

the sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra



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Pearly Gate?



June Mountain now open

Saturday, December 17, 2005

FREE

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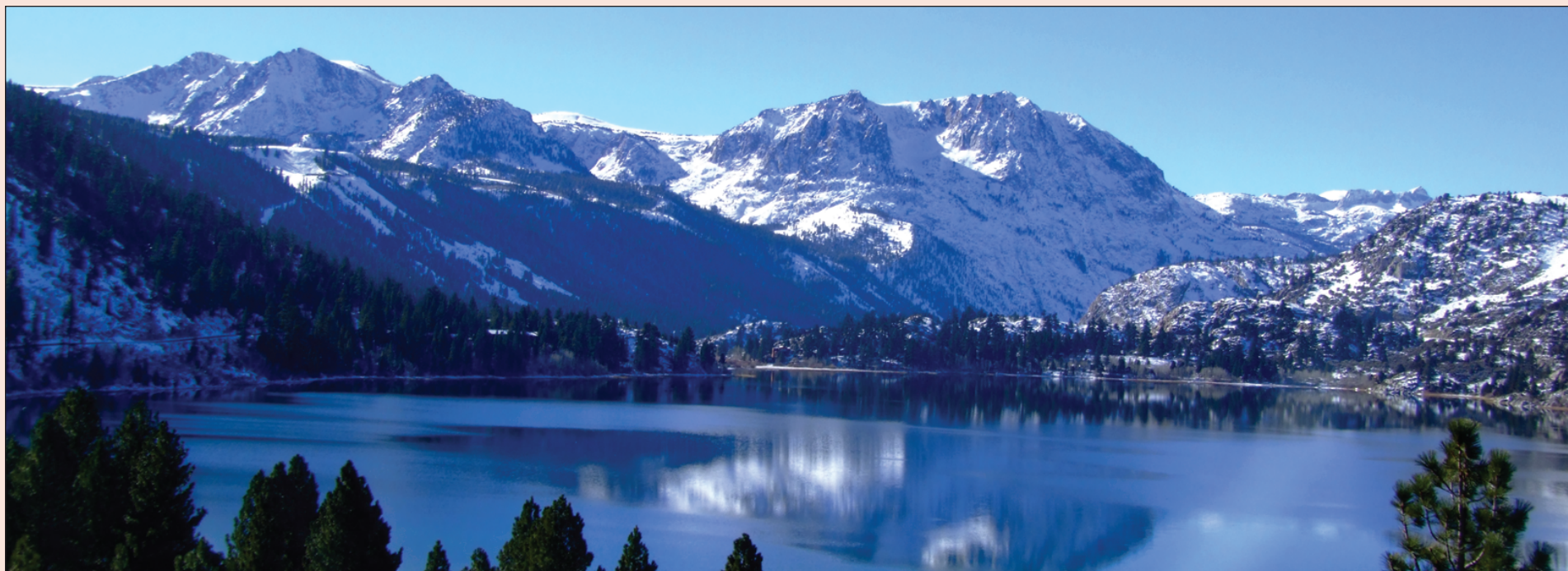


PHOTO BY HOFER

OFF THE TOP

Merry bleepin' Christmas

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Tennis players volley back at Rusty

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Sternlicht as King Kong

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Wentworth Advocates Public Access to Public Lands

The following is a transcript of a speech made before Mammoth Planning Commission on Wednesday

By John Wentworth

I have been a resident of Mammoth Lakes for five years.

On Monday, 30 fellow citizens here in Mammoth read and agreed and signed their names to the following statement. They signed as individuals and as business owners.

"I have been following the meetings of the Planning Commission and the Town Council regarding the vehicle gate on

Ranch Road. I believe that the Sherwins are a significant asset of our community and I believe further that deeded public access to this asset must be part of any General Plan that our community adopts.

I have had no objection to the construction of the gate on Ranch Road as I can sympathize with the residents' desire to stem the traffic of skiers see **PUBLIC LANDS**, page 15

Bravehearts

Why does freedom involve sitting through 5-hour meetings?

By Jenell Schwab

Mammoth Lakes Planning Commission proceeded with its General Plan review at a painfully slow rate Wednesday morning, making the final scene of Braveheart appear swift by comparison. With staff presenting the commission with a final list of 16 major policy issues and questions, the commission worked through only three of sixteen issues in five hours.

South Gateway

Some changes in the Draft General Plan (DGP) may allow

Mammoth Lakes Housing, Inc. (MLH) to purchase 25 acres of land for workforce housing development in the South Gateway parcel. Some members of the community argue the DGP modifies the intent of the current Urban Growth Policy?

Staff says "no" highlighting vocabulary in the general plan. A document produced by town staff reads, "Three environmental factors that were considered in the 1993 staff report (air quality, water quality, and plant and animal populations and habitat) and were tied primarily to the physical extent see **BRAVEHEARTS**, page 5

PUBLIC LANDS

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and snowboarders and other winter sports enthusiasts who may be parking vehicles in their neighborhood.

However, throughout these proceedings, it has been my distinct impression that this gate would not inhibit public access. The gate has been built with ease of pedestrian access in mind, there being no fence to impede pedestrian traffic extending perpendicular to Ranch Road in either direction. There is public transportation available at Snowcreek, a short walk down Ranch Road, which helps reduce the need for parking. Now that the town has agreed to vacate a section of Ranch Road to the Fairway Ranch Homeowner's Association and the Ranch at Snowcreek's Homeowner's Association, I am looking forward to reading the language of the easement that the Town will write to guarantee public access to this section of Ranch Road.

It has been my expectation that while the gate would inhibit vehicular traffic, it would not be an impediment to the public's pedestrian access to Ranch Road. I look forward to reading the language of the easement guaranteeing public access, and seeing the easement recorded as part of the vacating process."

What was most interesting about this exercise was the fact that I did not meet with a single objection to this statement from anybody I spoke with during my two-hour town tour collecting these signatures. Quite the opposite was true. The fact that I have 30 signatures and not three thousand is a testament merely to not having enough time nor enough blank documents for citizens to sign.

Elected officials will be well advised to conclude the following - there is no constituency in this town for the restriction of public access to public lands.

It would be an insult to the blind to suppose that our natural surroundings, the very physical environment we

live in, does not play - at minimum - a significant factor in determining why we all live here. Any attempt to complicate that relationship - the relationship between our dwellings, our houses, townhomes, the apartments we live in and the businesses we run and the jobs we work at - and the physical environment that we love and which nurtures and sustains us, will quite apparently be met with resentment and resistance and outrage.

But in addition to these personal concerns, the citizens recognize that it is at the very heart of the economic interest of our town and community - and by extension, ourselves - to create and provide a functioning and well reasoned relationship between ourselves, and most importantly between our guests, and the stunning public lands that surround us, and which are the fundamental reason why they choose to visit us in the first place.

In wintertime, for example, it is possible to ride up the Mammoth Mountain Gondola, ski perfect sunlit powder off the back of the mountain to Twin Lakes, travel through the stunning scenery of the Lakes Basin, take a short hike up to the Sherwin ridge to a vertiginous view of the town of Mammoth Lakes and the second highest peak in the contiguous United States off in the distance, ski another 2,000 feet of virgin powder snow and after traveling across a gentle meadow, hop on a public bus and get delivered - at no charge - to a welcoming village and a hot meal and a functioning gondola and do the whole thing again after lunch.

This is a smart and very gratifying exploitation of the resources Mammoth Lakes has to offer. This is why our guests are here. Even if they never participate in an adventure like this - and let's not forget that there are many who do and many more on the way who will want to - our guests have paid good money and made a significant effort to be in a place where they know things like this are possible and where they know things like this can happen. They want to be in a place that is not like where they have come from - note that

the word "parking" was not mentioned once in our Sherwins Scenario.

The town, the citizens and most importantly, the business community must come together to create an inspired and functioning integration of public and private land through deeded public access. This plan is - ironically, in that it doesn't exist - already being powerfully and quite successfully marketed by Intrawest and Starwood and 8050 and Tallus and The Westin and the

rest. They're doing an excellent job and making lots of money selling the vision of a plan that does not yet exist.

We cannot afford to be stupid - it's an internet world, word will travel fast.

And do we really want to be like everybody else? Do we really want to create an unfunctioning resort destination? There are plenty of other ski towns already racing us to the bottom. And it might just affect the value of our real estate...



PHOTO BY SCHWABA

This young whippersnapper dreams of unfettered access to PG-13 films.

NO CLASSIFIEDS

Personals

I saw you ... at Mammoth Liquor looking at all those thinly disguised soft-porn mags like Stuff and Maxim. You know all those girls are totally airbrushed, right? You know it's not all strawberries and cream, right? A word to the wise: the sooner you learn to appreciate the taste of cottage cheese, the better off you'll be. Meet me tonight at Vons at 6 p.m. and we'll buy a copy of 'O' and I'll take you home and show you what a real woman is all about.

I saw you ... out at a Christmas party. Man, you look so good ever since you dumped that loser-boyfriend of yours. It's time for you to play the field. And for me to play your infield. Don't worry about a thing. I've got good hands and a strong arm. Given the sports theme, whaddya say we meet at Grumpy's. 8 p.m.?

I saw you ... at the Booky Joint. You were browsing the fiction section, but let me tell you, that ass I saw ain't fiction. Stop by the Booky Joint tomorrow and meet me in the health section - under anatomy.

I saw you ... at Speed of Light. You were picking up photos, obviously from a recent party. Count me in for the naked hot-tubbing followed by a spirited game of Twister. I sure liked that photo where you went left hand green!

Help Wanted

Ski Surgeon now accepting applications for winter employment. Energetic PT and FT personnel for rentals, retails and repair. Contact Jim and/or Jon. 934.6370 or 934.6569.

Old New York Deli in the North Village now hiring full-time/part-time cashiers. 934.3354.

Mammoth Pet seeks part-time retail help. Heavy lifting and love of dogs required. Stop by and talk to Lance at 38 Laurel Mtn. Rd. Call 934.4417.

Elegant Bath & Kitchen seeks full & part time super fun retail sales positions. Please call Dawn 924-2040.

Full or part time. Smart, fun SHEET reader to work in art gallery, retail and food service environment. Multi-tasking ability a must. Flexible daytime schedule, salary plus tips & all the tea you can drink. **Inquire at Edisto Gallery & Tea Room**, 452 Old Mammoth Road. 934.3001.

Mammoth Spa Creations seeks PT and FT maintenance persons. Competitive wage. Possibility for advancement. Must be bondable/insurable and have a valid D.L. Stop by the store at 128 Tavern Rd. to apply.

Mammoth Boys Varsity Basketball seeks one athletic, high-school boy over six-feet tall to set picks and rebound. If interested, call Coach Carleton at 937.4613.

Mono County has a Ride Share Program!

Mono County has teamed up with AlterNet Rides to provide our community with a completely automated ridesharing service!

IT'S FAST, SIMPLE TO USE & ABSOLUTELY FREE

To Rideshare, to to **www.monocounty.ca.gov** and click on the link to AlterNet Rides. Select your destination, become a member, or log in if you've already joined, and you will immediately be walked through setting up a ride to that location.

Mono County



CONDO FOR SALE

1 bedroom with loft, 2 bath, centrally located in Mammoth. \$315,000. 937.4856. pat.pillowbirds@aol.com

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