U.S. homeless count rises, pushed by West Coast crisis

By Christopher Weber and Geoff Mulvihill, AP

The nation’s homeless population increased this year for the first time since 2010, driven by a surge in the number of people living on the streets in West Coast cities.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released its annual Point in Time count Wednesday, a report that showed nearly 554,000 homeless people across the country during local tallies conducted in January. That figure is up nearly 1 percent from 2016.

Of that total, 193,000 people had no access to nightly shelter and instead were staying in vehicles, tents, the streets and other places considered uninhabitable. The unsheltered figure is up by more than 9 percent compared to two years ago.

Read the whole story

All things Santa related at Mt. Rose on Saturday

The infamous Santa Ski Day will take place at Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe on Dec. 9.

Skiers and riders outfitted in their “finest Kris Kringle red and white,” or anything related to the holidays—elves, candy canes, shiny presents, Mrs. Clause and more—are invited to participate. Discounted lift tickets priced at just $69 will

be available for purchase for those wearing Santa's best.

This is a kick-off to the Great Reno Santa Pub Crawl that night.

At 10:45am, the mass Santa Ski Down will take place, with all participants invited to meet at the base of the Northwest Magnum 6 lift to head up the mountain as a group.

Other activities will include a "poker run" from 10am-noon, an eggnog station on the mountain starting at 10:30am, and a ski and snowboard raffle at the Timbers Bar in the Main Lodge at 1pm (beer purchase required for raffle entry). The poker run will feature five locations on the mountain where dealers will offer opportunities for guests to draw a card. The 10 best hands will win various swag.

Holiday open house at Donner State Park

Donner Memorial State Park's Visitor Center is having a family-friendly holiday open house on Dec. 16.

There will be live performances by Truckee's Richard Blair, storytelling, arts and crafts, Wagons Ho! Junior Ranger programs, guided history walks, scavenger hunts, as well as store specials and free gift wrapping. Free holiday cookies and hot drinks will be provided by our volunteers.

This free event is from noon-5:30pm, after which Jordan Fisher-Smith will read from his award-winning book "Engineering Eden."

Parking fees will apply.

North Shore film series features surfing in Iceland

Third installment of the 12th annual Alpenglow Sports Winter Film Series features Chris Burkard and his show “Under an Arctic Sky.”

At 7pm on Jan. 4 at Squaw Valley’s Olympic Lodge guests will get a taste of what it’s like surfing in the fjords of northern Iceland during the largest storm in 25 years.

Along with six surfers and filmmaker Ben Weiland, Burkard traveled to Iceland’s Hornstrandir Nature Reserve to seek out unknown swells under the glow of the northern lights. Chartering a boat, the crew departed from Isafjodur during the largest storm to hit the northern coast in a quarter century. Though treacherous for travel, to a surfer, storms signal the chance to ride legendary swells.

The crew was at the mercy of nature, so when the weather forced the team to sail back to land, they took to the road. Facing the brutality of winter in Iceland, the crew found that uncertainty is the best ingredient for discovering the unimaginable.

Burkard is one of the premier adventure photographers on the planet.

The event is free. Prizes from industry sponsors are raffled off at each show to raise money for local nonprofits.

Doors open at 6:15pm and an early arrival is encouraged in order to assure good seating. Fireside Pizza Co. will be on hand.

For Barton docs Orr-thopedics is in their DNA



Jeff and Terry Orr share athletic and professional interests. Photo/Provided

By Susan Wood

One could argue Orr stands for orthopedics at Lake Tahoe.

With Barton bringing on Jeffrey Orr, 37, to its Tahoe Orthopedics group in September, the healthcare organization carries on a legacy built around one of the most renowned and

accomplished orthopedic surgeons in this region. His father is Terry Orr.

Between names like Orr, Swanson and Bannar, the half-kidding joke around the lake is if you're going to bust up your knee, elbow or other critical joint – do it near Tahoe. The difference between being average or returning to the level of athlete you were depends on a doctor with years of experience and care with precision.

Even though the Orr family had the popular board game "Operation" around the house, the elder Orr said he and his wife never pressured their children to go into medicine. (Note: There's also Dr. Lance Orr in the emergency room – albeit no relation.)

It just came natural. That's the gist of the discussion in the younger Orr coming home after a whirlwind tour of hard work, focused studies and a strong dedication in his fellowship and residency on the East Coast. In between, Jeff received his medical doctorate from Georgetown University.

While his father stayed in Tahoe over the decades to care for professional, competitive and wannabe athletes, Orr left his childhood home in South Lake Tahoe to study aerospace engineering at UC San Diego for a year because he liked math. It wasn't meant to be though as it only offered "limited interaction with people," Orr told *Lake Tahoe News* in an after-hours fireside chat with his father in the clinic's waiting room area.



Father and son – Terry and Jeff Orr – at this month's Barton gala. Photo/Provided

As it turns out, Orr is too much of a people person and passed on fixing and designing machines.

Instead, he found a home in medicine – and more specifically orthopedics like his father, forging a path that provided the reward of helping patients transcend from an injury to the restoration of their lives.

Both admit that's not easy.

Orr senior describes a day and age when a patient's recovery was all up to the doctor telling the patient what to do. Now, in what's called the "shared experience," patients share in the experience of recovery and dictate goals for their desired outcome.

"The field of medicine has changed a lot," Terry Orr said.

With the constant evolution of new things to know, the learning never stops – even if you're considered the finest in the field. The elder Orr still takes continuing education units.

When asked if he thought his son would end up being better than he is, the modest Orr didn't hesitate, answering: "Absolutely."

And part of that "shared experience" is between the father-and-son surgeons, as the elder can pass on what he's learned over the years. The younger hasn't hesitated at gaining guidance from his father – even if it just means moral support.

The field comes with long hours and a constant expectation at being nurturing and brilliant at the same time. All this with a drive to keep up with trends and turning those trends into creative, new ways to help the increasing number of weekend warriors and competitive athletes live long and prosper.

"If you look at orthopedics, so much changes with the medical knowledge in just a decade, you have to wonder where things are going to be 20 years from now," the elder Orr said.

Hands down, the longtime surgeon is proud of his son.

In turn, his son exudes a sharp-as-a-tack level of intelligence. He also has inherited the senior Orr's well known calm and collected nature – which can be a blessing to anyone suffering nagging or debilitating injuries. The two men

understand all too well what it’s like to overcome a setback with the joints. And not everyone is patient about it (as this reporter attests to when she relied on Orr senior).

Jeff Orr has not only assisted with the patients’ recoveries; he’s lived the experiences. He didn’t wince when listing his surgeries – two ankles, a knee and a shoulder. After all, he downhill skis, rides a mountain bike and plays hockey (with his dad).

Orr senior said he’s been luckier – listing the annoying the plantar fasciitis on his foot and a broken hand.

To hear the two men speak of the gnarliest injuries they’ve seen is to hear them speak in code. It’s a language they’ll always share.

Beyond Orr junior taking rotations at the hospital and moving into the Center for Orthopedics and Wellness facility next year, he will join his father for yet another Olympic-oriented assignment. For years, Orr senior served as the U.S. Men’s Ski Team doctor. Now it’s his son’s turn. Through an affiliate of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, Jeff Orr just returned from La Parva, Chile.

In about two months, the two surgeons will use their expertise in Germany to essentially check the athletes with the Olympic team heading to South Korea in February.

Months later, the men will gear up to move into the new state-of-the-art facility designed to cover every aspect of athletic health from a specific body part to the science of holistic medicine.

In some respects, orthopedics is a medical discipline more about a restoration of excellence rather than a return to normalcy.

“Orthopedics isn’t just about getting people through their

day, it’s about getting them back to enjoying their lifestyle,” Jeff Orr said.

Editorial: Calif. surviving with plastic bag ban

Publisher’s note: ***This editorial is from the Nov. 18, 2017, Los Angeles Times.***

It’s been a year since Californian banned most stores from handing out flimsy, single-use plastic bags to customers. It was the first, and remains the only, U.S. state to do so. But guess what? In the end, this momentous change was not a big deal. Shoppers did not revolt or launch recall campaigns against state lawmakers. Food still gets to people’s houses. Reusable bags did not spark an epidemic of food-borne illnesses, as some critics suggested they would. Consumers didn’t go broke paying 10 cents apiece for the thicker, reusable plastic bags stores are allowed to distribute instead.

For the most part, Californians took in stride the sudden absence of some 13 billion bags that in previous years were handed out at grocery checkout counters and by other retailers of all sorts. Maybe a few grumbled at first about the inconvenience. But most adjusted quickly, perhaps because they intuited that something was not right about all those plastic bags hanging from trees, caught up in storm drains, clumped by the sides of freeways and floating in the ocean.

Read the whole story

Advertisers learn that everything is partisan

By Sapna Maheshwari, New York Times

In today's political climate, even pizza, bourbon and coffee can be partisan issues.

A year after the presidential election, a range of advertisers are learning that it doesn't take much — sometimes just a single Twitter post — to land them in the middle of a social media firestorm that splits along party lines. In some cases, they land there even if they've done nothing. And it has become clear in the past month that long-used strategies for how brands should respond to the ensuing outrage may need rewriting.

Last month, people shared videos of themselves destroying Keurig coffee machines after the company said it would pull ads from Sean Hannity's Fox News program, a decision based on the supportive comments the host made about Roy Moore, the embattled Republican candidate for Senate in Alabama. This month, the hashtag #BoycottJimBeam emerged after actress Mila Kunis, a spokeswoman for the liquor company since 2014, said on "Conan" that she has been donating to Planned Parenthood under Vice President Mike Pence's name in a form of "peaceful protest."

Read the whole story

Free ash cans for Tahoe Douglas service area

While fire can heat a home and provide comfort, it is also be an extremely destructive force.

That is why it is important to let ash cool and then dispose of it in a safe manner. The Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District has partnered with Kingsbury Hardware to provide ash cans to the homeowners of the district. This program is available free of charge to residents of the district who use a wood burning appliance to heat their homes.

To obtain a free ash can, ho log **online,** then under Prevention print out an ash can voucher. Vouchers are also available at Station 23 in Round Hill across from Safeway. Completed vouchers can be exchanged for an ash can at Kingsbury Hardware while supplies last.

Full ash cans can be dumped at TDFPD Station No. 23, on Elks Point Road in the rear parking lot in a bright red dumpster.

Mother Nature turns off rain/snow spigot

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

What happened to the rain?

Less than a year after the drought was declared over, precipitation has been relatively scarce in the Sacramento area and Northern California so far this season. This week’s

cold snap is accompanied by a round of dry weather that's expected to last at least another 10 days.

It's too soon to panic about a prolonged dry spell, however.

The National Weather Service said precipitation this season is actually running slightly ahead of schedule in the northern Sierra Nevada, thanks to a wetter-than-average November. But the weather gauges are emptier the further south you go, and rainfall truly has been in comparatively short supply in practically every California city.

Read the whole story

Author of 'Engineering Eden' to give talk

Jordan Fisher-Smith, author of "Engineering Eden," will discusses his critically acclaimed book on Dec. 16 at the Donner Memorial State Park Visitor Center in Truckee.

Doors open at 5pm and the program begins at 5:30pm. "Engineering Eden" will be available for sale and signing after the program. There is a $5 suggested donation to attend and parking is free.

In the book Fisher-Smith questions if humans can actually manage nature. In 1975 the Department of Interior was sued for mismanagement after a young man was killed and eaten by a grizzly bear in Yellowstone National Park. Fisher-Smith follows the trial arguments of two of the greatest 20th century wildlife biologists as they struggle with the answer.