

Homeless Hearts

January 2, 2020

City Weekly

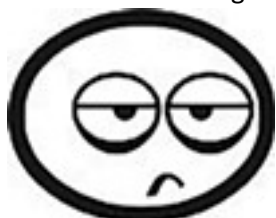
A father and son show us a glimpse of humanity in the city's homelessness trend. An example of how some voter decisions are not created equal. Plus, how you can face jail time for drinking and driving while not even driving.

<https://www.cityweekly.net/utah/homeless-hearts/Content?oid=14634238>



Homeless Hearts

Have a heart. Chase and John Hansen did. The 10-year-old boy and his dad started Project Empathy, a simple concept that involves talking to homeless people. Talking. In other words, it's about recognizing humanity among an oft-forgotten, if feared, community. *The Salt Lake Tribune* featured their cause and the 130 people whose lives they've touched. No, homelessness is not an easy nut to crack. The *Los Angeles Times* recently recognized Utah's multi-faceted approach—from the controversial police-centric beginnings of Operation Rio Grande to the jury-still-out scheme to disperse the homeless. While it makes sense to house single moms and their kids away from criminal drug addicts, some beds are still unfilled because transportation or information is lacking. And then there's a lack of affordable housing, which even former House Speaker Greg Hughes admits was a miss. More than 4,000 Utah homeless now have health coverage under the ACA. And many have hope.



Unequal Votes

The lieutenant governor might have followed the letter of the law, but he has no idea what he's facing by denying a petition from The People's Right. The group's chairman, Steve Maxfield, is suing in federal court to legitimize his referendum, one of two seeking to overturn the new tax reform law, the Trib reports. Maxfield was denied because of a requirement that organizers must have voted in the past three elections. Maxfield's son, for instance, wasn't old enough to vote. But it's the secondary argument that's interesting. The anti-tax reform group is essentially using the argument against the Electoral College. Say what? The lawsuit says, "One Carbon County voter's decision whether to join a referendum petition has 54 times more weight than a Salt Lake County's [*sic*] voter's decision."



Drinking, Not Driving?

Are you one of the many Utah "drinkers" who at least thinks you can drive well, even at .05%? While there's always the threat of arrest, no one imagined that well-intentioned drunks who aren't even driving could face prosecution. But, you know Utah. We don't want you to drink at all—ever. KUTV Channel 2 ran a surprising report about how you could get 180 days in jail and a lot of fines even when you're not behind the wheel. You could be locking your car before getting in an Uber. You could be camping and listening to a car radio. You could be retrieving something from the car, but the cops can stop you. It's up to them—and maybe the courts, if you want to fight. The message: Stay away from your keys.