ward, Miami Hurricanes QB, played the first half of the team's bowl game. He set the NCAA all-time record for TD passes and then proceeded to sit out the second half. The team lost 42-41. Some folks were outraged. I found it COMICAL. First of all, they didn't lose because of him. They lost because their defense sucked. I heard some saying if he was in the game they could have scored more. Yeah and if he played line-backer maybe they wouldn't have given up 42 points. If I were Ward, I wouldn't have played. Why get hurt and lose millions to win the ... let me look it up ... you have to be kidding me ... the POP TARTS bowl. That ain't even real food.

Select picks

Ravens -17.5 to Browns. O/U 41.5. Ravens need this game to win the AFC North title. Browns need this game and line to convince them to make some real changes to that pathetic organization.

They recently restructured the **De-shaun Watson** contract to give them more salary cap space. The NFL is a joke with their salary cap. That cap rule has some serious holes in it. And Watson is just laughing his ass off. Show me the money. Ravens 42-13. Ravens cover the OVER by themselves.

Browns D-lineman **Myles Garrett** recently said he wants to know sooner than later what their plan is to start winning. I am going to guess he will find out soon they do not plan to win. He demands to be cut immediately at halftime and signs with the Ravens before the game is over.

Bengals -2 AT Steelers. O/U 48. Over is the Steelers run to greatness with

DangeRussell at QB. Bengals can score. Steeler CB **Joey Porter Jr** tries to cover **JaMarr Chase** and gets 13 holding penalties and ends the game playing with boxing gloves on. Bengals 31-21.

Bills laying 3 to the Patriots. O/U 38. 38? Are the Bills sitting all their offensive players? Patriots tanking for the #1 pick. Bills cover with **Doug Flutie** at QB.

Bears a 10 point 'dog to the Packers. O/U 41. Packers need a win and some help (need Cowboys to beat Redskins) to get the #6 seed. They take care of business, 33-19.

Cowboys 5 point 'dog to the Redskins. O/U 44. Cowboys trying to prove they're not soft, but playing well in meaningless games doesn't prove anything. Coach **Mike McCarthy** is trying to save his job so Cowboy fans are doomed to suffer another couple years of this crap. The Redskins are good again so the name should come back. 'Skins 27-20.

By the way, they do still play their Fight Song "Hail to the Redskins" after every home win. But now it's called "Hail to the Commanders" and they've changed the lyrics. "All of Washington" instead of "Sons of Washington" and "Fight for Our Commanders" instead of "Braves on the Warpath."

Eagles laying 2.5 to the Giants. Yes, Barkley will sit. Rushing record holder **Eric Dickerson** can breathe easy.

Despite the team record, I still don't think much of **Nick Sirianni** as Eagles head coach. He is just a puppet. That's how the organization is set up. They hire the coordinators they want and when they have good coordinators they are killing it as the coach just wanders around. Then they have this character. You have to read this:

Dom DiSandro, also known as "Big Dom," is an employee for the Philadelphia Eagles.

DiSandro has been with the Eagles since 1999 and is responsible for:

- Overseeing safety and security for players, coaches, and executives
- Directing security at the team's training complex
- Managing security measures for team travel and logistics
- Educating people on the NFL's personal conduct policy

DiSandro became involved in a sideline altercation during the Eagles' Week 13 game against the San Francisco 49ers in 2023. He was suspended from the sidelines for the rest of the season after he stepped in to separate Eagles WR DeVonta Smith and Niners linebacker **Dre Greenlaw**, and Greenlaw hit DiSandro in the face.

After the incident, DiSandro was given the additional title of director of game-day coaching operations, which involves overseeing Nick Sirianni's coaches on game days. This new title was likely intended to make it more difficult for the NFL to discipline DiSandro if there's another sideline incident in the future.

So he's Security, assistant to the GM and director of gameday coaching operations. In effcet, he is the actual GMs henchman on the sidelines to control the game and the coaches. Why doesn't the GM just fire the head coach and come down to the sidelines himself. I think unless the Eagles reach the Super Bowl, Sirianni is gone after this season. I am applying for the job. I can manage a

game better than Sirianni.

Bucs laying 13.5 to the Saints. O/U 43.5. Bucs need a win to vie for the NFC North title. Bucs lay WASTE to the Saints. 30-14

Chiefs vs Broncos. Chiefs will be sitting in their homes watching the game. Sit everybody and play the entire practice squad. Broncos make playoffs by default.

Chargers laying 5 to the Raiders. Chargers can be the #5 seed if the Steelers lose and then the Chargers would get to play the Texans. If you wanna play a lame duck playoff team, that would be the Texans. Or the Steelers. Steelers play Saturday night so Chargers will know before kickoff if they have a chance at the 5 seed. Chargers win either way, but win by more if incentivized.

Dolphins -1 to the Jets. That's all? O/U 39. Over is the Jets season ... eight weeks ago. Over is me seeing **Aaron Rodgers** on a football field. Thank goodness. Dolphins need to win and for the Chiefs to beat the Broncos. Which won't happen. Dolphins still want to win to prove they can play in cold weather. 20-16.

'Hawks at Rams. Hawks -6.5. O/U 38.5. If Rams lose and Bucs win, the Rams drop to the #4 seed and will face either Minnesota or Detroit. I am imagining they don't want to have that happen and take this game seriously. They play Sunday night after the Bucs so if the Bucs lose they sit their oft-injured starters **Kupp, Stafford, Nacua** and lose the game 26-14. If the Bucs win, Rams play the game for real and win 30-24.

Vikings 2.5 point dog to the Lions. O/U

56.5. This should be fun to watch. Is **Sam Darnold** gonna continue his elite play or is he going to turn back into 2018-2023 Dumbass Darnold? Will **Dan Campbell** make another ridiculous decision to lose the game and fall from the #1 seed to the #5 seed? That would be fitting. I think PieFace Darnold pulls off the victory 36-33. For some reason, I think they have this whole team of destiny thing going. And the Lions defense is atrocious now.

Speaking of Darnold I was stuck watching GET UP the other day and **Rex Ryan** and some other talking head, probably Orlovsky, were bitching about the Vikings not giving Darnold a contract already. What are they waiting for? What else does he have to prove? They kept asking. Well, why rush? They can franchise tag him after the season and ask him to prove it again. He is having a magical year. After five bad years. I wouldn't pay him right away. Which also gives you a chance to see if this year's #1 draft pick **JJ McCarthy** gets healthy and can play.

These people on TV clamoring for teams to throw money at him will be the same ones bashing the team if Pieface reverts to form.

One of the other idiots on the show was ranting and raving how bad he wants to see Saquon play because the EAGLES HAVE TO LET HIM BREAK THE RUSHING RECORD. Risk losing your best player to injury and screw the whole team in the playoffs for a record? That show is terrible. SHUT UP.



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MURDER HORNETS AND SOLAR SHADE

My vaguely serious effort to do a bit of a local news detox over the holidays went pretty well, thanks to simply switching to regional news to feed my addiction. Here are a few tidbits.

Skiers and mountain lovers from the Bay Area, Sacramento and Reno have plenty of reasons to avoid Mammoth in favor of Lake Tahoe, and they just got another one.

Alterra Mountain Company's massive redevelopment plan for Palisades Tahoe in Olympic Valley was approved by the Placer County Board of Supervisors on Nov. 20. The revamp is huge. It will consume about 85 acres at the base of the ski hill. The plan calls for 850 lodging units, 1,500 hotel rooms, 300,000-square feet of commercial space, 3,000 parking spaces (think about that groundbreaking idea while trudging through the sludge to the Village or to Mammoth Main Lodge), and employee housing for up to 300 worker bees (another whizbang idea). That investment makes Alterra's proposed revamp of Mammoth Mountain's Base look rather skimpy. Anyway, the buildout at Palisade will take about 25 years. Or roughly twice as long as the 13-year planning and approval process took. And yes, not everyone in North Lake Tahoe was happy

about the sprawling "upgrade," but it was approved despite nine hours of public comment, mostly negative.

One big Western news story generating plenty of buzz was the recent announcement that the pitched battle to fight off the dreaded invasion by murder hornets has been won.

Murder hornets, of course, were phase two of the plague arriving five years ago, winging their way into our Covid-era consciousness as a sting-symbol of the coming apocalypse. The apocalypse will have to wait. After a five-year war on the pesky pest, the Washington State Department of Agriculture pest program recently declared victory and announced the murder hornet hordes have been "eradicated."

Another happy story involves the Great Salt Lake. Alarm bells have been going off for years as the lake levels continued to drop. The shrinking lake prompted comparisons to our very own Owens "Dry" Lake, which dried up and turned into the biggest single source of PM10 dust in the country. But it seems "saving" Mono Lake would have been a better comparison. This December, the Great Salt Lake water watchers reported about 70,000-acre feet of water has been "donated" to the effort to keep the Great Salt Lake a lake, according to Fox 13

News, Salt Lake.

For comparison, 70,000-acre feet is about the yearly average amount of water sent down the LA Aqueduct to keep Los Angeles from drying up. The big donations to the Salt Lake came from the Utah's big players, The Church of Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons) and Rio Tinto Kennecott, (the copper mine and one of the largest open-pit mines in the world), along with some cities and irrigation districts.

In the "Money Talks, BS Walks" Water Department we have solid results so far in the effort to keep more water in Lake Mead, the nation's largest reservoir and another source of SoCal water. Instead of lecturing and pleading, the federal government and the Imperial Irrigation District offered cash to farmers not to farm. Guess what, it worked. Hay farmers got about \$300 for every acre foot of water they didn't use to grow hay in the desert (dumb idea to start with, but here we are). About 154,000 acres were left fallow. That kept about 700,000 acre feet of water in the reservoir, the LA Times reported.

Unfortunately, that news was swamped by the return of widespread dry and drought conditions in the Western US and California.

The dry start to the snow year is most likely why the Los Angeles Department

of Water and Power has decided its previous decision to take merely 4,500-acre feet of water from the Mono Basin can't hold water anymore (*see related story page 9*). Instead, to the dismay of the Mono Lake Committee, LADWP calmly and without notice kept diverting water after hitting the 4,500-acre foot target. The committee had hailed and celebrated the decision to take less than the legally allowed 16,000-acre feet this year. That was called a significant decision reflecting the "a new collaborative approach to restoring Mono Lake," as the committee webpage notes. Plus, it touted that none other than LA Mayor Karen Bass endorsed the original plan to take less water. But Mayor Bass and probably other Mono Lake fans might have forgotten about the routine bit of LADWP boilerplate attached to any and all projections, estimates and promises.

As of Jan. 1, the committee webpage reported LADWP had taken about 7,000-acre feet from the basin and the gates were still open and LADWP confirmed it would divert the legal limit of 16,000-acre feet of water by March 2025.

Finally, a bit of a head scratcher. Several news outlets reported that California is currently generating so much solar power during the day that the juice overwhelms the grid and exceeds demand fairly regularly. So the grid operators tell large commercial solar operators to curtail or shut down operations (some are able to "wheel" the power and sell it to other states). The best estimate in the LA Times was last year the state shut down enough solar energy to power about half a million homes for a year.

On the heels of that news the Bureau of Land Management has issued permits for nearly 29 gigawatts of clean energy (mainly solar and wind) in the Western US and about 66 more utility-scale renewable projects are in the permitting pipeline.

Closer to home, the BLM has designated about 12 million acres of federal land in Nevada for possible utility-scale solar projects. That includes land bordering Death Valley National Park and the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

Right down US 395 near Mojave, LADWP completed its latest solar project, the Eland Solar-plus-Storage Center, sitting on about 4,600 acres. The project will power about 266,000 households in LA, and adds to the department's current output of 1,100 megawatts of solar power. The Eland project is the first for LADWP to combine solar generation and battery storage, which allows the electricity to be released at night and in the evening when the solar panels literally go dark. Battery storage is noted as one way to take full advantage of solar power by evening out energy flows throughout the day.

Jon Klusmire of Bishop is trying to even out his energy surges so he can get off the couch quicker.



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SHEET SURVEY

The Sheet asked: What’s the weirdest thing that’s gonna happen in 2025?

By Fisher



“Trump voters learn what tariffs mean.”
-Jane Doe, Reno



“The incidental theft of art (as a byproduct of AI).”
-Eric Kramer, Reno



“AI ... I don’t know why and I don’t know how but it’s gonna do something.”
-Greg Jackson, San Diego



“Whoever stole my E-Bike will die.”
- Simon Stallings, Mammoth



“The Year of the Dragon. It’s already happening.”
-Benjamin Montes, Las Vegas



“Snowboarding influencers.”
-Bella Molony, L.A.



“Self-driving Ubers.”
-Joey McNulty, L.A.



“Changes in government agencies like the FDA and EPA.”
-Heather Brunsell, L.A.



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