

# Opinion: The Art of the Golden State Warriors

By Peter Tokofsky

During an early round of the current NBA playoffs a couple weeks ago, my family's favorite team, the Golden State Warriors, had an idle evening. Missing the excitement of seeing our squad outplaying an opponent, I suggested to my daughters that we re-watch the game from the previous day. This suggestion provided them—and their mother—proof that I had indeed finally succumbed to senility.

Didn't I remember watching (and shouting about) the game the night before?

And: What, they wondered aloud, could possibly be the point of watching a game, the outcome of which was already known to all of us?

I responded in terms familiar in our household—museums and folklore. I reminded them that we all enjoy repeatedly seeing our favorite artworks at museums we visit. When they join me at the Getty, where I work, we frequently have a look at Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's "Vexed Man," whose expression doesn't change each time, but still pleases us as we seek to understand the cause of his vexation. And we inevitably walk the zigzag path through Robert Irwin's Central Garden, which is indeed "never twice the same," as the artist's inscription suggests.

And don't we all enjoy telling our favorite folktales, watching our favorite movies, and reading our favorite stories again and again? So repeat viewing of the Warriors' artistry seems perfectly reasonable to me.

The game in question had been particularly masterful. In his first game back from an injury-induced, two-week hiatus, Warriors star Stephen Curry, the league's Most Valuable Player, scored 17 points in overtime to lead his team to victory. Those 17 points were more than any player in any NBA game ever has scored in a five-minute overtime period, and more than two entire teams (Toronto and Miami) had combined to score in their overtime earlier in the day.

This performance and subsequent ones have brought the Warriors to the verge of their second straight NBA championship—and have left commentators searching for the right terms to describe the Warriors' excellence. This is a team that won a record 73 games in the regular season (out of 82) and a host of awards. It also turned frequent, long-distance shooting—long dismissed as a poor strategy—into a new, exciting style of basketball. Was this not a work of art?

And a new form of art at that. Watch some basketball games on TV and you can notice that a typical sequence consists of one or two players dribbling the ball and then shooting. In contrast, watch the Warriors and you will see (if the cameras, which have been trained to focus on the ball, reveal it) a constant flow of movement and multiple passes before a shot is launched. Fitting this style, the Warriors have assembled numerous players who seem able to put the ball in the basket from anywhere on the court once their motion frees them for the shot. The Warriors led the league this season with over 20 assists per game. Their style is similar on the defensive side as well, with all five players rotating in perfect choreography as they move about, frustrating their opponents.

Now other teams are changing their styles—and searching for more versatile players like those on the Warriors, who can handle the ball, shoot 3-point shots, and play multiple positions. The Warriors style has revived some of the old metaphors for describing basketball, such as the coordinated improvisation of a jazz quintet. But it has also spawned a

search for new explanations for their extraordinary success. The *New York Times* magazine focused on majority owner Joe Lacob and his inclusive, team-oriented management style honed in Silicon Valley. An opinion piece in the *Los Angeles Times*, on the other hand, pointed out the Warriors' special team dynamics, in which Curry is the star but the versatile and sometimes volatile Draymond Green is the team leader.

The Warriors motto "Strength in Numbers" reflects their unselfish distribution of contributions. Yet such a successful and innovative approach to the game deserves more than a motto or a refurbished metaphor, so I return to my fields of art and folklore in search of the best way to describe my team.

Their name gave me a first idea: What great warriors of legend find embodiment in the Warriors of the hardwood? Roman hero Horatius Cocles, immortalized in Lord Macaulay's 1842 epic poem "Lays of Ancient Rome," is a candidate. Like the diminutive Curry, who was overlooked by recruiters for major college programs, Horatius unexpectedly rose from the ranks and inspired his fellow Romans. With two fellow warriors at his side, he stood at the Pons Sublicius, preventing the invading Etruscans from crossing into Rome. One can imagine the indomitable Curry flanked by Green and Klay Thompson (or is it Andre Iguodala and Andrew Bogut?), the bridge on their jerseys a reminder of their fending off an invasion from across the Bay.

But the Warriors are, in fact, misnamed. Their strength is not the rippling muscles and flaying sword of Horatius. Their greatness is their artistry and finesse, calling to mind the masters of the Renaissance, not the soldiers of antiquity. When Curry weaves around defenders, hoisting multiple long-range shots rendering broadcasters at a loss for words, he is more like Michelangelo chiseling his David, leaving viewers agape for centuries. Yet the analogy of the Renaissance master fails to account for the collective effort of the team. Even the idea of the Renaissance workshop is inadequate since the

Warriors teammates mean so much more than a group of skilled yet unrecognized supporters of a great artist.

The Warriors art is a modern one. From ownership to every coach and player on the bench, they see the game differently than others before them. They are Picasso, whose Cubist paintings enable us to see a subject from multiple sides simultaneously. The Warriors frustrate defenders who view the court from a traditional perspective; their motion offense envisions various options while the opposition sees only a static play. Like the five *Demoiselle d'Avignon*, the five Warriors on the court shock and inspire viewers to see the world anew.

But Picasso's modernism, while providing an apt means for appreciating the radically different style of Warriors basketball, still fails to capture the fluidity and motion that make their game such a pleasure to watch, and re-watch. To describe the continual slashing and weaving of the five players we need another icon of modern painting. The Warriors style has all the rhythm and movement of a Jackson Pollock drip painting. Their game plan consists not of the static cliché of X's and O's on a coach's clipboard; it is the free movement and colorful beauty of a big, bright Pollock canvas.

So if a friend tries to tell you you should go to a museum and get some culture, feel free to tell them you prefer the comfort of your couch, and turn on the game to watch those masters of modern artistry, the Golden State Warriors.

*Peter Tokofsky is a senior public programs specialist at the J. Paul Getty Museum and an adjunct faculty member at UCLA and Otis College of Art and Design.*

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# Adult smoking rate in U.S. keeps declining

By Associated Press

NEW YORK – The nation seems to be kicking its smoking habit faster than ever before.

The rate of smoking among adults in the U.S. fell to 15 percent last year thanks to the biggest one-year decline in more than 20 years, according to a new government report.

The rate fell two percentage points from 2014, when about 17 percent of adults in a large national survey said they had recently smoked.

The smoking rate has been falling for decades, but it usually drops only 1 point or less in a year.

The last time there was a drop nearly as big was from 1992 to 1993, when the smoking rate fell 1.5 percentage points, according to Brian King of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new statistic is based on a large national survey that is the government's primary measuring stick for many health-related trends.

Smoking is the nation's leading cause of preventable illness, causing more than 480,000 deaths each year in the United States, the CDC estimates.

Why the smoking rate fell so much in 2015 – and whether it will fall as fast again – is not quite clear.

About 50 years ago, roughly 42 percent of U.S. adults smoked. It was common nearly everywhere – in office buildings, restaurants, airplanes and even hospitals. The smoking rate's

gradual decline has coincided with an increased public understanding that smoking is a cause of cancer, heart disease and other lethal health problems.

Experts attribute recent declines decline to the mounting impact of antismoking advertising campaigns, cigarette taxes and smoking bans.

The increased marketing of electronic cigarettes and their growing popularity has also likely played a role. But it is not yet clear whether this will help further propel the decline in smoking, or contribute to an increase in smoking in years to come.

E-cigarettes heat liquid nicotine into a vapor, delivering the chemical that smokers crave without the harmful by-products generated from burning tobacco.

That makes them a potentially useful tool to help smokers quit, but experts fear it also creates a new way for people to get addicted to nicotine.

Some CDC surveys have shown a boom in e-cigarette use among teenagers, and health officials fear many of those kids will get hooked on nicotine and later become smokers.

As today's teenage e-cigarette users become adults in the next few years, "we may see 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds pick up the habit," worried Jonathan Whiteson, a smoking cessation specialist at NYU Langone Medical Center in New York.

Still, he and others are optimistic in part because regulators are turning their attention to the potential dangers of e-cigarettes. Earlier this month, the Food and Drug Administration announced sweeping new rules that will for the first time apply long-standing rules covering traditional cigarettes to e-cigarettes, hookah tobacco, pipe tobacco and nicotine gels. Minors would be banned from buying the products.

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# Cyclist hurt during ride around the lake

A cyclist participating in America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride was airlifted to Renown Medical Center on Sunday with non-life threatening injuries.

"(The) bicyclist took a tumble onto the roadway. He was then hit by car," Bernadette Smith with Douglas County Sheriff's Office told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The accident occurred near Zephyr Cove about 2:05pm June 5.

Curtis Fong, who puts on the annual event, told *LTN*, "I know that when friends picked up his bike from my (registration) tent that he was texting them that he may be released from the hospital after an MRI that evening."

No further details were available about the cyclist, including age and home town.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Plague warning at Fallen Leaf Lake Campground

A flea from a Yellow pine chipmunk in the Lake Tahoe area has tested positive for plague.

The flea was sampled from one of three rodents trapped in the Fallen Leaf Lake Campground area during routine plague surveillance May 18.

Warning signs are posted in the affected area and individuals are advised to report dead or sick rodents. All campers checking in are provided with educational materials about plague. Health officials are not aware of any human contact with infected rodents in the Fallen Leaf area.

Plague is naturally present in many parts of California, including higher elevation areas of El Dorado County. Additional plague testing will be performed this week in the Fallen Leaf Lake Campground area.

Plague is an infectious bacterial disease spread by squirrels, chipmunks and other wild rodents and their fleas. People can get plague when they are bitten by an infected flea or through close contact with an infected rodent or pet. Plague can be prevented by avoiding contact with wild rodents, and by keeping pets away from rodent burrows.

Symptoms of plague usually show up within two weeks of exposure to an infected animal or flea and include fever, nausea, weakness and swollen lymph nodes. Plague can be effectively treated with antibiotics if detected early.

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## **SLT council revises VHR rules —again**

**By Kathryn Reed**

The South Lake Tahoe City Council did a 180 Tuesday regarding

regulating multifamily properties as vacation rentals, while at the same time mandating those renting a room on a short-term basis have a permit to do so.

For now, at least, these nearly 60 multifamily parcels may still use their parcels as tourist accommodation units. This was the recommendation of Councilmembers Wendy David and Austin Sass, who comprise the vacation home rental subcommittee.

David said the reason for the change is having gathered more input from people who would be affected and realizing it would not solve the greater housing issue for locals.

Following the council's decision in May, many of the multifamily owners who are using at least some of their units as a VHR formed a coalition to protect their rights and interests. Now other VHR owners are part of the group. Their goal is to be a buffer between homeowners and the council-staff.

After the first two people spoke June 7, Councilman Hal Cole decided to recuse himself because he owns duplexes. And while they are not now used as VHRs, the option is open to him and therefore he could be financially impacted by the decision. Councilman Tom Davis already recused himself because of being in the VHR business.

Many of the 17 who spoke at the council meeting said they use the residence as income and/or for retirement. Some also live onsite, especially those in duplexes. Most said they are not rich land barons, but instead have worked hard to acquire income property and need to keep it to pay their bills.

One reason the council originally wanted to limit multifamily VHRs was to provide more long-term housing for permanent residents.

It was pointed out how there is a larger affordable housing

problem in town. Most agreed it would not be solved by banning VHRs at multifamily units.

Sass pointed out how in most ski towns employees live elsewhere and commute to their jobs.

Councilwoman JoAnn Conner said if housing is not available for the average worker, then they will be living off the hill, taking their disposable income with them as well as their kids out of local schools.

While multifamily units are still allowed to be rented to tourists today, the council did not promise that this is a long-term decision. Instead, David-Sass-Conner said they want to revisit the issue again – and soon – as well as have a larger discussion about housing for residents.

As of May 5, there were 1,862 VHR permits in South Lake Tahoe. Total permits as of: January 2015 – 1,549; October 2015 – 1,906; and January 2016 – 1,874. Since Oct. 1, 2015, there have been 106 new VHR permits approved by the zoning administrator.

The ordinance takes effect in 30 days. Also at that time anyone using any part of his or her residence as a vacation rental must collect transient occupancy tax.

At the June 21 meeting the council will review the submitted bids for an economic study about vacation rentals.

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# TDPUD scales back watering restrictions

The Truckee Donner Public Utility District board this month rescinded mandatory restrictions on outdoor irrigation with potable water effective immediately.

This change was in response to new California emergency drought regulations that allow local water agencies to self-certify adequacy of water supply and to base restrictions on projected water supply shortages.

Truckee Donner PUD said it has not experienced a water supply shortage during the drought and no longer needs mandatory restrictions to comply with state law. Even so, California emergency drought regulations remain in effect through January 2017. This includes the prohibition against wasting water by washing driveways and irrigating 48 hours after measurable precipitation.

The board still wants customers to strive for a voluntary 10 percent reduction in water use. and reminds the community that the C.

To help with enforcement of drought regulations through January 2017, the Truckee Donner PUD will continue the formal procedure to receive complaints regarding observations of noncompliant incidents. Staff will investigate complaints and take action where appropriate. Complaints may be filed **online**.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

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# Boreal's owners acquire Colorado ski resort

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

Utah's Powdr Corp. is doubling down in Colorado, adding Eldora Mountain Resort ski area to a portfolio that has included Copper Mountain resort since 2009.

Powdr Corp. also owns Boreal Ski Resort. The acquisition by Powdr, which now owns nine ski areas in Colorado, California, Nevada, Utah, Oregon and Vermont, adds yet another chapter to Eldora's ownership story.

"Colorado's Front Range is one of the best ski markets in the world. Expanding our footprint here with now two of the most accessible resorts to serve those passionate skiers is an enormous honor," Powdr owner and CEO John Cumming said in a news release. "Eldora is admired as a leading entry point and training ground for children and beginners."

**Read the whole story**

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## Benefit of LTN subscription? — Free Giants tickets

One of the benefits to being a subscriber to *Lake Tahoe News* is the occasional freebie. The latest giveaway was two tickets

to the July 4 San Francisco Giants game.

The winner had to name the former Giant who will be pitching today against the Reno Aces and then say why she subscribes to *Lake Tahoe News*.

While Joyce Youngs was the first to answer correctly – Tim Lincecum, she passed on the tickets because of other plans.

She said, “I subscribe to the *LTN* because it is the best news source here in Lake Tahoe and I have learned a lot of neat things about other places too!”

Another response, this from Michael B. Clark: “I’m betting that you are talking about Timmy. We’ll be in Scotland on the 4th, but we love the *LTN* because it is the best local news source online available. Keep up the good work Kae.”

Then there was this from Linda Fine Conaboy, “Why do I subscribe to *Lake Tahoe News*? Because it’s up to date – it’s the only place to get timely news about what’s going on at South Lake Tahoe and environs. And besides that, the publisher is honorable and always excited about the product she produces.”

And the winner – Wendy David – said, “I subscribe because *LTN* gives me news often as it is happening. *LTN* also publishes some of the most interesting and thought provoking opinion pieces from many other sources. I have been a subscriber for years.”

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The cost to subscribe is \$10/month or \$100/year. You may

subscribe **online** or send a check to: Lake Tahoe News, PO Box 13406, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Calif. beats water conservation targets in April

**By Associated Press**

SAN FRANCISCO – Californians once again beat the state's drought-time order for water savings in April – one of the last months before officials transition from a statewide conservation order to more localized targets, a state agency said Monday.

The average Californian used 77 gallons of water a day in April, down 26.1 percent from 104 gallons in April 2013, the state Water Resources Control Board said.

The agency has been the top conservation monitor and enforcer during California's five years of drought.

California in April marked its 11th month of mandatory water conservation of up to 25 percent for cities and towns.

El Nino storms this winter brought near-normal rain and snow to Northern California but not the southern part of the state.

Starting this month, California will switch to a system that will let local water agencies lift conservation requirements if they can prove they have enough water to get through three more years of possible drought.

State water board chairwoman Felicia Marcus called the localized conservation orders the “show-me-the-water model.”

“I do want to be clear if this approach doesn’t work we are prepared to call folks on it,” Marcus told reporters.

Under the new system, water districts unable to show they have enough water for three more years’ of drought must conserve by a corresponding amount.

Water agencies that are 20 percent short on water, for example, would be told to keep their water use 20 percent below pre-drought levels.

After 11 months of conservation, Californians have saved enough water to supply 18 percent of the state’s nearly 40 million people for a year.

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## **Letter: Caltrans plans to build Meyers roundabout**

**To the community,**

Caltrans District 3 is developing a safety project that proposes to construct a roundabout at the intersection of highways 50 and 89 in Meyers beginning in 2018. The department has looked at several options at this location and has identified a roundabout as the preferred alternative to address safety concerns and improve traffic flow.

Caltrans staff members have been meeting regularly with El Dorado County and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency representatives to gather their feedback on the project and to ensure that it is in line with the draft Meyers Area Plan,

which identifies a need for improvements at this intersection, and the Meyers Corridor Project.

Studies have shown that roundabouts:

- Are safer than signalized intersections
- Reduce frequency and severity of crashes
- Reduce traffic delays/increase traffic capacity
- Can slow excessive traffic speeds while still improving traffic flow
- Reduce long-term operational costs
- Are more environmentally friendly than traditional intersections due to less vehicle emissions, fuel use and noise
- Are more aesthetically pleasing than stop signs or traffic signals

Roundabouts in the Lake Tahoe area are currently in use on highways 89 and 267 in Truckee and Highway 28 in Kings Beach. Three additional roundabouts are being built on Highway 89 in Tahoe City over the next two years.

Caltrans looks forward to presenting its Meyers project to the community and gathering feedback at an open house later this year as we continue through the project development process.

For more information on the benefits of roundabouts, go **online**.

**Steve Nelson, Caltrans public information officer**