

Opinion: A deeper truth under the hoodies

By Phil Taylor, Sports Illustrated

What do you see, America? What do you see when 13 black males stand before you, their faces partially obscured by hoodies? Do you see a group or a gang? Men or menace? Such a powerful image circulated last week, a kind of team photo never seen before: the Miami Heat players in their black, team-issued hoodies, heads bowed both in mourning and protest over the death of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed African-American teenager who was shot to death on Feb. 26 in Sanford, Fla. LeBron James, who came up with the idea along with Dwyane Wade, posted the picture on Twitter last Friday, with the hashtags #WeAreTrayvonMartin, #Hoodies, #Stereotyped and #WeWantJustice. The photo was a statement, but also a question: Look at us, America. Pretend you don't know us as LBJ, D-Wade and friends. Pretend you don't know us at all. What do you see?

Trayvon was killed by George Zimmerman, 28, a neighborhood watch volunteer of Caucasian and Latino descent who apparently found something threatening about a skinny, 17-year-old black kid walking down a street of middle-class townhouses in a hooded sweatshirt. The tragedy became a flash point for age-old anger about the treatment of African-Americans by whites and police. It wasn't just the shooting but also the seeming indifference of investigators. Why, even considering the Florida law that gives wide latitude for the use of force, had Zimmerman not been arrested? Why had police accepted his claim of self-defense even though he was carrying a gun and Trayvon reportedly was packing only Skittles and a can of iced tea? Why had Zimmerman continued to follow Trayvon against the advice of a police dispatcher?

When the Heat photo hit the Internet, it felt as if everyone involved stopped talking for a moment and did a double-take, surprised that athletes would dare join the discussion. We have become accustomed, after all, to players backing away from political and social issues, as if in a prevent defense. Remember when Latino baseball players threatened to boycott the 2011 All-Star Game in Phoenix to protest a controversial Arizona immigration law? It never happened. Or when Michael Jordan declined to make an endorsement in a hotly contested 1990 North Carolina senate race, reportedly explaining, "Republicans buy shoes too"? Most of the greatest stars—think Jeter, Tiger, Brady—have been alike in their neutrality, as it had been with James and Wade.

Read the whole story

Social commerce helps small businesses grow

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

When you're trying to sell your product, exposure is key. And attracting that attention has become easier with the rise of social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Reno resident Barbara Read's online business increased after she started posting her listings on websites and on the Facebook and Twitter feeds of friends and other potential buyers.

"It's about the exposure and the fact that you can deliver what you say you can," Read said. "It's about having satisfied customers. Because if you don't have satisfied customers,

people are going to hear about it. Somebody is going to post it somewhere.”

Read, 57, has been selling her crocheted items on eBay, Etsy, Yardsellr and other online marketplace websites to supplement her family’s income after she lost her job in 2007.

“I don’t make a lot,” she said. “But I do make some, and it does help out.”

Connections provided by websites, such as San Francisco-based startup YardSellr, which lets users post listings on almost anything on its site and sellers’ Facebook pages, have increased sales.

“I had a few people go, ‘Hey, can I put your stuff up on my Facebook page?’” Read said. “... I think that is why I have gotten more business.”

Yardsellr founder and CEO Danny Leffel, 32, started the company in October 2009. Before launching the website, he spent five years at eBay working on product strategy centered around a community of people who shared passions about a type of product. He left the online auction and shopping giant a couple years ago to work at another Silicon Valley startup before venturing out on his own.

Read the whole story

Gay marriage lawsuit presses for survivor benefits

By Barbara Bradley Hagerty, NPR

Herbert Burtis met the person he wanted to marry in college, in 1948. But since the object of his affection was another man, they had to wait until 2004 for the ceremony, when Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriages.

“It’s a long engagement,” Burtis says, laughing. “We thought it was time that we made each other honest people.”

His spouse, John Ferris, died four years ago. When Burtis went to the Social Security office to apply for survivor benefits, the clerk told him the federal government did not recognize his marriage.

“You feel like, ‘Why am I a second-class citizen?’ ” the 82-year-old Burtis says. “I thought our marriage license was a legal document. And if it’s legal for a man and a woman, it should be legal for a man and a man. And I couldn’t see why there would be prejudice in that.”

Burtis is one of 17 gay men and women who are asking a federal court in Boston to clear up the confusion. On Wednesday, the First Circuit Court of Appeals will begin hearings on whether the Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA, is unconstitutional.

Read the whole story

Tapping, meditation classes at Tahoe Wellness Center

Rosemary Manning will be conducting two classes at the Tahoe Wellness Community Center this month.

Tap-Aware Party is April 17 from 6-7pm. It’s free, though donations are accepted.

Meditation For People Who Are Busy, Busy, Busy, Busy! is April 23 from 6-7pm. With a donation of \$5 or more people will receive the book "101 Essentials of Meditation".

Couches are available or bring a pillow to sit on.

Tahoe Wellness Community Center is in the Bijou Center in South Lake Tahoe next to Hot Gossip.

Email tahoehealthtouch@gmail.com with questions.

ACLU: Local police tracking cellphones without warrants

By Suzy Khimm, Washington Post

Local police departments across the country are tracking cellphones without a warrant, according to documents obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The ACLU surveyed about 200 state and local law enforcement agencies across the country and found that only a handful of them said they obtained "warrants based on probable cause" before tracking cellphones. Most other agencies had laxer standards for tracking cellphones. In Lincoln, Neb., for instance, local police can obtain the GPS location of cellphone users "without demonstrating probable cause," the group said in a statement.

As a result, the ACLU concludes that there are "unclear or inconsistent legal standards from town to town that frequently fall short of probable cause," questioning whether the

practice is constitutional.

Read the whole story

How women, girls are faring in education, jobs in Calif.

By Los Angeles Times

California women have made significant strides in recent years, obtaining college and graduate degrees at a higher rate than men, for instance, but they still lag their male counterparts when it comes to leadership roles, earning power, and proficiency in advanced science and math, a new report shows.

The analysis, released Thursday, takes a wide-ranging look at how women and girls are faring across California. It points to recent achievements in some areas but highlights continuing inequities in many others, including women's low representation in elected office, in high-paying science and technology careers, and in the top ranks of the state's major public companies.

The analysis is believed to be the first to attempt a comprehensive look at the status of California's women and girls, based on such factors as poverty, education, employment, leadership, and mental and physical health. It was produced by faculty, staff and students at Mount St. Mary's College, a Los Angeles liberal arts institution that primarily enrolls women. Researchers worked on the project for a year, compiling data from multiple sources, including the U.S. Census and various state agencies.

“As a women’s college, we have a deep interest in the forces that shape women’s lives,” Mount St. Mary’s President Ann McElaney-Johnson said. “We see it as part of our role to shine a light on the opportunities for women, and on the inequities women continue to face.”

The findings in many cases echo broad trends outlined in a national report, “Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being,” and other recent studies. Like those, it found that women have a distance to go in many areas to reach parity with men.

The report highlighted continuing gaps between the performance of boys and girls on mandated state tests in math and some areas of science, although not biology, where girls have pulled even. But the gender gap for advanced algebra, geometry, physics and chemistry has remained fairly constant in recent years, with girls tending to fall further behind as they reach more advanced math and science subjects.

The reasons for the gaps include different preparation and course-taking patterns in high school and college, said University of California, Los Angeles education professor Linda Sax, who studies gender differences in college students.

[Read the whole story](#)

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Northstar is planning to close April 15.

- California won't reach Tax Freedom Day until April 20; five days later than last year and three days later than the average for all states.

- South Lake Tahoe planning commissioners are hosting a workshop on the design plans for the Harrison Avenue Streetscape and Public Improvement Project on April 12 at 4pm in the City Council Chambers.

- Truckee is having a prescription medication take-back day on April 28 from 9am-1pm. Click on the flyer for more information.

Incline boarder tops podium at national event

Natalie Vitalie of Incline Village won the April 5 rail jam at Copper Mountain Resort in Colorado.

The U.S. Snowboarding Association's event is an invite-only competition.

On Sunday, Vitalie won gold in the slopestyle event.

S. Tahoe fair participants don't have to travel to Placerville

Do you have a project you've been working on lately and now don't know what to do with it? Enter it into the fair.



South Lake Tahoe entries will be picked up from library the week of May 8. There are some exceptions, for example, floriculture entries and baked items, need to be brought to the fair on their respective receiving days.

Entry guides for the "Grapest Show on Earth" – the 2012 El Dorado County Fair – are available online. Whether you've just begun a project or are looking to pick up a new hobby, browse through the entry guides.

Most entry forms are due on or before 4pm May 11. There are a few exceptions such as floriculture and the special contests. For more information on entry guides and forms, go online or call (530) 621.5860.

The fair is June 14-17 in Placerville.

Remember – your brain needs

to continually be stimulated

By Mandy Kendall

I seem to be spending a lot more time these days running up and down the stairs going back to fetch something I've forgotten. Don't get me wrong, the exercise is doing me good, and I'm not finding the car keys in the fridge (yet), but I am a little concerned about my brain's seeming inability to multitask.

So, I decided to spend a little time looking into what can be done to keep the old gray matter ticking over.



Mandy
Kendall

As we age, if we are not careful, our bodies will generally start to decline. Our brains are no exception, but like a muscle, the more we use it, the longer it will remain stronger and fitter.

Studies have shown there are numerous ways to help stave off the "senior moment syndrome" as well as much more chronic and devastating diseases like Alzheimer's, and it seems the earlier you start the better.

Daniel Amen (physician, psychiatrist, teacher, and author from Southern California) has scanned more than 70,000 brains and is a huge advocate for brain health. His studies show that as weight increases, brain size decreases, and that brain damage can be caused by abuse of bad foods and toxic substances (and

alcohol is included in that category too I'm afraid). The good news is that brain function can be dramatically improved by following a few simple steps.

Be kind to your brain – Limit toxic substances. I know it might be easier said than done, but when I think about my brain deteriorating, it makes it a lot easier to say no to more wine.

Feed your brain – If we asked ourselves “is this good for my brain” before eating something, most of us, if we were being honest with ourselves, would know whether we should be eating it. Try and aim for maximum nutrition with minimum calories. Researchers found that seniors whose blood had high levels of nutrients found in fish, fruits, nuts and leafy greens were less likely to suffer from memory problems and brain shrinkage which can be an early indicator of Alzheimer's.

Rest your brain – As well as a good night's sleep, your brain will thank you for an occasional rest throughout the day. Meditation is a great catnap for the brain and doesn't need to take long to be beneficial. There are plenty of apps you can download onto your phone or iPad to guide you.

Increase your brain size – Studies are showing that decreasing midlife obesity can reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia in old age as well as increasing the size of our brains. So now we know that as well as helping our hearts, weight loss also helps our brains.

Exercise your brain – Socializing, learning something new, changing routines, using your left hand if you are right handed (and visa versa) and being creative with craftwork all help to flex your brain muscle.

Watch less TV – A study showed that children's brains showed more activity when they were sat in front of a blank wall compared to when they were watching TV. Enough said.

If you're interested in learning more about how to protect your brain I can thoroughly recommend Amen's book "Use Your Brain to Change Your Age".

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.