

Companies offering pet bereavement

By Elyse Wanshel, Huffington Post

To many, a pet isn't "just a dog" or "just a cat." People share deep bonds with their animals, and when one dies, the experience can be devastating.

Fortunately, a few companies are beginning to take this loss more seriously.

CBS Miami reports that some companies are now offering "pet bereavement days," or paid time off, so that employees can process the death of their pet, regroup and begin to heal.

Read the whole story

Scientists: Vegetarian world would be better

By Megan Rowling, Reuters

By eating less meat and more fruit and vegetables, the world could avoid several million deaths per year by 2050, cut planet-warming emissions substantially, and save billions of dollars annually in healthcare costs and climate damage, researchers said.

A new study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, is the first to estimate both the health and climate change impacts

of a global move toward a more plant-based diet, they said.

Unbalanced diets are responsible for the greatest health burden around the world, and our food system produces more than a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, said lead author Marco Springmann of the Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food.

Read the whole story

Popular Tahoe area trailhead now publicly owned

The land around one of the northern Sierra Nevada's most popular trailheads is now in public hands.

The Trust for Public Land and Truckee Donner Land Trust, working as part of the Northern Sierra Partnership this week agreed to buy the Castle Valley trailhead for \$2.1 million. They in turn sold it to the U.S. Forest Service for the same price. The 412 acres will be part of the Tahoe National Forest.

The well-used, year-round trail network leads people to some of the most popular and easily accessed backcountry in the northern Sierra, including Castle Valley and Castle Peak, Pacific Crest Trail, the Sierra Club's Peter Grubb Hut, the Hole in the Ground trail and the Donner Lake Rim Trail.

The Pacific Crest Trail Association said the acquisition will protect views and improve access to one of the most popular sections of the Pacific Crest Trail.

Meditation provides multiple benefits

By Amy Smith

The links between your mind and body are abundant. One significant connection is how the mind can affect your physical state of health.



Amy Smith

There are many healthful benefits of positive thinking, imagery and meditation. More than 1,000 clinical trials indicate meditation can help treat anxiety, chronic pain, high blood pressure, and insomnia. Studies also show meditation can improve attention and help with stress management.

Meditation and brain activity

Richard Davidson, founder of the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin, examined the brain activity of Tibetan monks who meditated daily on compassion. Through magnetic resonant imaging (MRI), he determined that these monks had increased neuron activity in the left prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain associated with happiness.

Davidson then compared non-meditating individuals who initiated a compassion meditation practice. Two weeks after

starting a thirty minute daily practice, participants developed more neuron activity in the left prefrontal cortex. Davidson concluded this neuron activity, activated by meditation, strengthens neurological circuits to the left prefrontal cortex. This reduces fear and anger triggers and boosts contentment and resilience.

Meditation types

Meditation, or the act of quieting your conscious awareness, is difficult. To quiet the mind, meditative practices each have a unique approach.

In the practice of Breath Meditation, focus on consciously observing inhalation and exhalation and the rise and fall of the chest. Or follow the sequence pattern of four-seven-eight: Inhale through your nose for the mental count of four seconds, hold your breath for the count of seven seconds, and exhale through your mouth for the count of eight seconds. A longer exhalation than your inhalation lowers your blood pressure and pulse rate.

Mindfulness Meditation is based on having an increased awareness of the present. The goal is to focus on experiencing the present without reacting to it. Through this practice of meditation, you can develop a more balanced response to the different emotions you experience daily.

Transcendental Meditation is when a person focuses on a mantra, perhaps a sound or a phrase. Repeat this mantra over and over either aloud or silently in your head. This act of repetition keeps distracting or negative thoughts from your conscious awareness. The goal of transcendental meditation is to achieve a state of relaxed awareness and improve alertness.

Another type of meditation, Visualization, focuses on a specific place or object associated with a personal sense of well-being.

Pick a meditative practice and try using nature sounds or instrumental background music to quiet the conscious from other distractions.

Meditation applications

If you are new to meditation, download a mobile application onto your phone or tablet to help guide you through the process. Some of my favorites are “Simply Being” by Meditation Oasis, “Calm: Meditation” A Mindfulness Practice, and “Relax Melodies: Zen Melodies for Sleep.”

Meditation is just one integrative medicine approach. Learn about other examples of effective integrative medicine on April 6 at my What is Integrative Medicine? lecture.

Amy Smith is a family nurse practitioner at Stateline Family Practice.

Recall for 2 EDC supervisors fails

El Dorado County Supervisors Sue Novasel and Brian Veerkamp will be keeping their jobs – at least for now.

Those who wanted to **recall** them could not get the necessary signatures needed to take it to the voters.

A final tactic occurred last week as robo calls were made throughout Novasel’s district, which runs from the basin to Pollock Pines, telling people about her stance on **roads**.

The process started last fall.

The other three supervisors, auditor-controller and district attorney still face recall challenges; they are in the signature process. Signatures are due March 31 for Supervisors Ron Mikulaco and Shiva Frentzen, and on April 12 for Michael Ranalli. For DA Vern Pierson and Auditor Joe Harn the deadline is in May.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Sierra snowpack below normal; better than '15



Snow has been on the ground for each of this season's snow surveys. Photo/LTN file

By Lake Tahoe News

Even though there was white stuff to walk on during the final snow survey of the season today, the lack of water content will likely mean California is headed for a fifth year of drought.

The snow depth in the field by the entrance of Sierra-at-Tahoe on March 30 was 58.4 inches, with a water content of 26 inches. That amounts to 97 percent of average. Statewide the water content is at 80 percent.

While this is a dramatic difference than a year ago when Gov. Jerry Brown stood in a dirt field at Phillips Station, the odds of much more moisture adding to the snowpack are not good.

A year ago, the snowpack was 5 percent of average. This led to the governor to institute dramatic water cutbacks in an effort to conserve. Those rules remain in effect even though some areas believe the rules should be loosened because of the amount of rain that fallen in the winter and filled the reservoirs.

With longer and warmer days, the snow will begin to melt faster. Peak runoff is usually in May. Temps are supposed to be in the 50s the rest of the week, reaching nearly 60 by the end of week.

The importance of the snow lasting as long as possible is that then there is more to fill the reservoirs downstream. In normal years the snowpack accounts for about 30 percent of California's water needs.

CASA in need of volunteers

El Dorado County Court Appointed Special Advocates has scheduled a May 3 training for new volunteers.

CASAs advocate for the best interests of children in local court system. CASAs are child advocates, tasked with getting to know a particular child and their specific needs. CASAs communicate those needs and the child's voice to the court. This information is critical in the decision-making process of juvenile court proceedings.

To register for training, submit an application **online**. For more info, call 530.573.3093 or email alexis@casaeldorado.org.

Climate forecast: Warmer, less reliable Truckee River

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

An updated report on climate change that forecasts less snow in the Sierra Nevada and warmer temperatures across the Great Basin doesn't bode well for fishing and water sports in the Truckee River.

And while average to above average mountain snow in winter 2015-16 has provided a welcome reprieve from five years of drought conditions, the long-term forecast for the remainder of the century is a different story.

The latest version of the Bureau of Reclamation's SECURE Water Act Report forecasts a continued warming trend that threatens to undermine environmental features that make the Truckee

River a vibrant place for fishing and other water sports.

The report, which has segments for several major Western river basins, says the mean annual temperature in the Truckee River Basin, an area that includes Reno, Carson City and Lake Tahoe, is expected to increase 5 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit during the 21st century.

Read the whole story

Heavenly ski patrol party benefits others

The annual Heavenly ski patrol party is April 2 at the Hard Rock in Stateline from 7-11pm.

It combines activities, entertainment, and food and beer. This year there will be a three-ring circus theme with carnival games, live music, clowns, a balloon animal artist, bearded men and women, an avalanche dog shaved to look like a lion.

The Heavenly Ski Patrol fund supports Special Olympics Team Tahoe, Live Violence Free, St. Baldrick's, Bread & Broth and many other local organizations.

Entry to the event is:

- \$5: Entrance and one season pass raffle ticket
- \$15: Entrance, one season pass raffle ticket, a plastic beer stein and unlimited refills
- \$25: Entrance, one season pass raffle ticket and a glass beer stein with unlimited refills.

This is for all ages.

Community soup night in Truckee

Slow Food Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Food Hub's next soup is April 6 at Fifty Fifty Brewing Company in Truckee.

Community soup nights have been an ongoing tradition in the Truckee-Tahoe community, with event series each spring and fall. They began as an effort by Project Mana to fill a need to bring the community together for a warm, affordable, delicious meal.

Each soup night is on a Wednesday evening, from 6-7:30pm.

All are welcome to attend, and the cost is \$5 at the door for soup and bread.

Each evening there is live music and a raffle. Proceeds are used to cover the costs, and to educate and reconnect the local community to our sustainable and regional food system.

For additional information or to volunteer, contact Trish Geary at pfgeary@gmail.com.