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To our readers:
Sierra Views offers a view of the events, activities, and fun up and down the Eastern Sierra and beyond. In this issue, we see many things to do in Bishop, the Small Town with a Big Backyard, and from there, we head north to Mammoth, and south to the Kern River and Tehachapi.

On the cover:
Summer’s biggest party runs Aug. 29 to Sept. 1 at the Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair, including the rodeo, with a scene from a previous year’s event shown here.
(Photo courtesy of BACCVB)
Mammoth Lakes are officially ready for their 24th Annual Party in the Pines: Festival of Beers and Bluesapalooza.

“At 8,000 feet, our festival unites the best in craft beer and legendary blues at altitude,” says Sean Turner of Mammoth Brewing Company, host brewery of the event. “This year’s lineup is incredible with a mix of celebrated blues performers and some emerging new acts.”

The outdoor event takes place Aug. 1-4 at The Woods at Mammoth Lakes. The first two days focus solely on music, no pun intended, while Saturday and Sunday will include beer tasting as well as musical acts.

The weekend tastings include beers from more than 70 breweries, a lot of them local, with over 200 beers, ciders and hard kombuchas on the menu.

How an event like this normally works, in regards to the tasting, is that there will be small shade structures set up for each brewery. Each brewery will have one, two, maybe even three beers that you can have a small taster of. You will carry around a reusable taster cup, getting to sample as many beers as you want.

This is why I have found it useful to bring someone, a friend or a partner, along. If you get one tasting while your friend gets another, you can try as many beers as you can in half the time, while still staying relatively sober.

Music lineup

The schedule for the main musical acts is below. There is a second stage with even more acts performing than listed below.

Thursday night will run from 4:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. and is labeled “Beyond Blues.” Some of the acts that Bluesapalooza will be showcasing include ‘Dirty Cello,’ ‘Sal’s Greenhouse,’ and Shamarr Allen & The Underdawgs.’

Friday night runs from 4 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. and is called the “Rock ’n’ Blues” event, with acts Reverend Tall Tree & The Blackstrap Brothers, Emily Wolfe, Popa Chubby, and Karl Denison’s Tiny Universe all in the mix.

Saturday is the main event, running from noon to 11:30 p.m. There will be a grand tasting from noon to 5 p.m., with bars open for the majority of the event. The main acts for Saturday night include Kings and Associates, Cristone “Kingfish” Ingram, Surgaray Rayford, Mindi Abair & The Boneshakers, and Trombone Short & Orleans Avenue.

The last day of the event, called “Soulful Sunday,” will run from noon to 6 p.m. The main tasting will take place from noon to 4 p.m. Acts include Southern Avenue, Charlie Musselwhite, Jimmie Vaughan, and Buddy Guy.

Interesting tidbits

The Mammoth Festival of Beers and Bluesapalooza originated 24 years ago in the Whiskey Creek Restaurant parking lot. There were just 10 breweries in attendance, with “a handful of beer-lovers.”
According to the event's website, “The idea behind the event was simple — have some fun and introduce Mammoth locals to the joys of handcrafted beers. The second year we threw in some real blues and a lot more breweries, and we’ve never looked back.”

Every week on the event’s website, Amy Smith posts an interesting article about something related to Bluesapalooza. The past two weeks have been articles about breweries that are participating in the event. The article prior was about Bluesapalooza attire. The website has some good reads if you are interested in the event as a whole, or just local breweries or craft beer in general.

**Ticketing information**

The event does have tickets still available at the time of this writing. A single Thursday day ticket is $25 a person. A single ticket for Friday is $55 a person. A Saturday music-only ticket is $85 a person, but the blues/brews ticket is already sold out. A Sunday music-only ticket is $65 a person, and a blues/brews ticket costs $85 a person.

There are multi-day passes available as well. A four-day blues/brews bundle costs $230 a person. There is also a four-day music lover pass that costs $185 a person.

Two-day passes for Friday and Saturday blues/brews combo starts at $160 a person, or you can purchase a Saturday/Sunday blues/brews passes for $175 a person.

Lastly, you can also purchase a 4-day ultimate pass for $310 a person. This includes early access to the event as well as two food vouchers.
BY JACK BARNWELL
The Daily Independent

As the summer continues into August and early September, people are going to look at escaping to the Kern River Valley, Lake Isabella and the mighty Kern River for relief.

When people do so, they must remember to take the necessary precautions as the Kern River’s rapids can be powerful — hence the reason why county officials are stressing safety.

Kern County Sheriffs Sgt. Steve Williams and other officials stressed that point during a recent public meeting at the mouth of the Kern River in June following a spate of drownings and deaths.

“If you are visiting the river and not actually going into the river, you are still in danger,” said Williams. “In the case of the 11-year-old girl, she was not swimming but simply walking along the edge of the river with her friends and family. In this case, she slipped in and fell into the river.”

An 11-year-old girl from Bakersfield was among the latest victims to be lost in the river. KCSO received reports of her missing on June 22.

Williams expressed little hope that the girl is still alive, but noted that search and rescue teams continue to look for her body.

“Obviously we have a tragedy with her,” Williams said.

Three other people have either drowned or gone missing in the river or Lake Isabella since the start of June. Spencer Makaza of Los Angeles was located.

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RODNEY PREUL/DAILY INDEPENDENT

The Kern River.
Two teenagers, a 15-year-old and 19-year-old from San Bernardino County, went missing on June 16 after jumping into the Kern River at Keyesville South. Both their bodies were found in July.

The Kern River has claimed 96 lives since 2000. Of those, 39 were from Lake Isabella.

Brian Baskin, Kern River Search and Rescue captain, noted that his crews are continuously in the water on both the river and lake during since the onset of the first missing persons cases of the summer. "We are making sure to bring those who are missing home," Baskin said. "We cannot stress enough how dangerous this river is. There are dangerous spots on this river that we will not go in and will not raft."

He said despite that danger, search and rescue crews continue to do their best to search for the missing, and break apart any visible obstructions like debris piles and search high rapid areas.

Baskin stressed that the public's assistance continues to be valuable by spreading the message about being safe while at the Kern River and Lake Isabella.

He also urged people to wear life vests or personal flotation devices if there was any chance they would be near or on the water. "Also, if you want to go out on the water (for rafting) please use one of the area's outfitters," he said.

He said his volunteers are out and about at campsites conducting outreach efforts, especially in light of the incident with the missing Bakersfield girl.

"We want to make sure that doesn't happen to anyone else," Baskin said. "We bring everyone home eventually. We take this very seriously."

Baskin noted the operations include joint operations with his agency, Bakersfield Search and Rescue, Tehachapi Valley Search and Rescue and China Lake Mountain Rescue Group.

Countywide, Williams said there are about 220 volunteers on a daily basis who assist with search and rescue operations, though the number fluctuates depending on availability.

"I get as many as I can on any given day," Williams said. Williams said the high water flow is due to an extremely wet winter, with the Southern Sierra Nevada snowpack reaching 187% of normal.

"Once that snow starts melting, it feeds into our rivers and lakes and then ends up as madness," Williams said.

When asked if there are any "safe areas" on the Kern River during the high water season, Williams couldn't say there is any that fit that definition. "There are certainly areas that are more dangerous than others," Williams said.

However, he stopped short of accepting the river's moniker of "Killer Kern." 'Killer Kern' is to some degree a bit misleading," Williams said. "You can stand by this river all day long and go home, still get in the river and enjoy it safely, and still go home at the end of the day."
We sure have a lot going on these days. Only about 2 hours away, Bishop makes the perfect destination for a quick escape. Whether your idea of fun includes fishing, hiking, shopping, live entertainment, or pure relaxation, you’ll find it all in Bishop.

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Cool off in Bishop Creek Canyon

BISHOP AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS BUREAU

Locals say “20 minutes to lose 20 degrees.” While the mid-day temperature in downtown is toasty this time of year, a mere 20 minute drive west on Highway 168/Line Street will transport you to an alpine environment with tall pine trees, crystal clear lakes and streams teeming with trout. Visit Sabrina, South Lake or Intake II for an afternoon hike or bring your fishing gear. All lakes and streams are well stocked this year so your chances of landing a lunker are really good. Tip: Consider riding the ESTA Shuttle from downtown Bishop up the canyon. The shuttle runs twice daily and a one-way ticket is only $5.

Shop for local produce and artisan made items

BISHOP AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS BUREAU

The Bishop Paiute Community Market is every Thursday evening 5pm until dusk (through October 3rd). The market features fresh produce, local art, crafts, food vendors and live music. Admission is free and location is Owens Valley Paiute-Shoshone Cultural Center, 2300 West Line Street. Tip: go a few hours early and explore the Native American museum and cultural center. First Friday Markets in Downtown Bishop are set for August 2nd and September 6th. Enjoy great food & beverages, live entertainment and shop for unique hand-made items on Academy Street from 6-9pm. Labor Day Arts & Crafts Show in Bishop City Park August 30th – September 2nd. Dozens of booths featuring art, photography, jewelry, weavings, wood carving, ceramics, clothing, food, and more. Friday - Sunday 9am – 6pm. Monday 9am – 2pm.
Don’t miss the Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair

Summer's biggest party runs August 29th – September 1st offering good old-fashioned fun for the whole family. Carnival rides, rodeo, contests, demolition derby, horse show, concerts, vendors and of course, fantastic fair food! There's so much happening this year, you'll definitely want to go more than once.

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Live music is good for the soul!

Come on down to the gazebo at Bishop City Park every Monday during the summer at 8pm for free concerts by the Bishop Community Band. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and friends. On August 8th, chill out at the free concert by Adventures in Parrotidise – a Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band at the Tri-County Fairgrounds & Event Center. Bishop Community Concerts Association hosts several live performances each year and there are several coming soon. August 25th: Golden West Woodwind Quartet (Free!) September 15th: Sean Stackpoole Jazz Quartet and October 13th: Don Gato Latin Band. All performances begin at 3pm at Bishop Union High School Auditorium. For a truly immersive musical experience, don’t miss the Annual Millpond Music Festival September 20th – 22nd. The world-class music lineup is complemented by kids' activities, arts and crafts booths, and food vendors – all in the beautiful outdoor setting of the Millpond County Park just outside of Bishop, CA.

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Celebrate and learn about Native American traditions

BISHOP AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS BUREAU

September 27th-29th the Paiute Palace Casino will host the 2019 Pabanamanina Pow Wow. The event is open to everyone, beginning with a parade on Friday, California Indian Day. Hundreds of Native American dancers, drummers and others from around the nation will show off their regalia and traditional dances. There will also be kids’ games, music, a free barbecue, Native American artists selling wares, an honoring of local veterans and the crowning of Miss Pabanamanina. This is a family friendly, drug and alcohol free event.

Laws Railroad Museum and Historic Site is a true Eastern Sierra treasure!

BISHOP AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS BUREAU

In the 1880’s the Carson and Colorado Railroad Company built a railroad from Mound House, Nevada to Keeler, California. One of its stops was Laws. The railroad ceased operation in 1961, but the original depot, agent’s house, turntable, oil and water tanks have been preserved. Today those artifacts stand with other buildings and exhibits on the grounds of this 11-acre museum. For a real treat, hop on the historic Death Valley Railroad Brill Car for a ride on certain dates. August 3, 17, 21; September 1; November 29 & 30. Train rides are offered 10:30am-2:30pm and cost is $5 per person (kids ride free with adults.) September 27th – 29th, Laws will host Curley Fletcher’s 127th Birthday Rendezvous. Amateur and professional poets and musicians will gather to celebrate the life of the prolific American composer. Laws Museum is open daily 9:30am to 4pm; admission by donation. From Bishop, take Highway 6 north for 4.5 miles. Turn Right onto Silver Canyon Road and the museum is on the right.

Plan your Eastern Sierra stay at the Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau

BISHOP AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS BUREAU

Be sure to check in with the Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau for help in planning your Big Backyard adventure. Their friendly, knowledgeable hosts are eager to share tips to help you make the most of your stay. Bishop Visitor Center is at 690 N. Main Street; Open Monday – Saturday 9am-5pm and Sunday Noon-4pm. Telephone (760)873-8405. Online – www.bishopvisitor.com.
Consider escaping the seasonal heat of the desert with a day trip to Tehachapi. At a higher elevation than Ridgecrest, the charming small town provides a cooler recreational equivalent when temperatures begin to climb.

At less than an hour and a half away, Tehachapi offers many options for entertainment.

There’s the historic BeeKay Theater. This landmark was originally built in 1936 by Frank Baumgart and Louis Kanstein. The name comes from the first letter of each name: B and K. BeeKay, get it?

At one time people came from all over Kern County to view movies at the theater. Now it is home to well-produced and surprisingly inexpensive live theater productions by the Tehachapi Community Theater. For more information on these productions, see tctonstage.com

Before the show, be sure to spend some time in the historic courtyard. The side of the theater boasts a remarkably life-like mural. Real people modeled for it, and...
were painting in costumes authentic to the era the theater was first built.

Other murals and artwork are also in evidence downtown. This is an artsy community and it shows.

While you are in town, don’t forget about shopping. Downtown Tehachapi boasts some charming and unique shops. One called “Stop Staring” is the storefront for a famous online store featuring faux-vintage dresses in a wide range of sizes. The window also features hand-written thank-you’s from the likes of Kim Kardashian and Britney Speaks who apparently have shopped there.

Plenty of restaurants are also available. One, Kohnen’s Country Bakery, is a German bakery that has been open 15 years but has baking traditions that date back to 1683.

Tehachapi produces award-winning wines and offers wine-tasting at several places. These include Triassic Vineyards at Triassicvinyards.com or 661-822-5341; Tehachapi Wine and Cattle Co. at tehachapiwineandcattlecompany.com and 661-822-9233; and Dorner Family Vineyard at Dornerfamilyvineyard.com and 661-823-7814, which was voted “Tehachapi’s best place to get married.”

The Tehachapi Visitor Center is also a good place to check out. It is located at 200 W. Tehachapi Blvd. and is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Monday. Or you can call at 661-825-5003.

The Tehachapi Depot Railroad Museum is also worth checking out.

Tehachapi also offers a wealth of seasonal festivals. For more on what this diverse area has to offer, see Tehachapinews.com/Visitor-Guide.
Dick Dahlgren, the man who battled the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to restore permanent flows into Rush Creek and Mono Lake, died July 9 in Boise, Idaho, not far from his log cabin home on the banks of the Big Lost River. Before moving to Idaho, Dahlgren was the founder of the Mammoth Fly Rodders, the father of year-around catch-and-release fishing in the Eastern Sierra, and one of the pioneers in fly-fishing the region.

You will be able to read a lot of regular obituaries about Dahlgren in different sources over the coming weeks, but there are two stories that need to be told about my 80-year-old friend, and perhaps some battles that need to be rejoined.

Rush Creek: I have been telling people this week that Dick Dahlgren was the only person I know to have caught trout from a dry Eastern Sierra stream. He then went to court to sue the LADWP — and win — to restore water flows to that stream.

That dry stream was Rush Creek. Since 1941, the City of Los Angeles has been siphoning water almost all the water draining from the Eastern Sierra and sending it south to taps and swimming pools. Rush Creek was one of the many casualties of that effort, its water completely diverted by the LADWP at the Grant Lake dam, funneled by flume and tunnel to the upper Owens River, and eventually into the Los Angeles Aqueduct. But the El Niño winters of the early 1980s sent more snowmelt down the river canyons than the LADWP could transport south. Watershed that hadn’t seen flows in decades below where they had been diverted by the LADWP had flows again. Trout washed downstream from above the diversions into those formerly dry washes — and flourished.

Dahlgren, who lived and fished throughout the Mammoth Lake region at that time, happened to be poking around in the Mono Lake Basin one day in October, 1984. Only a mile or so above Mono Lake, Rush Creek was an inviting looking trout stream and Dahlgren stopped to look. He probably saw a trout take something off the surface and dug out his fly rod. He spent the rest of the afternoon catching over 100 small trout to eight- or nine-inches, browns and rainbows, and even a few brook trout.

Dahlgren starting researching Rush Creek and found Eldon Vestal, a long retired Department of Fish and Game fishery biologist, who showed him his photographs and journals on Rush
Creek before it was dewatered and when it held a DFG hatchery that was used to plant trout throughout the region. The brown trout were two to three pounds in those days. Dahlgren got excited about what he might discover in the future on the river, but then he received some disconcerting news.

Dahlgren was told by a game warden that the LADWP intended to again divert all the flows from Rush Creek at the dam as soon as fishing season closed, drying up seven miles of the trout stream Dahlgren had been fishing. He was catching trout from a dry stream. It was dry before, it would be dry again.

Well, how on now. Did it have to be this way? What happened in a flurry over the next few days, turned into a years-long legal battle. A court issued a temporary injunction to protect the trout in the revived river, and Rush Creek has had permanent flows ever since. The LADWP was forced to rebuild the first two miles of Rush Creek from Grant Lake Dam to Highway 395.

[You can hear this story in Dahlgren’s own words in this wonderful video: http://www.moldychum.com/the-trout-that-saved-mono-lake/]

Sadly, the lower five miles of Rush Creek have still not been restored to their former glory, and it broke Dahlgren's heart that the LADWP might have lost in court, but it had won the long game.

CROWLEY LAKE AND THE UPPER OWENS RIVER: Dick Dahlgren was instrumental in getting two significant changes made in the upper Owens River and Crowley Lake drainage during his time in Mammoth Lakes.

The first was the extended trophy trout, catch-and-release season on Crowley Lake. Once upon a time Crowley closed to all fishing on July 31, while the general trout season extended until Oct. 31. Spawning brown trout started massing at the mouth of the Owens River on Crowley in mid-September, and the rainbows joined them because of the cooler water flows entering the lake. The in-the-know anglers would mob the Owens vying for that last piece of bank at the mouth of the lake to cast streamers out into the current and have it swing down into the lake. The big browns and rainbows would whack the flies just as they approach the edge flooded river channel, rocketing up out of the channel to eat the perch minnow imitations.

That last legal spot to stand became the honey spot, and many anglers simply waded out into the lake in ankle to knee deep water to the edge of the river bank in the lake and started casting. It was technically illegal, and since no one was keeping fish the game wardens had a hard time writing citations.

“I wasn't fishing, officer. I just waded down the bank looking at the water. I'd been fishing up river and was just carrying my rod.”

Dahlgren was brazen when the spot became popular. He simply walked 100 yards out into the lake and waded over to the channel and started fishing, chuckling that it should be legal. Eventually it would be, and Crowley Lake was opened for trophy fishing through the end of the regular season.

The second was the year-around, catch-and-release season on the upper Owens River (and other premier waters that have year-around fishing now). Dahlgren discovered a loop-hole in the DFG regulations: You could fish for perch year-around in the state, no exceptions for Mono county. The upper Owens River had Sacramento perch.

Dahlgren wanted me to write about it and invited me up during a mild March to fish the upper Owens. He'd made a discovery. The big rainbows swarmed up out of Crowley in late winter and early spring in a pre-spawning run movement of fish up the Owens. They stacked up in the pools and runs below where Hot Creek's warm water entered the Owens, escaping the frigid water of the lake. The fishing was phenomenal. Of course, we were fishing for perch and had to release any trout we caught by accident.

The DFG promptly closed the loophole, but enough anglers discovered the great off-season fishing that lobbying began with the DFG's biologists and Fish and Game Commission to open a number of waters to year-around fishing. Today, the upper Owens River, Hot Creek, and the East and West Walker rivers are open to year-around, catch-and-release fishing.

These are probably the two most significant actual changes Dahlgren helped accomplish, but these just
He was an ambassador for fly-fishing and the quality waters in the region. He and I fished Heenan Lake the first fall it opened to catch-and-release fishing for the Lahontan cutthroat trout. We hiked into Kirman Lake to catch "air-brushed footballs" as Dick called the lavish, gaudily colored brook trout in their fall spawning colors. And he hammered on the DFG, along with the late Rick Rockel at Ken's Sporting Good in Bridgeport, to make sure the brookies were planted each year because there was little or no natural spawning took place in the lake. The DFW hasn't been planting the brookies in any numbers or at all in recent years.

While everyone else was jostling for a spot at the mouth of the Owens River, Dick and I would walk the two miles across spongy pasture to fish the mouth of Convict-McGee Creek, fishing alone. He took me to the fingers of Hilton Creek in the spring to catch 15 and 16-inch spawning rainbows that ran up out of Crowley into streams you could straddle. He wanted to share the wealth, encouraging me to write about Kirman and Heenan, and the best places and times to fish Crowley and the Owens River. He did an amazing ink map of Crowley Lake with the top fishing spots and how to fish the lake that is still published and sold in the region.

More than sharing, he wanted to make sure the fishery resources were protected for future generations. Besides Rush Creek, he battled with cattle grazers so all the water wasn't diverted out of the little streams around Crowley (and other waters in Idaho) in an effort to protect the fry that had been naturally produced into those water. His motto was that you don't help the fishery when you dump the fry out into pastures every summer instead of letting them get back into the lake.

He fought against more geothermal plants near Hot Creek, fearing it would harm that amazing fishery or ruin the DFG's Hot Creek Fish Hatchery. He battled against ranchers who sought to block access from public fishing on several Sierra rivers. He was a constant thorn in the DFG's, U.S. Forest Service's, and LADWP's side if they did anything that might threaten one of his fisheries. And he was great at sharing his enthusiasm and getting others involved.

When I met Dahlgren, there was a section on one sporting goods shop in Mammoth devoted to fly-fishing, and there were no guides working the region. Today, there are fly shops in Bishop, Mammoth, and Bridgeport, and there are well over 100 guides who work at least some of the year in this part of the Eastern Sierra. I certainly won't say he was responsible for all that, but he was on the ground floor that built the foundation for that passion.

At the beginning of this story, I told about how Dick Dahlgren caught trout from a dry river, which is quite a feat for any angler. After that river had water again, I followed Dahlgren down to where it dumped into Mono Lake, a body of water too saline for anything but hardy brine shrimp to survive. He had remembered reading that trout in Rush Creek would dart out into the salty water to eat brine shrimp and then dart back up into the breathable fresh water.

Standing at the mouth of Rush Creek, like we had done many times on the Owens River mouth at Lake Crowley, Dick cast out into Mono Lake and caught a trout from that briny stew, pulling it quickly back up into the river before releasing it. We looked at each other in disbelief. The old story was true.

It was always a scene I wished Dick would have painted; a trout leaping above the waters of Mono Lake with a jubilant angler, cigar clenched in his mouth, his back arched as much as the fly rod, and the Sierra Nevada in the background. It is an image I see when I think of Dick Dahlgren.

We could use a few more Dick Dahlgrens.

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