Ways to ensure a good night’s sleep

By Mandy Kendall

A friend and I were talking about the most unusual weather we’ve been having recently and how nature seems to be getting a tad confused about it, too. Squirrels out and about, trees are budding, birds are chirping. We also wondered if the “supposed to be hibernating” bears were also being stirred from their slumber too.

Sleep can be blissful, when it happens, but can also be elusive, frustrating and damaging to our health if we don’t get enough.



Mandy Kendall

Sleep is essential for our physical and mental wellbeing and many studies have shown there is a strong link between poor sleep and many chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, depression and obesity. Adults need at least seven hours a night to allow the body to rest and repair itself. Children and adolescents need up to 10 hours sleep to help them develop mentally and physically.

So this week’s *Qwik-e* (Quick and Easy) tips are about how to get the best night’s sleep possible.

Avoid too much overload before you go to bed. Limit exercise

in the last few hours before you go to bed. Five minutes of gentle stretching will help to release tension but anything more is likely to get your system kicked into high gear. Try and avoid large heavy fatty meals or sugary foods at the end of the day, light protein based meals are best. Limit light interference in the room; our brains respond to light as a signal to wake up, so even the light from an electric clock can stimulate our brains to wake up. Sometimes a good old-fashioned eye mask is easier than trying to block out lights from outside. Earplugs or white noise machines help cut out background noise that we might not be able to reduce too.

Set the scene. Our bodies like routine so try to set a pattern to follow each night. Go to bed about the same time each night. Take a shower or bath (not too hot), try a warm drink (no caffeine), read, keep the bedroom at a cool temperature or perhaps try some meditation (with a CD or by yourself). All these will help prepare the body for sleep.

If you can't sleep – do something. If you've been awake for 20 minutes or more, try something that's not too energetic. Reading or doing a crossword for example will help occupy your mind preventing you thinking about stressful or emotive things.

Write it down. If you can't stop thinking about something try writing it down, and maybe how you plan to deal with it during the day. Then distract your brain from that topic with something neutral like re-running a favorite movie in your mind, going through the times tables in your head or maybe even the proverbial counting sheep.

Need a nap? If you can't make it through the day and you need to take a nap, try to keep it to no more than 20 minutes and as early in the afternoon as possible, just after lunch is best.

Until next time, sweet dreams!

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

Tough Mudder coming to Northstar

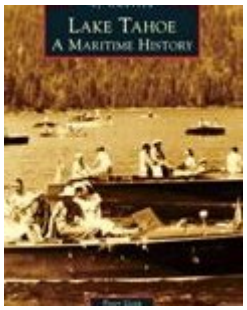
Northstar will host the Tough Mudder event series Sept. 22-23 at the Truckee resort.

Tough Mudder events are 10- to 12-mile obstacle courses designed by British Special Forces to test all around strength, stamina, mental grit, and camaraderie. With the most innovative courses, half a million participants, and more than $2.5 million raised for the Wounded Warrior Project, Tough Mudder is the premier adventure challenge series in the world.

Registration is open.

For more information about the Tough Mudder event at Northstar or to register, go online.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• UNR Professor Peter Goin through Arcadia Publishing has released “Lake Tahoe: A Maritime History”.

• Yosemite National Park’s plans to rehab the historic Ahwahnee hotel won’t have a significant impact on park operations and the nearby environment, the National Park Service says. The findings are online.

• Mountain Travel Symposium’s registration for the 38th annual conference at the Resort at Squaw Creek in mid-April is up 16 percent compared to last year.

• John Hernstat is now director of sales and marketing at the Hyatt in Incline.

• Barton Memorial Hospital general surgeon Scott Welker is now performing cholecystectomies (removal of the gallbladder) through a small single incision procedure enabled by the GelPOINT system.

Rove spends day in Reno touting future GOP success

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

RENO – Former Sparks resident and George W. Bush presidential adviser Karl Rove predicted Thursday that both houses of Congress will go Republican in the November general election, but said the presidential election is up in the air even with President Obama's low approval ratings.

Rove, speaking at the Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce event Directions 2012, predicted the Senate will see Republican control with a minimum of 52 seats, but possibly as many as 54.

Republicans could lose a handful of House seats but will maintain control, he said.

No president has won re-election with poll numbers as low as Obama has now, but he is a tough competitor with $1 billion to spend, Rove said.

"It's going to be difficult," he said, predicting that the U.S. will see "the nastiest, ugliest general election campaign we've seen in our lifetime."

The Obama campaign team will put the Republican candidate on trial and prosecute tough and hard, and with $1 billion in the bank, as often as they can, Rove said.

Winning 51 Senate seats is important if Republicans win the White House as well, because it will mean the immediate repeal of the federal health care law, he said. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passed in the Senate using a process called reconciliation, which requires only 51 votes to reverse, Rove said.

In his comments to several hundred attendees at the event, Rove noted that the federal Health Care Law is the only major piece of social legislation since polling began in the 1930s that is less popular after it was passed.

"Why?" Rove asked. "Because every single promise made about it

is turning out not to be true."

He declined to pick a winner of the Republican presidential nomination, although he said, "(Mitt) Romney looks like he could be the guy."

"You have a big role to play in that," Rove said of Nevada GOP voters.

Nevada's Republican presidential caucus, the first in the West, is Saturday. The four remaining contenders for the nomination are visiting Nevada to make their case with GOP voters. Romney is the favorite to win.

Rove, who lived in Sparks from age 9 to 15, served as senior adviser to Bush from 2000-07 and deputy chief of staff from 2004-07. Now he writes a weekly op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal*.

Study: 3 Tahoe area counties expected to see job growth

By Anne Knowles

Three counties near or surrounding Lake Tahoe should see faster job growth in the coming decade compared to the state as a whole, and more quickly than in the nearby Sacramento region, according to a recently released report.



Alpine, El Dorado and Placer counties – the Golden Sierra region – should see about 18,000 new jobs by 2015 and nearly 32,000 by 2020, according to the report by the Center for Strategic Economic Research in Sacramento.

That's a growth rate of 11.1 percent between 2010-15 and 19.6 percent between 2010-20, compared to 10 percent and 13.6 percent in the state overall, and 7.2 percent and 12 percent in Sacramento, for the same time periods.

Many of those jobs will come in the health care sector, which posted gains in the area even during the recession, and a rebound in construction, which lost more than 7,600 jobs between 2005-10 in the three counties.

Some of the upswing in construction, the report says, will come from retooling for green technology, which may require skilled workers like carpenters and electricians to retrain. In addition, new jobs will be available in green technology-specific occupations such as solar photovoltaic installers and technicians, and solar designers and engineers, as well as sales representatives for such products. The counties are home to about a quarter of the region's clean energy technology firms, including SMA America and Solar Power Inc., and close to 16 percent of the jobs, according to the report.

The report projects 7,254 new health care jobs in the Golden Sierra by 2020, 5,046 in accommodations and food services, 4,693 in construction, 2,816 in government and more than 1,000 each in retail, finance and insurance, and professional, scientific and technical services. The projected job losses, both less than 100 jobs, are in two job sectors: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; and mining.

About a dozen job sectors will post double-digit job growth, according to the report. Twenty occupations, including

bookkeepers, cooks, registered nurses and retail salespersons, will account for 42 percent of the new jobs.

Job growth may be faster in the area, but it comes on the heels of higher job losses in the last half decade. Between 2005 and 2010, about 16,000 jobs were lost in El Dorado, Placer and Alpine counties, for a decline of 9 percent, compared to a drop of 7 percent and 5 percent in the Sacramento region and the state as a whole, respectively.

Most of the job losses in the Golden Sierra region were in construction (7,625), professional, scientific and technical services (2,494) and retail (2,194). The only gains in that time period were agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (22), utilities (13), health care and social assistance (3,233) and other activities including government (1,328).

In 2010, nearly 32,000 Golden Sierra residents were unemployed for close to 12 percent unemployment, compared to about 5 percent unemployment in 2005, the report says. But after adding underemployed and discouraged workers no longer looking for work the real unemployment was 81 percent higher.

Nearly half, or 48 percent, of the workforce leaves the area for work and only about 74 percent of those are replaced by workers commuting from elsewhere. From 2004-09, 40 percent of workers in the area were categorized as high wage earners earning more than $3,333 a month, 32 percent were considered moderate wage workers making between $1,251 and $3,333 a month and 28 were low wage earners making less than $1,251 monthly.

The report, Golden Sierra Area Labor Market Analysis, was commissioned by the Golden Sierra Workforce Investment Board in Auburn.

Opinion: Governor’s cuts to fire safety in Tahoe don’t make sense

By Ted Gaines

As we near the fifth anniversary of the devastating Angora Fire that ravaged the Lake Tahoe area, leaving destruction in its wake, I am baffled by the governor’s decision to put lives and property in even more danger by cutting fire protection funding for the region.

The governor’s proposed budget eliminates the entire $2.3 million general fund money for Lake Tahoe Basin fire protection, and leaves only one forester and four part-time seasonal forestry aids to provide fire prevention services such as defensible space inspections and enforcement.



Ted Gaines

Residents will continue to have some fire protection services through local fire districts. If these cuts are implemented, however, resources could be stretched thin and emergency response times could be delayed. As witnessed with the Angora Fire, every second counts in containing potential wildfires.

Lake Tahoe fire safety officials also expressed concern with the lack of funding and vowed to work with me on the issue.

“We are equally troubled by this latest cut to the vital fire protection services we provide the community and will do all we can to reverse this budget decision,” North Tahoe Fire District Chief Duane Whitelaw.

I intend to follow up on this matter until funding for the safety and protection of the residents of Lake Tahoe is fully restored.

I encourage people to contact the governor’s office to express their discontent with his proposed cuts.

One of the essential services government should provide its citizens is public safety. We need to seriously evaluate things when we’ve reached a point where we can’t even provide that peace of mind to residents. If you are as upset about this budget decision as I am, I urge you to call Gov. Brown and ask him for reconsideration. The governor can be reached at (916) 445.2841.

Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento and Sierra counties.

Wild & Scenic Film Fest coming to Stateline

The 7th annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival returns to MontBleu in Stateline on March 9 at 7pm.

With a growing public awareness for the environment, the Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival producers say the aim is to increase awareness through inspiring and educational films, which hopefully will motivate people to go out and make a difference in their community and around the world.

Hosted by the Sierra Nevada Alliance, Patagonia, and the South Lake Tahoe Earth Day Committee, the Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival combines award winning environmental and adventure films with the energy of local activism.

For tickets, call (530) 542.4546, ext. 305.

Raley's breaks from grocers to negotiate its own labor contract

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

Raley's says the lack of progress on a new labor contract is costing the West Sacramento grocer millions – and contributed to the recent closure of two of its stores.

In an effort to jump start negotiations with the the United Food and Commercial workers, Raley's has separated itself from its fellow union grocers, Safeway Inc. and Save Mart Stores, and will now bargain on its own.

"There is more urgency on our end than on the other retailers to reach an agreement," Raley's spokesman John Segale said

today.

The company is seeking about $18 million worth of annual savings, mostly through cutbacks in health expenses, according to a memo sent to employees late Wednesday by Chief Executive Michael Teel. The lack of a new contract since the old pact expired four months ago has cost Raley's about $6 million, he said.

Read the whole story

Sage grouse heads toward endangered listing

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Maintaining the status quo when it comes to protecting Nevada's sage grouse will eventually lead to its listing under the Endangered Species Act, a situation that could come with widespread economic impact to the state, experts said.

Instead, federal and state officials and private property owners must work together in a unified strategy to conserve increasingly threatened sagebrush habitat vital to the bird's future, participants in a "stakeholder's update" hosted recently by Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval's office agreed.

"If we keep doing the same thing, we will end up with a bird that is listed," said Amy Lueder, Nevada's state director for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Representatives of the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife and other agencies gathered in Carson City to discuss ongoing activities

to protect sage grouse habitat and avoid its listing as a threatened or endangered species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared in March 2010 that listing of the greater sage grouse is “warranted but precluded” across its range of 11 western states, including Nevada. That means federal scientists believe listing would be justified, but other species in bigger trouble have a higher priority.

South Tahoe has money to loan first-time home buyers

Are you renting an apartment or home in South Lake Tahoe?

Did you know there is help available for first-time home buyers who meet certain requirements?

The program is available to those who have not owned a home in the last three years, occupy the property to be purchased as their primary residence at all times, provide a down payment equal to 10 percent of the city loan, and qualifies for a first loan to purchase the home.

For details, contact Lwatson@cityofslt.us, call (530) 542.6021 or click on the flyer.