

Letters

Jack Lunch,

The other morning I hiked the Sherwins before work. It was clear and cold, and a half-moon presided in the pre-dawn sky. I hiked by myself, taking in the quiet serenity and soft colors of the Eastern Sierra sunrise, spectacular as ever.

Behind me the Mammoth Crest and Crystal Crag were set against a backdrop of blue, white and gray, not yet illuminated by the day's first light. Soon pink and purple hues would appear. Above me, the final push to the top stretched farther than I could see.

Anticipation flowed through me. I quickened my pace.

Standing on top of my line, I strapped in and turned off my iPod to listen to the stillness in the air. I reflected back on my life, and how the events of the last 28 years had brought me here, looking towards town from the top of a 3000-foot descent through fresh powder, the sun rising in the distance. I dropped in and there was nowhere in the world I would have rather been.

Then I got to Ranch Road. Not so serene.

A woman was erecting a "No Trespassing" sign, and a man was yelling at me.

"Hi," I said to the lady. She said hi back.

"GO THE F'K AROUND!" the man yelled from behind his wife. "GET THE F'K OUT OF HERE!"

She told him to calm down. He ignored her and walked toward me. She told him to stop. He ignored her again and walked right up to me.

"What's wrong with me being here?" I asked him.

"We'd prefer you walk on the golf c-," she started.

"YOU'RE TRESPASSING! AND I'M TIRED OF YOU %#\$HOLES TELLING MY WIFE TO GET F'KED AND KNOCKING OVER OUR SIGNS!"

"I agree," I said. "That's completely inappropriate."

He took a step closer. I could see he was foaming at the mouth. Literally. I told him I was happy for him that he was successful and owned his home in such a nice part of town, and that I was just trying to get to the road so I could get to work on time. He told me I wasn't f'kn going through there. I wondered if he was going to punch me.

"It's because of a few idiots, isn't it?" I asked, realizing what was going on.

"IT'S BECAUSE OF A LOT OF IDIOTS,"

he bellowed. "YOU'RE ALL A BUNCH OF F'KN IDIOTS!"

"How long have you lived here?" I asked curiously.

"THIRTY F'N YEARS!"

"That's about how long people have been walking through here on their way down from the Sherwins." I retorted.

"THINGS F'N CHAAANGE!" he screamed. I laughed because he reminded me a little of Howard Dean at that moment.

"GET THE F'K OUT OF HERE, F'KFACE!"

I told him alright, that I was leaving, and that he was an %\$^hole, and I turned around and went the other way.

"I'm sorry, ma'am," I said, "but he's an a**hole. I'm sorry, ma'am."

Brandon Sheaffer

Mammoth Lakes

PS: Since I was by myself, you'd think I'd seem innocent to the homeowners who are having problems with the riff-raff who are mouthing off to them and drinking beer on their porches. The way I see it, not all Ranch Road homeowners are pricks just because this guy came

completely unglued on a snowboarder recreating on public lands. But this guy is grouping all snowboarders together and demonizing us because of the actions of a few. Outdoor enthusiasts' continued use over many years of the Sherwins, to quote John Wentworth, presents "a strong argument" that "a 'public recreation easement' can be established through judicial process." My hope is that future skiers and snowboarders who are approached by this guy handle themselves respectfully, for fighting him on his property will only give him leverage, and impede the wishes of the majority of us in town.

Ted and Mike,

If my mother were still alive, I'm sure she would have been fascinated by her son being mentioned in an article - albeit a release - with a "Ménage a Trois" headline.

Thanks for the coverage!

Rick Phelps, Executive Director

*High Sierra Energy Foundation
Mammoth Lakes, CA*



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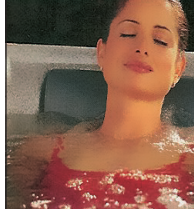
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