

Remembering Tahoe's kids at the holidays



The Children's Memorial in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Provided

Santa's elves have done it again. Those little elves have placed a Christmas tree with a red Christmas stocking for each and every child who is on our tree at the Children's Memorial in South Lake Tahoe.

No child we have lost before their time should not go without a stocking for Santa to put a gift in during Christmas. Every stocking has a thought and prayer telling each child they are not forgotten nor will they be. Never gone, never forgotten, always remembered.

God bless our children and remember to hug our lost children in your thoughts and prayers every single day.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News

Christmas tree growers battle popularity of plastic

By Lydia Mulvaney, Bloomberg

Millennials have earned a reputation for loving consumer products that are local and artisanal. So why are they buying so many plastic Christmas trees?

That's the question irking Tim O'Connor, the executive director of the Christmas Tree Promotion Board in Littleton, Colo. To help capture more buyers, growers are positioning themselves as analogs to the local and organic food movement. Real trees have all the things younger adults are drawn to, he said, touting authenticity, benefits to the environment and support for regional economies.

They've got their work cut out for them. While almost 95 million U.S. households will display a Christmas tree this season, only 19 percent of those are expected to be real, according to a survey conducted by Nielsen for the American Christmas Tree Association released last week. While some houses display both types of trees, most will be putting up artificial trees, usually made from plastic and coming from factories sometimes located across the globe.

[Read the whole story](#)

USFS-Barton promote wellness

via nature

By Lake Tahoe News

The next prescription you get might not be able to be filled at a pharmacy or come in the form of a pill. Instead, it might require athletic apparel.

Nature as medicine is what it's being called. While people who regularly recreate outdoors know the benefits, those who are recovering from an injury or illness have often been treated indoors. That tradition is no longer always the protocol.

Barton Health and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit this fall signed an agreement to provide wellness outings for patients. They've been doing so since last year, but it wasn't until last month that the formal agreement was inked.

"These agreements allow the two entities to contribute staff time toward a mutual goal, which is to facilitate therapeutic experiences on the National Forest for at-risk populations in the community of South Lake Tahoe," Lisa Herron with the U.S. Forest Service told *Lake Tahoe News*. "No funds, public or otherwise, are flowing from USFS to Barton Health as part of this agreement. Instead, both entities have agreed to contribute staff time toward reaching a mutual goal."

The outings will be free for the patients who are "prescribed" this therapy.

"Wellness outings will be scheduled for community members by Barton Health providers as part of their care. Guided walks and winter snowshoe outings with Barton Healthcare providers and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit personnel are tailored to the patient's needs and ability level," Jenna Palacio with Barton told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Wellness Outings are intended to deliver the healing properties of nature with U.S. Forest Service land education in South Lake Tahoe."

The comprehensive program includes options for people with chronic or terminal illness, patients recovering from surgery, and at-risk youth.

According to Barton, time in nature lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol levels, while it increases concentration, memory, and attention spans.

Steve Bannar, who has been a doctor with Barton for years, in a statement said, "A prescription for nature can enable accessibility for at-risk groups as well as preventive medicine for other members of the community. We need to change our mindset from treating disease to promoting wellness."

To date, Barton and the Forest Service have led six community wellness outings for dozens of people. They include:

- Wellness walk for the chronically ill at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center (fall 2016);
- Moonlight snowshoe for orthopedic patients on the shore of Lake Tahoe (spring 2017);
- Wellness Walk for youth with emotional and behavioral challenges along the Upper Truckee River restoration (summer 2017);
- Interpretive walk for Spanish speaking youth in South Lake Tahoe (summer 2017);
- Wellness walk and facilitated mindfulness for the chronically ill at the Tallac Historic Site (summer 2017);
- Wellness walk at Valhalla historic property for full-time nursing patients (fall 2017).

USFS staff time for each of these wellness outings is estimated at two to three hours.

For the Forest Service, the partnership helps bring another segment of the community to its lands. Barton is also providing preventative medical training to Forest Service personnel who work in injury prone positions. Barton has

hosted three wellness workshops, including a foot care for wildland firefighters, emergency medicine for backcountry rangers, and a wellness training at a USFS all-employee meeting.

Keep Christmas merry by properly securing tree to vehicle

By Art Marroquin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Oh Christmas tree, oh Christmas tree, how lovely are your branches.

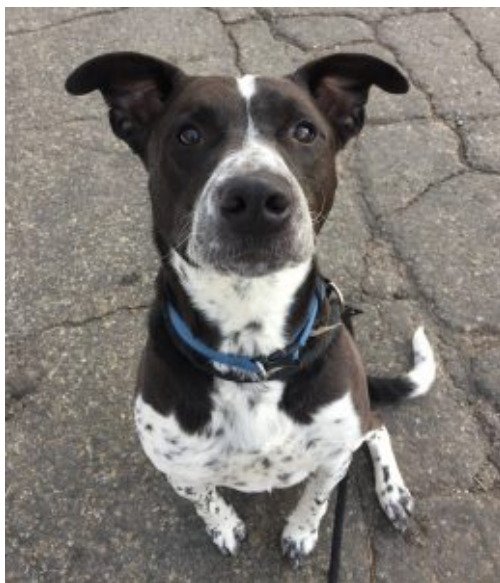
Until they damage your car. Or worse, tumble onto the street.

Picking out that perfect evergreen centerpiece is a time-honored tradition for many families, but taking it home can sometimes pose a challenge.

Failing to properly secure Christmas trees can damage your vehicle or create a road hazard for other motorists.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Dex

Dex is a very sweet 2 year old border collie/Australian cattle dog mix. He is a little shy at first, but pretty soon after meeting new people he is leaning in for pets. He loves to go for walks.

Dex weighs about 40 pounds. He likes other dogs and has lived with cats. He would do best in a home with children over 12.

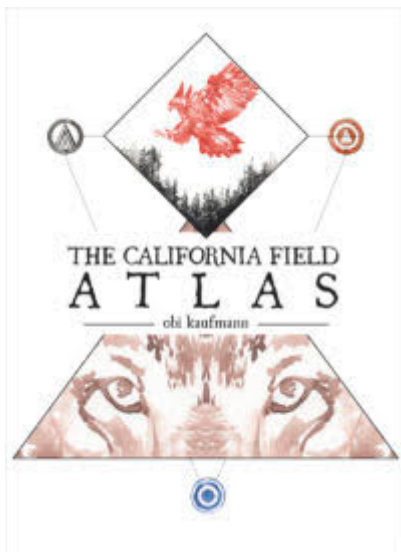
Dex is neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

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

Book review: An inspired gift for Calif. nature lovers

By Kim Wyatt



“The California Field Atlas “

By Obi Kaufmann

Heyday, 552 pages, \$45

One-line review: Get lost in this singular, enchanting atlas of our golden state.

“This is a love story,” begins “The California Field Atlas,” and the instant I opened this enchanting book I was under its spell.

What is the purpose of an atlas? To help us find our way? In “The California Field Atlas,” painter, poet and philosopher Obi Kaufmann invites us to find our way around California by getting blissfully, beautifully lost in its pages. Once the

book is in your hands, you'll be hard-pressed to put it down.

Heyday Books makes exceptional books, and this is a showstopper. More than 300 full-color maps and illustrations are detailed in the compact atlas, the result of California-born Kaufman's wide-ranging travels. Ten chapters are organized thematically and by ecosystem rather than north to south or any usual method. "Of Earth and Mountains," "Of Water and Rivers," and "Of Fire and Forests" are a few of the compelling sections. Attention is given to trail systems and natural features in more detail than roads. Included are maps of energy grids, snow levels and watersheds alongside watercolors of flora and fauna from golden eagle to gray whale. A large chapter deals entirely with each of the state's 58 counties, and I was surprised to find out something new about the place I was born. (For the readers of *Lake Tahoe News*, the features on the Sierra alone are worth the price of admission.)

Its unique key and map legends put you in the mind of the author, and encourage you to look at California in new ways. Without an index, you'll have to think about the state in broader terms, which begins to reveal a whole, California as "a single, integrative being composed of living patterns and ancient processes," as does Kaufmann. In the last chapter, "A Rewilded Future," Kaufmann lays out his conservation ethic in a way that will resonate with and inspire many.

Breathtaking and informative and one of a kind, this book will lead to fresh insights about the Golden State, promoting geographic literacy, historical understanding and perhaps, in turn, stewardship of this amazing place we call home.

The "California Field Atlas" would make an excellent gift. But buy two—you won't want to let it go.

Find out more about the author and the book at **here**. Order from Heyday Books **here**.

*Kim Wyatt is the owner of **Bona Fide Books** in Meyers.*

Boys and Girls Club – not enough space for kids



Lake Tahoe Boys and Girls Club needs more room and a permanent space. Photo/Susan Wood

By Susan Wood

For over a decade, the Lake Tahoe Boys and Girls Club has represented a home away from home for hundreds of South Lake Tahoe youngsters.

Now it needs a home itself.

The thinking is eventually the Lake Tahoe Unified School District may want to reopen the **AL Tahoe Elementary School**, so

shared use should be defined. The club took over part of those grounds in a year-to-year lease after the grade school closed in 2004 because of declining enrollment and through a reorganization of South Tahoe Middle School.

In that timeframe, the demand has mushroomed for the club on Lyons Avenue. The organization serving ages 5-18 busts from the seams in satisfying the needs of children finding a window of opportunity to play and study between school and home.

The Boys and Girls Club of South Lake Tahoe has grown from 423 members to 731 between 2014 and 2017 – with at least 20 families on the waiting list, Executive Director Jude Wood told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“I think it’s a reflection of an economy improving,” Wood said.



Jude Wood is leading the South Shore Boys and Girls Club to greater independence.

Photo/Susan Wood

If both parents are working, the club serves as an ideal alternative to latchkey children or babysitters.

Even as the best alternative, the kids are outgrowing the facility. During playtime, the recreation room is crammed with people. Backpacks line the hallway.

“We’ve outgrown it anyway,” Wood said.

The director and her staff have improvised nicely, but the dream is to cut a deal with the school district to build a new clubhouse next door where the portables are located.

Unlike club membership, school district enrollment is steady, but not surging.

The school district discussed the options with the club during a board meeting this fall. The trustees agreed to bring on an architect to survey suggested construction of a two-story, 10,000-square-foot structure adjacent to the gym and close to the ballfield.

The club is seeking a joint-use agreement with the district and expressed an openness to fund the design of a new place. The cost to build may be absorbed through donations, grants and other capital investment. Currently, the club renews its annual lease with the district every summer.

In exchange for a 50-year lease of the land, the club has offered to renovate Al Tahoe’s gym and kitchen, the latter being a vital resource serving more than 60 meals a day. Plus, the district would like to make the gym more multi-purpose.

“It’s a yearlong process. We’re doing our due diligence to see what’s best for the club,” Wood said.

Therein lies some advantages with the Al Tahoe location. It’s close to the middle school, library and the city recreation

center and within steps from major bus and walking routes.

“It’s pretty realistic, but we have to get the architect involved,” trustee Barbara Bannar told *LTN*. “Absolutely we want to help them move forward. It’s their decision ultimately. Whatever choice they make – we’ll all be happy.”



Backpacks cluttering the halls is an indication of lack of space. Photo/Susan Wood

Certainly, Bannar said the school district has also seen the portable units outlive their useful state.

They would come out with the preferred plan, much to the liking of LTUSD Superintendent Jim Tarwater, who told *LTN* he’d push for seeing them go.

Tarwater has much faith in LPA architects from Roseville to build an ideal facility to meet state specifications. The firm designed the remodeled South Tahoe high and middle schools.

“The positive thing is (the club) having all that acreage and a playground with swings,” the superintendent said. “The

hardest thing for (the club) is buying land. There isn't any."

Other options exist, but perhaps not as attractive as rebuilding next door.

The city of South Lake Tahoe can relate to the plight. After wrestling with its own leaky, rundown recreation center on nearby Rufus Allen Boulevard, it plans to rebuild. With plans through Measure P for the city to build a new recreation center, the Boys and Girls Club toyed with the idea of being roommates. But who's to say the club won't outgrow that location – especially since the youth organization seeks autonomy.

Besides talk of going into the Unity church site, El Dorado County may also have an option if it moves out of its vector control building on the same street. However, that relocation would require an environmental cleanup.

The county has conducted soil samples and found the land contaminated by pest-control chemicals. Another soil sample is slated to occur.

"We're interested in helping them any way we can – whatever works out for them," said Tahoe's county Supervisor Sue Novasel, a past-president of the Boys and Girls Club. "But we need to do some mitigation out there."

Novasel believes there's "no perfect option," but the drawn-out process is "just what you have to deal with when dealing with land use."

Burning Man wants permit to grow to 100,000 people

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Despite complaints from some critics that Burning Man is already too big, the organization may make their main event even bigger.

As Nevada Bureau of Land Management officials review how the annual, weeklong arts festival has affected the surrounding environment and communities since it moved to Nevada in 1990, Burning Man is proposing that the BLM allow the event to grow to 100,000 people in the future.

BLM officials and Burning Man organizers met with locals this week from Gerlach, Reno and Lovelock, the three communities most affected by Burning Man, to hear their concerns about growth.

Read the whole story

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.