

Study: 'Text neck' becoming an 'epidemic'

By Lindsey Bever, Washington Post

The human head weighs about a dozen pounds. But as the neck bends forward and down, the weight on the cervical spine begins to increase. At a 15-degree angle, this weight is about 27 pounds, at 30 degrees it's 40 pounds, at 45 degrees it's 49 pounds, and at 60 degrees it's 60 pounds.

That's the burden that comes with staring at a smartphone – the way millions do for hours every day, according to research published by Kenneth Hansraj in the National Library of Medicine.

The study will appear next month in *Surgical Technology International*. Over time, researchers say, this poor posture, sometimes called “text neck,” can lead to early wear-and-tear on the spine, degeneration and even surgery.

“It is an epidemic or, at least, it's very common,” Hansraj, chief of spine surgery at New York Spine Surgery and Rehabilitation Medicine, told the *Washington Post*. “Just look around you, everyone has their heads down.”

Can't grasp the significance of 60 pounds? Imagine carrying an 8-year-old around your neck several hours per day.

Read the whole story

Hunting on the decline in California

By Pauline Bartolone, Capitol Public Radio

Hunting in California has been in a sharp decline for the past four decades.

About 250,000 Californians hunted deer, pigs, bear and birds last year. In 1970, there were almost 700,000 hunters.

Dan Yparraguirre, a deputy director with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife says urbanization is likely one of many causes for the decline.

Read the whole story

Christmas Cheer looking for donations, volunteers

Christmas Cheer reports 1,200 families have signed up to receive food items and 800 kids are in need of toys for Christmas.

Monetary donations, non-perishable food items and toys may be delivered to Christmas Cheer at 1120 Third St., South Lake Tahoe, or mail donations to P.O. Box 14489, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

Volunteers are needed to distribute the items Dec. 18-19 from 10am-4pm.

For more info, call 530.542.4934.

Nevada earthquake swarm not letting up

Nevada is proving why it is the third most seismically active state in the United States behind California and Alaska.

While it hasn't had a magnitude 7.0 earthquake in 60 years, the far northwest corner of the state has been shaking for the better part of this fall. It all started in the summer.

There have been several 3.0 earthquakes this week, a 4.0 on Nov. 21 and a 4.3 on Nov. 17. The largest two events – magnitude 4.7 – occurred just after midnight Nov. 6 and Nov. 7.



Graham Kent, director of UNR's Seismological Lab, is studying the swarm of quakes in N. Nevada. Photo/LTN file

The thousands of earthquakes in the last several months is the strongest of the swarm-type sequences recorded in Nevada in recent history with its current count of 12 magnitude 4.0-plus events since it began in July.

The area being inundated by these temblors is in the Sheldon National Antelope Refuge about 40 miles southeast of Lakeview, Ore., 40 miles northeast of Cedarville, Calif. and about 250 miles north of Reno. Farm, ranch and grazing lands dominate the landscape.

"We've located about 1,350 earthquakes, but thousands more that are taking place just can't be located because of the small number of seismic stations in that part of the state," Ken Smith, seismic network manager in the UNR's Nevada Seismological Laboratory, said in a statement. "So far there have been 112 earthquakes greater than or equal to magnitude 3.0. We'd have to go back to a similar sequence near Hawthorne in 2011 and the 2008 west Reno swarm for anything comparable."

Additional instruments are being added to the area in order for scientists to gather more data. The goal is to have a better understanding of earthquake swarm behavior.

Scientists said there is a small increase in the probability of a larger event because of the swarm, but forecasting such an earthquake is not possible.

The Wells earthquake in 2008 was a magnitude 6.0, the largest event in Nevada in 42 years. Historically, Nevada can expect to have three magnitude 7.0 earthquakes per century and one magnitude 6.0 or larger every decade, according to Graham Kent, director of UNR's Seismological Lab, said in a statement.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Cinder the burned bear cub leaving LTWC



Cinder is now 83 pounds. She arrived at LTWC weighing 39 pounds. Photo/Provided

By Tom Millham

I am very pleased to inform you that Kevin Willitts, the official volunteer veterinarian for Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, has released Cinder, the bear from Washington with burns on all four paws, from his medical care and will allow her to return to the area from where she came to complete her rehabilitation and to hibernate for the winter.

On Nov. 23 at 6:30am, Willitts will be at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care to immobilize Cinder one last time, give her a final goodbye exam, weigh her and witness her being placed into a transportation cage for an eight-hour car ride to Garden City, Idaho.

She will spend the rest of the winter at Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Center, just outside Boise, in a cage next to a first year bear cub (for at least a short time, until they get to know each other).

In the spring, Sally Maughan, founder of IBBR, will inform Washington wildlife bear specialist Rich Beausoleil that she is ready to go. Then Beausoleil will pick Cinder up and take her on her last car ride.

It has been quite a ride.

Beausoleil will then release Cinder in a suitable habitat and she will again be free in the wild. The reason she will be at IBBR for the next four months will be to allow her now healed burned paws a chance to toughen up so she can be as natural as possible when she is released.

On Aug. 4, Cinder was flown by plane by pilot Bill Inman from Washington to South Lake Tahoe so LTWC could treat her wounds, just as we did six years ago with Li'l Smokey. On Sept. 30, after almost two months of having her bandages changed every other day, Willitts decided that she did not need bandages anymore and it was time to let air get to her paws. That was the first time she did not have any dressings on her paws since Aug. 3.

Tom Millham is secretary-treasurer of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

Cancer League selling See's Candy

The South Lake Tahoe Cancer League's annual See's Candy fundraiser is under way.

Money raised goes to provide stipends for cancer patients in the community. Funds are also used to reimburse people who

drive patients to appointments.

Jonnie Crawford, a volunteer with the organization, said in an average month it's not unusual to hand out more than \$5,000 in grants and more than half that much in gas money.

The sale goes from Nov. 21-Dec. 24 from 10am-5pm in the storefront by Starbucks at the Y.

Cost of Thanksgiving dinner barely budes

By J.M. Hirsch, AP

Giving thanks will be a little costlier this year, but – and here's something you can be truly thankful for – it probably won't empty your wallet.

The price for putting Thanksgiving dinner on the table for 10 people is expected to rise slightly this year, clocking in at \$49.41. That's 37 cents higher than in 2013. For that, you can blame dairy products, coffee and that all-important marshmallow-topped sweet potato casserole, according to the annual informal survey of consumer grocery prices performed by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The group found that the price of dairy – as in milk for the mashed potatoes and whipped cream for the pies – collectively jumped 25 cents over last year. Miscellaneous ingredients, such as coffee, sugar and eggs, account for another 28 cents, while 3 pounds of sweet potatoes jumped 20 cents.

The good news is that a drop in fuel prices won't just make it cheaper to drive to Grandma's house for the big meal, it also

helped keep down the cost of some ingredients. Flour-based foods, such as stuffing mix, pie shells and dinner rolls, will run about 21 cents less than last year, likely due to energy cost savings by the processors, says John Anderson, the Farm Bureau's deputy chief economist.

The group estimates the cost of Thanksgiving dinner by averaging non-sale food prices around the country based on feeding 10 people a meal of turkey, bread stuffing, sweet potatoes, rolls with butter, peas, cranberries, carrots and celery, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, and coffee and milk. And yes, their estimates account for needing leftovers.

And here's something to consider: Though this year's cost is up, it's still 7 cents lower than in 2012.

News earlier this week that turkey production is at its lowest level in nearly three decades and wholesale prices are at an all-time high briefly spooked some folks. But most consumers won't see that reflected on their grocery bills. Retailers aren't likely to pass on to consumer much if any price hike that they are paying for the big birds, and the Farm Bureau actually expects the cost of a 16-pound turkey to drop by 11 cents this year.

Of course, there are plenty of ways to spend more this Thanksgiving. Upgrade that 16-pound conventional bird to an organic, free-range model and suddenly the Farm Bureau's \$21.65 estimate can jump to \$100 or more at specialty online retailers. Not into baking? Instead of spending about \$3 on a homemade pie, you can spend \$25 or more on high-end mail order versions.

Or maybe you don't want to cook at all. A complete and fully cooked Thanksgiving dinner for 12 people from Whole Foods Market will cost around \$170.

Then again, maybe you want to spend less. Shop smart at a bargain retailer and you could shave more than a third off the

Farm Bureau's total. Using the same menu for 10 people, Wal-Mart estimates that shopping for Thanksgiving dinner at one of its stores will cost just \$32.64.

But maybe you got off the hook this year and aren't hosting Thanksgiving. If instead of cooking you'll be traveling by car, you'll see savings at the pump. Gasoline is running about 33 cents less per gallon than it was a year ago, with a national average of \$2.88, according to travel tracker AAA. And it doesn't matter where you're driving. Gas can be found for less than \$3 a gallon in every state in the continental U.S.

Don't want to drive? If you're traveling by train, you'll pay a bit more. Amtrak says its ticket prices have increased an average of 2 percent over last year. Same goes for flying. The average price of an airline ticket for travel this Thanksgiving is \$307.52, not including an average \$51 in taxes and fees, according to the Airlines Reporting Corp., which processes ticket transactions for airlines and travel agencies. That's up 1.1 percent from last year.

Snowmakers create a Heavenly opening day



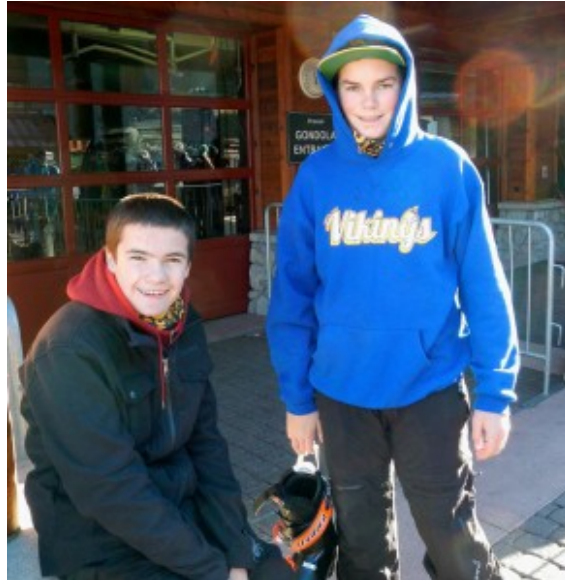
Opening day at Heavenly Mountain Resort is an event unto itself. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

First tracks happen every day of the ski season. First tracks of the season, well, you can only get those on opening day.

Gunnar Barnwell was going to make sure he christened the slopes of Heavenly Mountain Resort for the 2014-15. The 13-year-old arrived at the gondola entrance at 5:30am Nov. 21 in below freezing temperatures.

He didn't mind waiting around for $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours until the resort opened; after all this was the Whittell High School student's first opening day. (Whittell doesn't have classes on Fridays.) He admitted part of the draw was to have an opportunity to win one of the raffle prizes offered to the first 100 people in line.



Gunnar Barnwell, left, is first in line Nov. 21 for opening day and his friend, Logan Langemeier, third.

It was Barnwell's buddy, Logan Langemeier, who won the GoPro. And to think he didn't arrive until 7am.

This arrival time put the 15-year-old third in line. The South Tahoe High student was playing hooky from school on what was his second opening day.

Jennifer Wolf of Santa Cruz was second in line.

"I'm anxious (to ski)," Wolf told *Lake Tahoe News* as to why she showed up at 6am. "I sat out last year with a knee injury."

She's been skiing Heavenly for 37 years. With her parents having a cabin nearby, it makes doing so all that much easier.



Nearly 200 people wait for the gondola to open to signal the start of the 2014-15 season.

For Brad Drake of Reno this was his fifth opening day.

"It means the rest of the season is ahead of us," Drake told *Lake Tahoe News*.

His favorite opening day: "Two years ago when I was lapping the face before Thanksgiving."

That won't happen this year. However, snowmaking was continuing on unopened trails throughout the morning, with the anticipation of more terrain on the Nevada side being available as conditions allow.

While only the gondola and Tamarack chairlift are open, the snowmaking crew has covered the 14 acres with an abundance of snow. No obstacles, excellent conditions. Four terrain park features are also available to the skier's left of California Trail.



A mini terrain park has four features.

Opinion: Tips for healthy holiday eating

By Lynn Norton

The holidays and their food celebrations are almost here. Sound wonderful? Many love the holidays, but dread the annual resolution to lose weight. Consider this: if you eat 500 extra calories a day for two months, you could gain nearly 10 pounds.

Limit holiday weight gain with the following tips:

- Be selective. At a party, scan the food choices and select the best first. Skip snack foods available “anytime” like chips, crackers, pretzels, and cheese.
- Fill up, not out. Alternate high calorie treats with low calorie vegetables and beverages.
- Cut down portions. Start with a forkful of cheesecake instead of a slice. Try new or special holiday treats, but savor in small amounts.
- Socialize without a full plate and a high calorie beverage. Snacking adds calories fast. Select a small

plate and eat, enjoy, and be done.

- Eat slowly, avoid seconds, and stop after 20 minutes.
- Avoid high calorie drinks like punch, beer, wine, or a cocktail and drink water or diet soda. Can't resist? Consume half the calories; alternate between high and low calorie beverages.
- Entertain healthfully. Be considerate of others watching their weight and serve sugar-free, low-fat food and beverage options. This provides healthy options for you, too.

Healthy substitutions can be tasty and satisfying. Consider some simple substitutions from the American Dietetic Association:

- Use two egg whites instead of one egg
- Replace cream or whipping cream with evaporated skim milk
- Substitute an equal amount of applesauce for at least half the oil, margarine or butter in muffins and quick breads
- For dips, sauces, and pie toppings, use non-fat yogurt and whipped topping or fat-free sour cream and salad dressings
- Top casseroles with almonds, fresh herbs, or raw vegetables instead of fried onion rings
- Choose reduced-fat cheese in recipes

Find healthy recipes online. Helpful sites include the National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute; American Heart Association; American Diabetes Association; Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics; and "Light Favorites" in allrecipes.com.

Dress for success. Skip clothes with an expandable waist. Keep belts comfortably snug to remember your "no weight gain" goal.

Exercise. Plan extra exercise around the holidays. Make

walking, snowshoeing or skiing a family tradition. Be active before the feast and enjoy burning calories as much as eating them.

Enjoy the holiday. Don't focus on the food and beverages – enjoy the company of friends, family, and the spirit of the season. Relish treats in moderation.

It's difficult to lose weight around the holidays, but give your health a present and start 2015 without extra pounds to lose. If you succeed, adapt these tips every day. Achieve weight maintenance or weight loss with similar vigilance year round.

Lynn Norton is a registered dietitian who provides nutrition services to patients at Barton Health. On Dec. 2 she will give a free lecture titled Nutrition for the New Year from 6-7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College in the board room.

One-stop local shopping event in Kings Beach

Holiday shoppers who attend the second annual Hospitality Holidays event on Dec. 3 from 5:30-9:30pm could complete their holiday shopping in one night and give the gift of locally made products from more than 50 artisans and vendors.

The event is sponsored by the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association.

There will be free photos with Santa, face painting and sleigh rides.

Local band Sneaky Creatures will play and there will be performances by Tahoe Flow Arts. Complimentary food tastings and \$5 drinks will be available. Raffle tickets may be purchased.

Shoppers will be entered to win the Show Your Love – Shop Local contest by collecting eight stamps from vendors. To get a stamp, pick up a contest card at the door upon arrival. Each vendor will stamp the card after completing a purchase of at least \$25. The winner will receive two lift tickets at 10 local ski areas.

The event is in Kings Beach at the North Tahoe Events Center.