California earns F for timely ER treatments

By Eryn Brown, Los Angeles Times

An updated national report on U.S. emergency medical care has again awarded California an F for lacking access to speedy treatment, noting that the state has the fewest hospital emergency rooms per capita – 6.7 per 1 million people – in the nation.

The America's Emergency Care Environment report card, which gauges how well states support emergency care, was released Thursday by the advocacy group American College of Emergency Physicians. Tracking 136 measures from sources including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the organization called overcrowding in California emergency wards a "critical problem" and urged the state to increase its healthcare workforce and beef up a variety of facilities to reduce long waits for emergency services.

On average, Californians who were admitted into the hospital after visiting an emergency room waited more than five and a half hours from the time they arrived in the ER to the time they left it, the report said.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Goofy

Goofy is one of those true mutts. There are many guesses as to his breed – he could be part Whippet, part Miniature Pinscher – but we do know he is a well-mannered boy who does not live up to his name.

He is quiet in the shelter, and gets along well with dogs and cats. He is about 2 years old, walks very nicely on the leash, and is quite affectionate. Goofy weighs only about 20 pounds, and could use another 5 pounds.

Goofy is neutered, microchipped, tested for heartworm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Cal band brings music to Sierra's slopes

By Susan Wood

TWIN BRIDGES – Call it a prelude of things to come at Sierra-at-Tahoe ski resort.

The century-plus-old Cal band showed up for the 10th time to play and dance in its signature, animated style at the ski resort's expansive, new plaza outside the main lodge this Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. Then, the members of the playful UC Berkeley band got on skis and snowboards to navigate the Broadway run with instruments in hand.



Members of the Cal band ski and play down the slopes at Sierra-at-Tahoe.
Photo/Steven Hemphill

The exceptional eye-hand coordination would make the Winter Olympians the ski resort has spawned proud.

If the band can overcome a losing football season last fall, it can certainly negotiate the sparse snow of the Sierra Nevada this winter.

“It’s not too bad. The tuba is a well-balanced instrument,” tuba player Naddav Paran said after Saturday’s morning performance. Of course, it might help that he started skiing at age 4. And band members are instructed to take it slow.

Upon success of the midday ride, the tubas become the stars at the end of the day for their dancing rendition of “Lights Out.”

On skis and boards or not, the student-run Cal Band knows how to entertain. When the Bears band marches out of Memorial Stadium’s North Tunnel for football pre-games, the display is referred to as the “pacesetter of college marching bands” – or, “the pride of California.” Band members take over the streets when the team wins at home in Berkeley.



Stephen Ramaley is bundled up to play in below freezing temps. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Guests and staffers of the ski resort located 12 miles west of Meyers were rocking out for the morning session near Tahoe, a non school-sanctioned event scheduled to wrap up the end of

winter break.

“This is awesome,” ski school instructor Jen Gilardi screamed. The employee, who followed the band when she lived in Berkeley, was texting friends to join her for the day to see the band.

Guests of the resort, the Mayali family of Kensington, were all smiles while watching. Dad Xavier went to Cal, and he and his wife, Michelle’s, two children play band instruments — Emma, 8, saxophone and Max, 10, trumpet. The Cal Band, in one of its several appearances at games, reunions, weddings and birthday parties, staged a performance at Max’s school.

“We make a point of coming up here for this weekend,” the Mayali matriarch said.



Before the sun comes over the ridge, the band welcomes skiers to Sierra.

Even the parents of the band members enjoy the venue.

“This is the only time I get to see him,” Doug Greer said of his piccolo-playing son, Ross.

Steps away, Kevin King of Folsom swayed and danced to the band’s repertoire of 150 songs ranging from the proverbial marching band tune “The Big C” to more contemporary hits such as “Carry On” by the rock band Kansas.

“I went to Davis, but the Cal Band is the best,” King said, adding he enjoyed the paving-stone plaza area Sierra installed this season.

The new area expands the base lodge space and seating, and resort management expects to stage many events there – particularly in the spring and summer. King’s alma mater band may play at the resort’s grand opening of the plaza.

Many people from all walks of life have connections to the Cal Band. Alumni musicians are invited at any time to join the band for the Tahoe-area weekend event, which continued on Sunday at Squaw Valley.



Keeping the cadence.

Despite the 19-degree temperatures early Saturday morning, most band members played without gloves, and at least one rotating conductor, a drummer, stripped off his hat and jacket upon taking the platform. Another percussionist rolled up his sleeves. The musicians have played in all sorts of weather conditions – even in a snowstorm a few years ago.

Senior manager Carolyn Richter recalled a time when she forgot to separate and defrost her mouthpiece one cold morning and paid for it with part of her lip sticking to the mouthpiece of

her trombone. Still, she considers Sierra-at-Tahoe one of the more fun events the band puts on.

“It’s as much about the dancing as the playing,” Richter told *Lake Tahoe News*.

That’s one way to stay warm in the mountains.

“Our band (members) who come out for this also love to ski and snowboard, and Tahoe’s not too far away,” she added.

Agreeing was Richter’s No. 2 man up for the manager job next year, Stephen Stapleton. The trumpet player made a point of declaring the ski weekend as one of his favorites, and he’s apparently not alone. About 140 members of the 200-person band showed up to take part.



Playing without the warmth of gloves.

“The Cal Band brings great energy to the resort. It’s so fun to have them skiing down Broadway and playing music at the base,” Sierra General Manager John Rice said.

The Cal Band has made a variety of performances, including the San Francisco Symphony’s Black and White Ball and even the Ed Sullivan show years ago. More recently, the high-energy band

led the San Francisco Giants downtown victory parade when the team won the World Series after a half-century drought.

Letter: Vail Resorts helps feed those in need

To the community

Bread & Broth's Jan. 13 Adopt A Day of Nourishment dinner was generously sponsored by Heavenly Mountain and Kirkwood resorts. Their hosting of the Monday evening event guaranteed that the attending 85 guests were served a nutritious and filling meal with tasty cabbage rolls as the main entrée along with calls for "seconds" and "to go" servings.

B&B appreciates and salutes the financial and volunteer crew support that we receive from the local Vail resorts each month.

"I am so happy Vail gives us this opportunity to serve the community," wrote Michelle Morton, a Vail volunteer for the evening. "After coming today, I was touched by how everyone comes in and sits together, laughs and catches up with each other, just like an extended family on Thanksgiving."

Also volunteering and spreading cheer at the Adopt A Day event were Morton's fellow sales department members Arnaud Robin, Hillary Hutchens and Shannon Proper.

"I was also touched by how everyone looks out for families with kids. The smiles on their faces made it all worthwhile," Morton added.

In addition to families, the B&B meals feed the working poor,

elderly on fixed incomes as well as those living outdoors. Thanks to our many generous donors and AAD sponsors like the Vail Resorts, the less fortunate in our community are able to enjoy an evening every Monday that fills both their hearts and lessens their hunger.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

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Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

McClintock may be challenged

By Christopher Cadelago, Sacramento Bee

Looks like Rep. Tom McClintock will get a challenge from the left. Democrat Kris Johnson plans to run in the Republican-dominated 4th Congressional District.

The Granite Bay resident filed the necessary paperwork to run just days after news anchor Walt Gray ended speculation that he would mount an independent campaign against McClintock, a rock-ribbed Republican.

Johnson, who has yet to formally announce her candidacy, said in a message posted to her website that she was frustrated and angry about the poor performance of elected officials to stem the economic crisis in the Foothills.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Squaw Valley, Diamond Peak, Mammoth and Kirkwood made CNN’s list of the world’s 100 best ski runs.

• Marlon Buckmiller has joined Coldwell Banker Select Real Estate in Zephyr Cove.

• Here is the January draft update of the Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan. A Summary of Changes companion document has been posted with the January 2014 Specific Plan and includes a chapter by chapter listing of the major changes to the document text, tables and figures. Comments or questions should be directed to Alex Fisch in the Placer County Planning Services Division at (530) 745.3081 or afisch@placer.ca.gov.

• Standup paddleboard manufacturer Tahoe SUP marks its five-year anniversary this month. It was founded by Nate Brouwer.

• Homewood Mountain Resort is having a rail jam Feb. 22.

Smart phones share data unbeknownst to users

By Elizabeth Dwoskin, Wall Street Journal

Fan Zhang, the owner of Happy Child, a trendy Asian restaurant in downtown Toronto, knows that 170 of his customers went clubbing in November. He knows that 250 went to the gym that month, and that 216 came in from Yorkville, an upscale neighborhood.

Businesses are tracking their customers and building profiles of their daily habits using a network of startups that have placed sensors in restaurants, yoga studios and other sites. Chris Gilpin, founder of one such site, Turnstyle, joins the News Hub.

The sensors, each about the size of a deck of cards, follow

signals emitted from WiFi-enabled smartphones. That allows them to create portraits of roughly 2 million people's habits as they have gone about their daily lives, traveling from yoga studios to restaurants, to coffee shops, sports stadiums, hotels, and nightclubs.

Read the whole story

Teter third in halfpipe at Mammoth

By USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN -– Kaitlyn Farrington (Bellevue, Idaho) clinched her spot on the Olympic halfpipe snowboarding team Sunday with her bold victory at the final event of the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix series.

Arielle Gold (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) also secured her Sochi spot Sunday. Olympic champion Kelly Clark (West Dover, Vt) settled for second while Hannah Teter (South Lake Tahoe) finished third in the electrifying final.

"Everyone is claiming that this is the best pipe of the season, if not the best in years. It's just so soft. I definitely felt the heat but sometimes that makes me get in the zone when I know I've got to do it, like it's all or nothing. So, it pushed me to the be in the spotlight … and I like the spotlight," Teter said.

White ready for 3rd Winter games in halfpipe

By USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN -– Defending Olympic champion Shaun White, who rides for Northstar, will get a chance to win three-in-a-row at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games after clinching a spot on the Olympic halfpipe snowboarding team Sunday with his victory at the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix series finale.

Local favorite Greg Bretz (Mammoth Lakes) also earned a spot on the team with his impressive performance throughout the Grand Prix tour. Style-conscious veteran Danny Davis (Truckee) took second on Sunday with rookie Ben Ferguson (Bend, Ore.) third.

“It was a long week for me, but I made the team. I’m pretty happy. My runs are definitely up to my expectations,” White said.

Sierra hosts Cal Marching Band

The Cal Marching Band members made their way to Sierra-at-Tahoe on Jan. 18 to entertain skiers and boarders. They even played and skied at the same time.