

No News Is Good News When You're Killing It At The Cash Register

Damn, it's slow. News-wise that is. Good news is that the business folks are too busy doing business to focus on much else. Word is that restaurants like Whiskey and Nevado's are having record or near-record winters. Even Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, which had a slow start due to a lack of early snow, is now trending at 98% of its anticipated total of 1.3 million skier visits for this year. Communications Manager Joani Lynch said a good weekend this weekend will likely get MMSA completely caught up.

In reference to the letter on page three, I also received a letter from a Ranch Road resident this week which chronicled the misdeeds and

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- Lunch

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misbehavior of backcountry enthusiasts who used his front yard as an outdoor bar/latrine. The letter was unsigned so I can't print it, and probably was unsigned because the homeowner, unlike Mr. Sheaffer on page three, faces far greater odds of retribution if he reveals himself.

Two sides to every story. Just sad, however, that the whole situation has reached this point, where the two sides cannot even address each other rationally. Unfortunately for the backcountry folks, a few bad seeds, like a few bad doses of medicine, tend to force the recall of the entire batch.

John Wentworth, who spearheaded the signature drive to force Town Council to address this crucial public access/private property issue, collected an astounding 796 signatures from members of the public eager to guarantee pedestrian access of some kind.

MMSA CEO Rusty Gregory sent the following from his Blackberry on Wednesday regarding Mammoth/Yosemite Airport. Not real specific, but specific enough. "Returning with [Town Manager] Rob Clark from FAA meeting [in Washington]. Airlines are Horizon and United."

Indeed, Mason Aguirre has made the U.S. Olympic team and will ride in the halfpipe competition in Torino next month. Fellow local rider Danny Kass, Silver medalist at the 2002 Salt Lake City Games, also made his 2nd Olympic team. Other team members are Shaun White, who won all five Olympic qualifier events, and Andy Finch.

Marshall Minobe has thrown his hat into the ring as a candidate for Town Council. Minobe served on the General Plan Advisory Group. His opinion of the General Plan Update process is that of a "huge failure."

In particular, Minobe took umbrage with Town Manager Rob Clark's

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assertion that the General Plan Update has been dovetailing more and more with the 1987 Plan it was supposed to replace. That Staff even considered halting the General Plan Update to re-adopt the existing plan, he said, represented a huge red flag.

"The Town currently has problems based upon its 1987 plan," said Minobe. "Especially in regard to housing. I recognize Mammoth Lakes Housing has done good things, but thus far, when considering both the quantity and character of the housing it is building, MLH is 'just another developer,' according to Minobe. Furthermore, he said the decision to solve the housing crunch by building new stock creates, in turn, potential new problems in regard to infrastructure.

One of Marshall's most interesting observations was in regards to what happens when infrastructure needs aren't addressed. For example, he said, an insufficient transit system has led developers in Mammoth to increasingly plan "fully amenitized hubs." In other words, the perception that the Town will not solve its transit deficiencies ("and why would you rely on the Town for services?" he said) leads developers to create self-sustaining developments where every need can be met and there's no need to leave the hub.

If such a trend continues, it could result in an increasingly fractured community.

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- Lunch paraphrasing Minobe

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