Study: Laughing may be the best medicine

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

Want the potential mental and physical health benefits of meditation without the work of chasing away all those intrusive thoughts and feelings? Try laughing, a new study suggests.

Laughter — the real kind associated with genuine joy and mirth — sets off brain wave patterns quite similar to those generated when experienced meditators ply their mindfulness skills, a new study finds.

Researchers know that when hooked up to an electroencephalograph, which measures electrical activity among neurons in the brain, those practiced in the art of meditation are able to achieve a brain state of what is called gamma brain wave activity: In it, virtually all of the brain's higher cortical regions begin to operate on a common frequency, somewhere in the 30- to 40-hertz bandwidth.

Unlike the dreamless sleep in which alpha brain waves sweep across the brain, or the cacophony of alert mental activity associated with beta brain waves, gamma waves tend to be synchronous throughout the brain. It's the brain wave pattern associated with cognitive "flow," with being "in the zone," with the highest state of cognitive processing.

Read the whole story

El Dorado County District 5 candidates’ forum

Candidates running for District 5’s seat on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors will participate in a forum sponsored by Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe on May 14.

The 11:30am-1:30pm lunch meeting is open to the public.

For reservations email soroptimistslt@gmail.com by May 12.

Cost of the lunch at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe is $10; it’s payable at the door.

Round Hill man found safe

Updated May 7 8:44am:

Donald Morris Jr. has been found safe.

—

Donald Morris Jr. of Round Hill has been missing since April 20.



Donald Morris

Jr.

His landlord last saw the 55-year-old that day.

Morris' vehicle is at his residence.

Morris is 6-foot-4, 225 pounds, and has brown hair and green eyes.

Anyone with information is asked to call Investigator John Preston at 775.782.9909.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Douglas County planning commissioners at their May 13 meeting will consider allowing Jon and David Park, owners of what is now called Park Tahoe Casino in Stateline, to use 2,730-square-feet of commercial floor area for an outdoor food service patio next to an existing restaurant. The 1pm meeting is at 1616 Eighth St., Minden.

• The Jon Paul Gallery in South Lake Tahoe is closing at the end of May.

• Chuck Malone of Lake Valley Fire Protection District has been promoted to captain.

• The Nevada Division of Forestry is hosting Junk the Junipers from 8am-1pm May 10 at its Eastlake Office in Washoe Valley. Residents of local communities are encouraged to bring their junipers, pines, rabbitbrush, sagebrush and other woody

vegetation to be chipped for free. Participants will receive a coupon from Moana Nursery for 30 percent off a "good plant choice," Moana-grown replacement shrub.

• Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is having a session about the differences between employees and independent contractors, as well as how misclassification may spell trouble. The meeting is May 8 from 8-9am the chamber's Stateline office. Cost is $5 for members, $10 for non-members.

EDC supe candidates try to sway voters



Candidates for El Dorado County District 5 seat are Angela Swanson, from left, Teresa Piper, Sue Novasel, Gerri Grego, Kevin Brown and Kenny Curtzwiler. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Few specifics and little substance came out of the first candidates' forum on the South Shore for El Dorado County District 5 supervisor.

While economic vitality and the need for jobs that pay more

than minimum wage were themes echoed throughout the night, the details of how to make that a reality were lacking from the six candidates.

What specific companies might make the difference were not mentioned – not even the genre – other than perhaps Internet based. And like so many discussions on this topic, what wasn't addressed is why aren't the companies with high paying jobs already here.

The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and Tahoe Regional Young Professionals sponsored the May 6 event at the California Conservation Corps.

Some of the questions were directed to all of the candidates, while others were to specific individuals. The audience had a chance to submit questions as well. The questions that could not be asked and answered within the two hours will be given to the candidates, with responses posted on TRYP's website.

Gerri Grego was asked for an example of how she would stimulate job growth.

Her response – Fewer government regulations. She is worried about an increase in recreation jobs because they don't pay well. She would like the area to focus on what she calls the "silver tsunami" – or the aging population – as a sector that will need care and therefore jobs specific to cater to that group.

Angela Swanson was asked how she would balance economic vitality with a healthy environment.

Her response – She said the economy and environment are inseparable. She pointed to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan as the answer – that good science will make all the difference.

Teresa Piper was asked how she would give Meyers a voice.

Her response – She said it’s not just Meyers that feels disenfranchised, but every community east of Placerville does. She said with the East Slope having water and recreation that support the West Slope, it’s time the West Slope gives something back. She would like that something to be jobs; Internet based specifically.

Kevin Brown was asked how he would fit in with others.

His response – He is an advocate of partnerships, finding solutions together. He would like to establish a county newsletter to reach people. And he wants advisors throughout the district to give a voice to more people.

Sue Novasel was asked how she would engage constituents of all ages.

Her response – She would also like to establish an online newsletter so it reached people who get their info via their computer or smart phone and don’t necessarily go to meetings. She said it’s important to be involved with all sectors of the district.

Kenny Curtzwiler was asked how he would hold agencies, businesses and individuals accountable.

His response – He said it’s time for residents to take over and make sure everything agencies have talked about is implemented, and for the agencies to take a back seat.

The public’s questions were more specific and concise. One was about what the candidates would do about mental health.

Grego – She said the biggest problem is getting services to the people who need it.

Piper – First responders need more training.

Brown – Hold people’s feet to the fire and figure out the real reason for the continual turnover in Child Protective

Services.

Novasel – There needs to better coordination between first responders and service providers.

Curtzwiler – Too much of the time people are reactive instead of proactive.

Swanson – The culture in Placerville needs to change, it's dysfunctional, especially with 11 human resource directors in the last nine years.

They all agreed not much could be done about Red Hawk money being spent on the West Slope and that the Indian casino is an economic knife in the South Shore's back.

They also agree the Meyers Area Plan should be slowed down. Swanson proposed Meyers create a community service district so then they would have more of a say as well as more elected oversight. Curtzwiler said the decision should be made when there is a new supervisor later this year.

Another question was about how best to represent the county as a whole when on other boards like TRPA and the California Tahoe Conservancy.

Brown said he would likely appoint a representative to TRPA like Placer County does. He also pointed out how the three Nevada representatives live outside the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The others said being on those other boards is critical because they are Tahoe centric.

They were asked how they would decide if a project that comes before TRPA is good for Tahoe.

Swanson – Projects will have to meet community plan area guidelines, and most will be rebuilds, not new development.

Curtzwiler – Cities and the county should be making those

decisions, not TRPA.

Grego – High-rises are not needed, but instead be sensible and considerate projects. She pointed out that it's not up to board members what projects come before them.

Brown – There are regulations in place that have to be met. It's a team approach, not one person's decision on a project.

Novasel – Local representation is important on boards.

Piper – Look to see if it fits an area and don't base decisions on personal choice.

The election is June 3. To win outright, a candidate must receive 50 percent plus one vote. Otherwise the top two vote getters will head to a November runoff.

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe is hosting a supervisor forum on May 14 from 11:30am-1:30pm. For reservations, email soroptimistslt@gmail.com by May 12. Cost of the lunch at Harrah's Lake Tahoe is $10.

Opinion: Californians thumb their noses at marriage

By Joe Mathews, Zocalo Public Square

This month, The Accident gets hitched.

The Accident is my term of endearment (really!) for my baby sister Katie, who arrived, unexpectedly, 11 ½ years after me and seven years after my brother. She exchanged vows in L.A.'s San Gabriel Valley with her longtime boyfriend, Matt, in a big

family wedding that (my mother would like you to know) is costing a fortune.

I thought this family milestone was a totally unremarkable story — hardly worthy of a column — until I came across some data on California and its families. In our state, a seemingly conventional marriage is now exceptional. And Katie and Matt—who, if encountered on the street, would appear to be fairly conventional millennial professionals—just might be radicals.

Marriage rates are declining across the country and the industrialized world, and married couples represent fewer than half of American households. In California, the trend runs even deeper: The state's marriage rate has reached almost European lows. There are fewer than six marriages a year now for every 1,000 Californians, putting the state at or near the bottom of the nation. (The rate in Arkansas, for example, is nearly twice as high.) Matt and Katie are swimming against a strong tide.

In California and around the country, people who are tying the knot are waiting longer to do so. The reasons for this are much debated, but one factor seems to be how long it takes people to get through school and find an economic footing. Such waits are particularly long in high-cost places like the Bay Area, where Katie and Matt live. My sister tells me that people there keep telling her that she's "pretty young" to be getting married. That's flattering but not true. She's 29, a couple years older than the average American (and Californian) bride.

A decline in marriages may not be worrisome in itself, but in California it has been accompanied by a rapid decline in the number of children. The number of children under 10 in L.A. County dropped by 17 percent in the last decade. Some demographers have raised alarm that the sliding birth rate, in combination with diminished immigration, is producing a child

shortage in the state. We need to produce more future taxpayers to buy houses and support the retirements of the old.

Read the whole story

Nutting: Disclosure problems an ‘honest mistake’

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado County Supervisor Ray Nutting testified Tuesday that his failure to report state income on economic disclosure reports was an honest mistake and that he never tried to mislead anyone.

The four-term county supervisor appeared by turns confused and emotional as he spent almost all day on the witness stand fielding questions from his attorney in the turn-of-the-century courthouse in Old Placerville.

Nutting faces charges stemming from state fire grants he received for clearing brush from his ranch. Prosecutors allege that he failed to describe that income on his political disclosure forms. They also say his board votes to fund two local fire districts were a conflict of interest and that he illegally borrowed money from county employees to post bail when he was arrested last year.

El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson has called Nutting a “hypocrite” for criticizing government as a fiscally conservative politician while accepting government grants as a citizen.

Nutting, in turn, has accused Pierson and other elected officials of prosecuting him for political reasons.

Read the whole story

Restaurants skip required nutrition labels

By David Lazarus, Los Angeles Times

Only five years ago, California enacted a pioneering law that required restaurants to put nutritional information on menus. For the first time, consumers were empowered to make informed decisions about what they ate.

So it seems crazy that it’s even a question: Does the law still exist?

If you ask state Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Pacoima, the author of the menu-labeling law, the answer is yes.

But that’s not how the California Restaurant Association sees it. It believes Padilla’s law has been repealed.

So does the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health, whose members are responsible for enforcing menu labeling at the local level.

Or, in the words of Angelo Bellomo, environmental health director at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health: “There is a law that requires it, but both the federal government and the state government have decided not to

enforce it.”

Read the whole story

Big money, many actors, little oversight of Calif. water

By Tim Reid, Reuters

In the middle of one of the worst droughts in California’s history, no one knows exactly how many agencies supply the state with water.

While state regulators supervise three companies that provide gas and electricity for most of California, drinking water is delivered through a vast network of agencies which collectively do billions of dollars of business, setting rates and handing out contracts with scant oversight.

There are so many agencies, in fact, that the California Department of Water Resource, which is responsible for managing and protecting the state’s water, concedes that it does not even know the exact number.

“We think the total number is about 3,000 but there is no definitive resting place for those numbers,” a department spokesman said.

Some state officials and water experts are calling for change, arguing that the process of providing water should be as clear

as the product, especially in the middle of a drought. As one of the nation's agricultural leaders and a trendsetter in environmental regulation, California's actions could be felt beyond its borders.

Wes Strickland, an attorney who specializes in water law, says most of these water agencies do a good job. Cities and towns like controlling their own resources, and most of the agencies are elected, assuring a level of accountability.

Read the whole story

Missing Amador County man's vehicle found at Pyramid Lake

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A car belonging to a missing Amador County man has been found stuck in a creek bed in Nevada.



Warren Alford Hagyard

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office has activated its search and rescue team in an effort to locate 79-year-old Warren Alford Hagyard of Pioneer, who has been missing since April 21.

The Amador County Sheriff’s Office was contacted May 5 by an individual who had been four-wheeling in the area of Pyramid Lake near Nixon on Saturday. The caller reported that while on a very rough dirt trail about 10 miles from the trail head, he located a blue Honda Civic in a creek bed and said the vehicle appeared to be stuck on rocks. No one was in the Honda. The windows were rolled down and the car keys were on the seat, according to a sheriff’s office news release.

Read the whole story