

Plenty of exercise equipment outside of a gym

By Christopher McDougall, Outdoor

I was waiting at the checkout counter of a drugstore in Lancaster, Pa., when a human cannonball sailed past the window. I glanced around. Did anyone else just...?

A second body flew by, right behind the oblivious cashier's head, looking like it had been flung by one of those medieval catapults that hurled rotten cow carcasses over fortress walls.

I swiped my card, grabbed my bag, and hustled outside to see what was going on.

I could have taken my time, it turned out. The two guys were still there and totally absorbed by the handicap-ramp railings: vaulting, swinging, tightrope walking, basically wringing a crazy amount of movement out of two blue bars. When I'd spotted them through the window, they were practicing "precisions" – broad jumping back and forth between the railings and sticking precise landings on top of the bars.

"You start practicing parkour," one of the guys told me, "and whole nights disappear."

Technically, he's talking about *l'art du déplacement*, more universally known by the funkified French version of its other name, *parcours*, for "obstacle course."

Parkour was born in the late 1980s when a band of mixed-race kids living in the outskirts of Paris got tired of being roughed up by bullies. They created their own "training method for warriors" and called themselves the Yamakasi. Being rebels and outsiders, they detested the idea of organized

competition; even after parkour became a phenomenon, the Yamakasi never bothered cashing in with how-to stuff. They were innovators, not explainers.

If you wanted to come to Paris and follow in their footsteps, fine—but that meant being yanked out of bed at 2 a.m. to train in a midwinter rainstorm. Otherwise the Yamakasi had just about zero interest in sharing their skills with the rest of the world. That left two places you could go if you wanted to learn parkour: France or YouTube.

Not surprisingly, my two new parking lot buddies got their start at YouTube U. “I got into it because I was so fat,” one of my new buddies, Neal Schaeffer, told me. He’d begun partying after high school and by age 20 had bloated up from 175 pounds to 240.

One afternoon, he was in a nearby park watching some strangers “kong vault” picnic tables—they’d charge a table, plant their hands, and shoot both feet through their arms like gorillas and fly off the other side—and they talked Neal into giving it a try. He was shocked to discover that even out of shape, once he got over his fear, he could master skills that at first looked impossible.

Read the whole story

People won't stop texting and walking

By AJ Vicens, Mother Jones

Last year, it was reported that a small city in China had

created a texting-only lane for pedestrians. The story went viral before it was somewhat debunked—turns out the lane is in a theme park, and it's just 100 feet long—but there's a reason it got eyeballs: everybody's worried about "texting while walking," and no one knows what to do about it.

According to a 2012 Pew study, most grownups have bumped into stuff while looking at their phones, or been bumped by someone else on their phone. A Stony Brook University study in 2012 found that texting walkers were 61 percent more likely to veer off course than undistracted ones, a finding backed up by other researchers.

Greatest "hits" compilations abound on YouTube. One woman tumbled into a mall fountain, another off a pier. A man nearly collided with a roaming bear. While pride suffered most in those cases, more than 1,500 pedestrians landed in emergency rooms due to a cell-phone related distracted walking injury in 2010—a nearly 500 percent jump since 2005—according to a recent study from Ohio State University.

Jack Nasar, professor of urban planning at Ohio State University and one of the study's co-authors, said the real number of injuries could be much, much higher. "Not every pedestrian who gets injured while using a cell phone goes to an emergency room," he told Mother Jones. Some lack health insurance or (erroneously) decide their injuries aren't serious. Others will deny a phone had anything to do with their injury. "People who die from cell-phone distraction also don't show up in the emergency room numbers," says Nasar.

Of course, pedestrians aren't the only ones with their noses in their phones. According to a 2013 University of Nebraska Medical Center study, the rate of pedestrians getting hit by distracted drivers grew by about 45 percent between 2005 and 2010. The good news is that 44 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico have banned texting and driving for all drivers, but the bad news is that texting and walking is potentially

more dangerous and has proved harder to ban.

[Read the whole story](#)

Placerville standoff ends with fire in home

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A long standoff with sheriff's deputies at a home in Placerville ended after a fire caused a wanted man to exit his residence.

El Dorado County sheriff's deputies attempted to serve an arrest warrant on a man in the 2200 block of Cold Springs Road about 11:30am Thursday. The man was wanted on charges related to felony domestic violence.

However, the man refused to leave the home. At one point, he briefly came outside with a knife and claimed he was going to kill himself.

Over the next 12 hours, deputies tried to get the man to come out. At times, negotiators tried to speak with him by phone.

[Read the whole story](#)

Former senator to run marijuana company

By Matt Ferner, Huffington Post

Former Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, is the new CEO of a marijuana company that produces cannabis-infused products for both recreational and medical use, the company announced this week.

The Alaskan Democrat and 2008 presidential contender will lead KUSH, a subsidiary owned by Cannabis Sativa, Inc. Former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson serves as CEO of Cannabis Sativa, and Gravel is on that company's board of directors.

KUSH will develop and market new marijuana-infused products under Gravel's leadership, the company said in a press release.

Steve Kubby of South Lake Tahoe and chairman of the board at Cannabis Sativa, called Gravel a "true American hero" who "brings invaluable perspective" to the company.

Gravel served two terms in the Senate from 1969 to 1981, and was a candidate in the 2008 presidential race. He also has been an outspoken supporter of marijuana legalization and a staunch critic of the decades-long war on drugs.

Read the whole story

Magnesium, the invisible health deficiency

By Zahra Barnes, CNN

Feeling exhausted? Or noticing weird muscle cramps that are throwing off your workouts? You might be suffering from a magnesium deficiency.

Dubbed the “invisible deficiency” by some experts because it’s so hard to spot and diagnose, magnesium deficiencies are more dangerous than you might think.

“Magnesium is involved in over 300 biochemical reactions in your body. It affects everything from your heartbeat to your muscles to your hormones,” says Danine Fruge, associate medical director at the Pritikin Longevity Center in Miami.

Between making sure to get enough fiber in your diet and trying not skimp on iron, monitoring your magnesium intake can easily fall through the cracks.

“Studies have shown that only about 25 percent of U.S. adults are at or above the recommended daily amount of 310 to 320 milligrams for women and 400 to 420 for men,” says Fruge.

In fact, the 2005-2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey revealed that at least half of the U.S. population had inadequate intakes of magnesium.

Read the whole story

CDC: Flu season at epidemic levels

By Cynthia H. Craft, Sacramento Bee

Flu is hitting hard, and even though vaccinations might not target the specific strain of the virus currently going around, experts still urge people to receive the shots.

The nation's top public health agency declared a flu epidemic Tuesday, warning residents to exercise caution in public spaces and use good, basic sanitary habits. And even though it may miss the dominant flu strain this year, experts continued to urge people to get the flu shot, saying that it certainly can't hurt.

Infectious disease experts in the Sacramento region confirmed that influenza activity has been on an uptick here during the past two weeks.

But, as in past years, the flu has hit states east of the Rockies the hardest early on in the season, giving Californians advance notice of just how harsh an outcome to expect.

[Read the whole story](#)

Editorial: Too many in U.S. ignorant of democracy's

basics

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 29, 2014, Los Angeles Times.*

In 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled that segregated public schools were unconstitutional, Chief Justice Earl Warren emphasized the importance of public education as a crucible for good citizenship.

"Today," Warren wrote, "education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship."

But a growing number of critics charge that education in good citizenship is being shortchanged by an American educational system that is focused on other "core competencies." The result is that too many products of that system are ignorant of the basics of how American democracy functions, and lack the knowledge to participate fully in the society it sustains. One of the most prominent spokespeople for this view is retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the last member of the court to have held elected office.

In a 2008 article written with former Rep. Lee Hamilton of Indiana, O'Connor argued that "civic education has been in steady decline over the past generation, as high-stakes testing and an emphasis on literacy and math dominate school reforms. Too many young people today do not understand how our political system works."

Read the whole story

New bank could save the pot industry

By Katie Lobosco, CNNMoney

Kristi Kelly owns legal marijuana stores in Colorado called Good Meds and has lost 23 bank accounts in five years.

Even though medical marijuana is legal in Colorado and 22 other states, it's still illegal on the federal level. And that means banks generally don't want anything to do with pot shops.

That creates a slew of headaches for these entrepreneurs, who are often forced to operate all-cash businesses. That is time consuming and costly – and can be dangerous.

But a new credit union formed specifically to serve the marijuana business could be a turning point for the fledgling pot industry.

Fourth Corner Credit Union is supported by a group of attorneys, business owners and legalization advocates who see an opportunity where traditional bankers see only potential legal problems. Pending final approval from the Federal Reserve, it could open in January.

Read the whole story

Subaru WinterFest at Sierra-at-Tahoe

Sierra-at-Tahoe will host the second annual Subaru WinterFest this weekend.

This free event includes a freeride skills course, equipment demos and autograph signing by Olympian and Meyers resident Maddie Bowman in the Subaru tent from 11am-1pm Jan. 3.

This year, Subaru brings along partners LibTech, Nordica and Yakima, which will be offering equipment demos on the latest technology in skis and snowboards, along with car racks for gear transportation. Subaru WinterFest is open to guests of all ages and will be staged on Sierra's Solstice Plaza.

All guests with a valid lift ticket may participate in the freeride skills course.

Barton's first baby arrives New Year's Day



Brianda Torres holds Jayden as son Noe and husband Daniel Molina look on. Photo/Provided

Time will tell if Jayden Daniel Molina Torres will always be faster than his older brother. But for now, he holds the speed record in his family – the record for how short of time he kept mom in labor.

Jayden has the distinction of being the first baby born in 2015 at Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe. He arrived at 3:06pm New Year's Day.

"It was so fast," mom Brianda Torres told *Lake Tahoe News* not long after she arrived home Jan. 2. "It was just kind of crazy. It happened so quick."

She was in labor for a little more than six hours. This is in contrast to her first son, who just turned 6 last week, when labor was 32 hours.

Not only was Jayden quick to arrive, but he also came three days before the due date.

The early arrival might have something to do with big brother Noe being more than ready for his sibling to be born. Torres said he was always asking: "When is my baby coming out?"

Jayden weighed in at 7 pounds, 7 ounces and 18 inches. In addition to both boys being born at Barton, so were their parents – Torres and dad Daniel Molina.

Barton Health provided a wagon full of gifts for the family. Local businesses and Barton employees contributed \$1,950 in baby supplies, toys, and gift certificates.

"We were just looking at them," Torres said. "It's awesome."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report