

It will soon be time to spring forward 1 hour

When you go to bed Saturday night, remember to move the clocks forward one hour – at least for those living in California and Nevada.

Daylight-saving time begins at 2am March 11.

This marks the 100th anniversary of the United States observing this annual ritual. It started during World War I as a way to save coal.

Missing snowboarder found safe at Sugar Bowl

By KTVN-TV

The Placer County Sheriff's Office says a snowboarder was found alive and well after she was reported overdue near the Disney run near Sugar Bowl Resort early Thursday afternoon.

She was found early Friday morning.

Read the whole story

Tahoe-Truckee region tilts toward 100% clean energy

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

Commitments to 100 percent clean and renewable electricity are a growing trend across the country, and with good reason. The prices of many renewable resources are dropping to or below those of natural gas and weaning ourselves off the fossil fuel teat has become a matter of global resilience and necessity. The wonderful thing is, today it's an achievable goal; many different approaches can be taken to reach it based on the state of the market, technological advances, and political definitions.

With the help of hydropower (not technically renewable under California code), Aspen, Colo., went 100 percent in 2015. In Truckee/North Lake Tahoe, roughly one-quarter to more than one-half of local providers' power mixes are already renewable sources such as wind and solar. To reach 100 percent clean energy, private entities are looking to a solar/battery storage combo to make the jump, while Truckee's public utility district sees nuclear as a potential means to achieve a carbon-free grid. Residents may also be given the chance to get some skin in the game with an optional "renewable rate," which is hoped to further increase demand for clean energy. The potential is there, and with smart action the region is in position to make state and country-wide progress timelines for renewable energy look like gross overestimations.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Why real estate is still a good investment

By Ana Bourne

The stock market has always attracted those who want to make large profits, but many prudent investors are wary of its instability— the recent 1,300-point drop of the Dow Jones Industrial Average for the week of Feb. 5 is a classic case in point.

Fortunately, the market bounced back recouping some of its losses, serving as a stark reminder of Wall Street's volatility. Luckily for us, the stock market is not the only place we can invest. In fact, a strong argument can be made for another time-honored, wiser and safer method to make money: real estate.

There are a few key reasons why real estate is currently and always will be a more stable investment than the stock market.

First, as a long-term, tangible investment, real estate values increase over time, naturally keeping pace with inflation. Those who are patient and hold onto their investments during a real estate downturn are ultimately rewarded. This isn't necessarily true for the stock market, where the risk never changes and stocks can suffer unpredictable hits in value or even decrease to zero value over time.

Secondly, for those who are in a position to rent property, real estate is a certain source of stable, cash-based income. This allows a property owner to generate higher rental income during times of higher inflation, often proving to be a more lucrative investment than bonds when hedging against inflation.

When you purchase property, the mortgage rate, which remains

the most expensive cost of maintaining a property, is typically locked in at a fixed-rate over a long period of time. This enables a property owner to borrow against their property's equity to make additional investments while recovering some of the cost of ownership through multiple tax benefits. While a property owner can rely on the stability of fixed-rate loans, as the landlord, they also can increase the rent to keep pace with the market.

Thirdly, the use of leverage in real estate is double that of investing in stock portfolios. What is leverage? It's simply using borrowed money in order to buy or finance something. For example, with a standard mortgage, a typical 20 percent down payment gets you 100 percent of the house in which you want to live (or rent). Some financing programs allow you to put even less money down, still granting you the same house.

Even if your real estate properties appreciate more slowly than stocks do, after a five-year period, often times you come out ahead, because of the combination of tax breaks and leverage. In the long-term, it has the capacity to generate years of consistent revenue, as the property itself will likely appreciate with value.

Real estate investments can be a good alternative to investing in stocks. If you prefer lower risk, hands-on investments, multiple tax benefits, and tangible assets...then real estate is where you want to keep your money.

Ana Bourne is a Tahoe-area real estate investor, and owner and president of Global Alliance International.

Importance of getting enough sleep

By Michael S. Jaffee, The Conversation

As we prepare to “spring forward” for daylight-saving time on March 11, many of us dread the loss of the hour’s sleep we incur by moving our clocks forward. For millions, the loss will be an added insult to the inadequate sleep they experience on a daily basis.

Surveys show that 40 percent of American adults get less than the nightly minimum of seven hours of sleep recommended by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the National Sleep Foundation. The National Institutes for Health estimate that between 50 million and 70 million people do not get enough sleep. These recommendations for minimal sleep are based on a review of many scientific studies evaluating the role of sleep in our bodies and the effects of sleep deprivation on our ability of our body to function at our peak performance level.

I am a neurologist at the University of Florida who has studied the effects of both traumatic brain injury and sleep impairment on the brain. I have seen the effects of sleep impairment and the significant effects it can have.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, American adults currently average 6.9 hours of sleep per night compared with the 1940s, when most American adults were averaging 7.9 hours a night, or one hour more each night. In fact, in 1942, 84 percent of Americans got the recommended seven to nine hours; in 2013, that number had dropped to 59 percent. Participants in that same Gallup poll reported on average they felt they needed 7.3 hours of sleep each night but were not getting enough, causing an average nightly sleep debt of 24 minutes. Fitbit in January 2018 announced results of a study it

conducted of 6 billion nights of its customers' sleep and reported that men actually get even less than women, about 6.5 hours.

Why sleep matters

The problems caused by sleep shortage go beyond tiredness. In recent years, studies have shown that adults who were short sleepers, or those who got less than seven hours in 24 hours, were more likely to report 10 chronic health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma and depression, compared to those who got enough sleep, that is, seven or more hours in a 24-hour period.

There are more challenges for children, as they are thought to have an increased sleep need compared to adults. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that children 6 to 12 years of age should sleep nine to 12 hours a day and teens 13 to 18 should sleep eight to 10 hours daily on a regular basis to promote optimal health.

A Sleep Foundation poll of parents suggested that American children are getting one hour of sleep or more per night less than what their body and brain require.

Researchers have found that sleep deprivation of even a single hour can have a harmful effect on a child's developing brain. Inadequate sleep can affect synaptic plasticity and memory encoding, and it can result in inattentiveness in the classroom.

Every one of our biological systems is affected by sleep. When we don't sleep long enough or when we experience poor quality of sleep, there can be serious biological consequences.

When we are sleep deprived, our bodies become more aroused through an enhanced sympathetic nervous system, known as "fight or flight." There is a greater propensity for increased blood pressure and possible risk of coronary heart disease.

Our endocrine system releases more cortisol, a stress hormone. The body has less glucose tolerance and greater insulin resistance, which in the long term can cause an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes. Also, sleep deprivation causes a reduction in growth hormone and muscle maintenance.

We also rely on sleep to maintain our metabolism. Sleep deprivation can lead to decreased release of the hormone leptin and increased release of the hormone ghrelin, which can be associated with increased appetite and weight gain.

The human body also relies on sleep to help with our immune system. Sleep deprivation is associated with increased inflammation and decreased antibodies to influenza and decreased resistance to infection.

Inadequate sleep has been associated with a negative effect on mood as well as decreased attention and increased memory difficulty. In addition, someone who is sleep deprived may experience a decrease in pain tolerance and in reaction times. Occupational studies have associated sleep deprivation with decreased performance, increased car accidents, and more days missed from work.

The role of the brain

Researchers have known for a while that brain health is an important aspect of sleep. Notably, sleep is an important part of memory consolidation and learning.

Newer research has suggested another important aspect of sleep for our brain: There is a system for the elimination of possibly harmful proteins such as abnormal variants of amyloid. This waste removal process, using what is known as the glymphatic system, relies on sleep to effectively eliminate these proteins from the brain. These are the same proteins found to be elevated in patients with Alzheimer's disease. Studies show that older adults with less sleep have greater accumulations of these proteins in their brains.

Our sleep-wake cycle is regulated by the circadian system, which helps signal the brain to sleep using the release of the natural hormone melatonin. It turns out that our body's system for regulating melatonin and our sleep schedule is most powerfully controlled by light.

There are cells in the retina of our eye that communicate directly with the brain's biological clock regulators located in the hypothalamus and this pathway is most affected by light. These neurons have been found to be most affected by light waves from the blue spectrum or blue light. This is the kind of light most prominent in electronic lights from computers and smartphones. This has become a modern challenge that can adversely affect our natural sleep-wake cycle.

Additional factors that can hamper sleep include pain conditions, medications for other conditions, and the increased demands and connectedness of modern society.

As we prepare for daylight saving time, we can be mindful that many athletes have been including planned sleep extensions (sleeping longer than usual) into their schedule to enhance performance and that many professional sports teams have hired sleep consultants to help assure their athletes have enough sleep. Perhaps we should have a similar game plan as we approach the second Sunday in March.

Michael S. Jaffee is vice chair of the department of neurology at the University of Florida.

Epic pass buoys Vail Resorts

despite dips in visitation

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

Weak snow across the West this year is impacting the ski resort industry in many ways, but the largest ski area operator in the country is hardly limping, thanks in part to President Trump's tax overhaul.

Vail Resorts on Thursday reported a net income bump of \$64.6 million for the three months through early March thanks to a one-time tax benefit from the U.S. Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The recently enacted legislation fueled a 58 percent bump in net income for the company's fiscal second quarter – the meat of the ski season for the owner of 11 destination ski areas in Colorado, California, British Columbia, Vermont and Australia.

That's good news for shareholders. The company on Thursday said it would be sharing the tax-cut windfall with investors, announcing a 40 percent increase in its quarterly cash dividend to \$1.47 per share.

Read the whole story

Deceptive conditions linger after storms avalanche

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

When Marlin Lathrop went backcountry skiing on Sunday near South Lake Tahoe he could expect great snow and even better

views.

Knowing recent storms that delivered fluffy, hip-deep powder also increased the risk of avalanches Lathrop said he picked a line he thought would be safe.

That's why Lathrop said he didn't expect to find a massive debris field from a recent avalanche he estimated was about 200 feet across with a four-foot crown.

The Sierra Avalanche Center also reported an unusual propensity for large, deep slab avalanches with enough energy to destroy trees and houses.

Read the whole story

High cuisine may become an après ski tradition

By AC Shilton, Outside

Chefs are infusing more than just sweets into cannabis. High-end cannabis dining is coming to a ski town near you.

Your cannabis-related food associations probably aren't great. There were the terrible weed brownies you made in college, with bits of plant fiber in every bite. Then there's all the garbage food you've eaten while stoned. High cuisine, for many of us, has never really been anything close to haute cuisine.

But in places where cannabis is legal, chefs are working to change weed's junk food reputation. Fine dining pop-ups and cooking classes, where marijuana is either cooked into dishes or served in some sort of complementary pairing with each

course, are selling out, with everyone from first-time boomer users to veteran stoners wanting a seat at the table.

The movement is a personal one for many chefs.

Read the whole story

Public records case before Nevada Supreme Court

By James DeHaven, Reno Gazette-Journal

What's in a public record?

That's one of several familiar questions raised Wednesday at the Nevada Supreme Court, where justices heard the latest arguments in a long-running legal battle over what information the state has to disclose about retired public employees.

At issue: A three-year-old public records request from the Nevada Policy Research Institute, a conservative think tank, seeking, among other things, the names of more than 57,000 people receiving payments from the state-run Public Employees' Retirement System of Nevada, or PERS.

Read the whole story

Veterans writing group publishes anthology

The Veterans' Voices Writing Workshop has published its first anthology of work, "For Them, By Us," which is available on Amazon.

Contributors to the anthology come from many walks of life, and bring myriad talents and backgrounds to the table. Many were not trained writers when they joined the workshop. The program encourages free thinking, open discussion, and supportive critique which promotes a safe and constructive environment.

While the focus of the workshop is not therapeutic in nature, organizers say creative endeavor tends to promote healing and the participants of the workshop have seen positive results from their work with the group.

Local author Weston DeWalt serves as the workshop leader.

Veterans' Voices Writing Workshop meets at the Veteran's Memorial Building at 130 Placerville Drive every Monday night at 6:30, excluding holidays. The current session runs March 12, March 19, March 26, April 2, and April 9. The program is free to all veterans from any branch of service.

For more information, call 530.295.3496.