

the sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra



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This guy's (almost) as high as Nate Newton



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Judging by his face, he can't afford 8050 either

Saturday, February 4, 2006

FREE

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Road-Gate Continues

Homeowners, Developer Create Compromise Plan For Sherwins Exit Strategy, But Some Users Remain Unconvinced

Pressure from backcountry enthusiasts led Town Council to repeal a previous resolution on Wednesday which vacated Town property on Ranch Road to two homeowners' associations. The vacation allowed these homeowners to install a private gate in order to restrict vehicular access to their neighborhoods. However, the vacation as written did not ensure public pedestrian access. By repealing the vacation, public pedestrian access at the gate was effectively restored.

This restoration, however, appears to be a quixotic victory at best. Attorney Tim Sanford, who represents the Ranch Road homeowners, called this "the easement to nowhere." Sure, backcountry users now have access around the gate, but they still must trespass across private property to reach it.

Which is why Mayor Pro-Tem Tony Barrett met with Sanford and Chuck Lande of the Chadmar Group (owner of the golf course) to hammer out an agreement to provide a legal exit route.

This is what they came up with.

The proposed exit route allows users to traverse the southwest edge of the golf course and along the back property lines of residences on Woodcrest Rd.

Upon reaching the end of the subdivision, users would then walk down Ranch Road and around the gate.

The catch, said Sanford, is that the proposed route would not constitute an easement through private property but a "license." In legalese, this means that permission to use the route would be conditional and revocable at any time with thirty days notice.

"Why not give it a try?" said Sanford. "It's an experiment." And if users don't behave and the agreement is terminated, how are the users any worse off? he asked rhetorically. "They're trespassing now. And they'd be trespassing then."

Attorney Michael Bornfeld, who represents John Wentworth (the Mammoth resident who has emerged as the de facto champion of the local public access to public lands movement) found the proposed license agreement unacceptable.

"It's a noble attempt," he said, "but it's an illusory agreement. It's like saying, 'If you give me \$500, I'll paint your house ... if I want to.'"

Bornfeld, Wentworth and Marshall Minobe all expressed frustration that they weren't adequately included and involved in the license agreement. **see ROADGATE, page 3**



PHOTO BY DUBLINO

Rescue helicopter at Mt. Walt

AVALANCHE CLAIMS FIFTH DEATH IN A WEEK

MMSA Ski Patroller Dies Wednesday in Backcountry Avalanche

By Tony Dublino

On Wednesday, February 1, an avalanche occurred in the Blacksmith Creek drainage near Twin Lakes out of Bridgeport, injuring one and claiming the life of Mammoth local Johanna Carlsson.

The party of three, all experienced back country skiers with the proper equipment, were also Mammoth Mountain Ski Patrollers. Carlsson, CJ Pearson and Josh Feinberg, were in the seldom-visited Blacksmith drainage on route

to the north face of Mt Walt. The group was traversing an east-facing, roughly 35 degree slope at 9,300 ft. when they approached a suspicious aspect a few hundred feet from the top of the slope. Feinberg led through while Carlsson and Pearson stood by in a safe area. The slope avalanched and triggered another "sympathetic" slab that released above Pearson and Carlsson.

Pearson managed to hold onto a tree as the avalanche

strained through numerous obstacles, carrying with it Carlsson and Feinberg. When it stopped some 500 vertical ft. below, Carlsson was not buried, but had sustained multiple life-threatening injuries including a broken back, femur, and head injuries. Feinberg, however, was completely buried by the slide.

Pearson reacted quickly. He began a beacon search for Feinberg, who he located **see AVALANCHE, page 5**

Beyond Wally's World

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Shake'n Bake

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Obscenely rich, Obscenely beautiful

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The Sheet. One of the few, the proud, the locally owned

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Six more weeks of winter

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PHOTO BY HOFER

The red line = proposed exit route of Lande and homeowners. The yellow and blue lines = existing routes favored by backcountry users.

ROADGATE

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ment negotiations.

Minobe even went so far as to say that he felt Town Council is on the side of neighborhood property owners versus the entire community.

This did not sit well with Mayor Rick Wood. "We don't favor property owners. We don't favor anybody. We're just looking for a solution."

Councilman John Eastman said he's spoken to several people who signed Wentworth's petition and that every-

one thought it was a good deal. "They might not be able to egress as they did in the past, but there still are routes," he said, noting that when he skied the Sherwins years ago, the popular egress point used to be Tamarack Street.

Barrett's motion to repeal the vacation of Town property included a directive for Staff to further vet the license agreement proposal and other proposals which may be brought forward in the next several weeks.

THIS SUNDAY

IT'S AN



SUPERBOWL

Pittsburgh Steelers v. Seattle Seahawks
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Sunday, February 5, 2006

Followed by

comedy night

8:30 pm



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