Being more connected opens up new consequences of being hacked

By Amy Thomson, Bloomberg

Come home to a hot iron and smoldering clothes this afternoon? Soon, it may not be a sign of forgetfulness, but rather evidence that you've been hacked.

In coming years, your smartphone will be able to lock your house, turn on the air conditioning, check whether the milk is out of date, or even heat up your iron. Great news, except that all that convenience could also let criminals open your doors, spy on your family or drive your connected car to their lair.

"As these technologies become more sophisticated, it opens up a broader spectrum of threats," said Gunter Ollmann, chief technology officer of IOActive, a tech security firm in Seattle. A world of connected devices makes it possible "for the bad guys to have permanent entry into your household."

What the industry calls "the Internet of things" has been heralded as the next wave of tech riches. By 2020, 26 billion such devices may be connected to the Internet, up from 3 billion today, researcher Gartner Inc. (IT) estimates. That's almost four times the number of smartphones, tablets and PCs that will be in use.

Read the whole story

Class focuses on landscaping with native grasses

Learn how to landscape with native and adapted bunch grasses as a system instead of just ornamental highlights through the Beautiful Bunch Grasses class.

Lake Tahoe master gardeners will teach people how to understand the concept of meadows, prairies and succession. People will be taught how to develop beautiful landscapes with grasses that are multifunctional, resilient and well-defined, as well as how to let plant material build and stabilize your poor Tahoe soil over time, naturally.

The free class is July 7 from 5:30-6:30pm at Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden, 1 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

Avoid mistakes when beginning a wine cellar

By Jean-Manuel Duvivier, Wall Street Journal

If you enjoy wine, are starting to take more than a passing interest and have perhaps bought the odd reference book about vino varieties, it might be time to think about beginning your very own wine cellar.

The worst habit you can get into is to stop off at your local wine shop once a week and pick up the odd few bottles. A much better approach is to buy by the dozen or a six pack, as most wine merchants will offer a discount on a mixed case. Better

still is to select two or three wine merchants, order their catalogs or look online and, when you’re in the mood, spend some time selecting your favorite wines and comparing prices. I like to do this on the weekend, with a cup of tea and all the catalogs spread out over the kitchen table.

But a cellar isn’t just a few cases of your favorite wine. It may sound like a cliché but a good cellar requires a bit of forethought and planning to provide pleasurable drinking over the long term. I like to break wine collecting into three categories: wines for immediate drinking, wines to lay down that will improve with age, and investment wines—those special bottles whose value will steadily increase year on year.

Read the whole story

Pampered pooch on Tahoe weekend getaway



AJ on top of the boulders at the vista point in Van Sickle Bi-State Park. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By AJ Rothschild-Reed

STATELINE – Mommy is letting some strange guy take my bed. I'm not sure about this.

Suddenly there's a knock on the door. I must protect my person. Oh, but wait, what do we have here? Some other guy has my bed and mommy seems to be paying for it. That seems strange.

Wow, look at that view. The window comes down low enough that I can see Lake Tahoe to my left. And there's a big stage. I might have to check that out, pretend like I'm a star. There looks like a lot of exploring to be had beyond these four walls.

But these four walls aren't too shabby, either. Harveys is pretty cool with providing me snacks, matching bowls, a placemat of sorts and a nifty pouch full of poopy bags. This

is better than at home. (Bet mommy the editor strikes that part out.) And that king-size bed. You know who is going to be lounging there when my peeps take off.

> *Harveys, for two years, has had 12 rooms designated for dogs. Stefan Humer, hotel manager, says special cleaning supplies are used, housekeeping receives extra training and rooms are vacuumed daily. Two dogs per room are allowed, with a 50-pound limit per dog.*

Wow, mommy isn't immediately sitting in front of the stupid computer. The leash is out – always a good sign. She tells me we are going to explore Van Sickle Bi-State Park. But I'm a little worried. Ken the bellhop said to watch out for coyotes. Then a guy in the parking lot says to beware of the homeless camp.

(We didn't see either.)

Just get a whiff of that. Oh, never mind, but you are missing out. If you two-leggeds could smell what we four-leggeds smell, you would want to pee on everything, too. Sure it's pretty – but the smells, really, that's the best part of a hike.

Mommy can't stop taking pictures from the vista point that was only about a half mile in from the trailhead. She's babbling on about how pretty this would be at sunset. I can't believe she just wants to sit on these boulders – how boring. They don't smell.

We're both getting hungry, but I overhear a conversation between the mommies that means I have to wait. We head back out the way we came in and never once see another person. Pretty cool to have the country's only bi-state park all to ourselves.

But our solitude is quickly gone as we walk through the bustling Heavenly Village. We sit at a table at Base Camp

Pizza waiting for the other mommy to arrive. The waiter brings three waters. I'm liking this kind of service. Talk about smells. There are crumbs all over the place from messy patrons sitting outside. I love it.

I see some of my own kind at other tables spread out between the two outdoor areas. We do our secret acknowledgement that our peeps don't know about.

Mommy is clearly feeling guilty about not having fed me because I never get people food from the table. This pizza crust is pretty darn tasty. I'm going to put that on my list of people food to beg for.

After a good night's sleep it's time to head for the special area Harveys has outside for me to do my business.

My mommies say they are off to watch some horse race. Whatever. I'm part greyhound; they see me run all the time. But I'm not allowed to go.

At check in I saw mommy sign a waiver that said I would have to leave if I created a disturbance, went into the gaming area, lounged by the pool or went to one of the casino's restaurants.

> *The hotel manager said some unruly dogs have been shown the door. Kennels are an option at Harrah's Lake Tahoe for $10/day. Harveys charges $75/night for a dog.*

Today we are going on another excursion that the bellhop recommended – Nevada Beach. Mommy likes the idea of not having to get in the Jeep all weekend.

> *The brochure provided by the hotel suggests outdoor play at Hawley Grade, Fallen Leaf Lake, Kiva Beach and Tallac Historic Site. These all require getting in a vehicle.*

Lots of BS'ing here. That's butt sniffing in our language. It's flat, and apparently pretty, according to mommy lingo. I

just know there is a lake at the end. Mommies perch themselves in the sand as I figure out how to tame these waves.

Later in the afternoon mommy takes me for a walk around outside. I ask about that stage I could see from the window. Mommy lets me get on stage. Pretty cool. I can hear the applause now. Just call me princess.

Dagnabit. Mommy interrupts my fantasy. It’s time to go back to the room.

I’m not too sure about escalators, but the elevators seem like some form of space travel.

The next morning the three of us head off to find breakfast. Well, I ate before we left. Still, I’m wondering what new people food I might indulge in.

We sit outside Driftwood Cafe. No table service, but they allow mommies to get food to go so the three of us can dine together. I’m not getting a scrap. What’s up with this? I am the reason we are on this mini trip. Why isn’t it all about me?

I guess we better get back and check out. But I could get used to this lifestyle of living on the 14th floor with a view of Lake Tahoe.

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Editorial: Time for Calif. to

manage groundwater

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the June 2, 2014, Sacramento Bee.***

This has to be the year that California finally starts to regulate groundwater. It has to be.

Not since the drought of 1977 have water resources been in such dire straits. To cope, the state is taking drastic steps when it comes to surface water. Last week, the State Water Resources Control Board ordered more than 4,200 "junior" water rights holders in the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds to stop pumping water from streams and warned that, if things got worse, "senior" water rights holders might see restrictions as well.

This move will only put more pressure on farmers and water districts to turn to groundwater – a practice that has already had dramatic, and disturbing, results.

Wells have run dry; overdrafting of groundwater has caused the land to sink – up to 28 feet in some places in the Valley; and aquifers aren't getting recharged.

Read the whole story

Pre-planning critical before retiring

By Larry Roby

The start of football season may be months away, but the

game’s on the minds of many after the NFL draft. Minicamps are gearing up and team personnel are organizing in preparation for the 2014-15 season.

Football is a big deal in the United States – and so is the surge of retirees – 10,000 baby boomers every day for the next 18 years. The last thing pre-retirees want to do at this stage of their lives is to fumble while in the red zone of their retirement date.

Only 23 percent of pre-retirees have calculated how much they’ll need to save for retirement, according to New Retirement Landscape; while three-quarters say they’re confident in the red zone of retirement, an equal amount of people haven’t even done the math yet.

Confidence in your retirement portfolio is good – if it’s justified. Otherwise, it can lull people into a false sense of security and lack of preparedness.

Having a diverse portfolio and understanding your options for life insurance, Social Security and 401(k) or other retirement accounts are staples for retirement planning. But there are also six crucial documents that are often either not in an individual’s playbook or are overlooked.

Here are the six documents you need for a solid red zone estate plan:

• Joint Ownership – Enables you to own property jointly with another person and upon the death of the joint tenant, the surviving joint tenant automatically becomes the owner of the property.

• Last Will and Testament – A legal document which expresses the wishes of a person concerning the disposition of their property after death and names the person who will manage the estate.

• Durable Power of Attorney – Grants authority to another individual to act on behalf of the person who executes the instrument and are commonly used for legal and financial purposes.

• Durable Health Care Power of Attorney – Grants authority to another individual to make health care decisions on your behalf should you be unable to make such decisions.

• Advance Care Directive – A set of written instructions in which a person specifies what actions should be taken for their health, if they are no longer able to make decisions due to illness or incapacity.

• Living Trust – Created during your lifetime. Assets are transferred to the trust while you are alive. Provides written instructions for the disbursement of the trust assets upon your death. These documents can play a vital role in the major plays during the fourth quarter of your life. Understanding how they work now can make the difference between a last-minute victory or loss.

Larry Roby is the founder and president of Senior Financial Advisors.

‘Stuffed’ foods add spin to barbecuing

By Bill Daley, Chicago Tribune

Grilling already has got its steaks, slabs and skewers. With summer coming, maybe it’s time to slap another “s” down on that sizzlin’ hot grate: as in “stuffed.”

Stuffing can mean extra prep work, not something most people will naturally want to deal with on a lazy, hazy summer day. But it’s all worth it to Ted Reader, a Toronto chef, barbecuing expert and product developer, who has a number of stuffed recipes in his latest book, “Gastro Grilling” (Pintail, $25).

“The No.1 reason is to add fun to your food, to change it up,” Reader says in making a case for stuffing. “You can grill burgers, hot dogs, steaks and chicken breasts, and that’s great. But there’s so much more you can do to make these things better.”

Stuffing can add flavor and moisture to foods, particularly leaner cuts of meat, says Jamie Purviance, an El Dorado Hills-based chef and author of several grilling cookbooks. (The most recent? “Weber’s Big Book of Burgers,” Oxmoor, $21.95, published in April.)

Read the whole story

Family storytime at Dangberg Ranch

The Douglas County Public Library is hosting a special family storytime on June 18 at 10:30am under the canopy at Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park.

Youth Services Librarian Kathy E. will tell a story based on the book “No Problem” by Eileen Browne. Afterward children of all ages will fold their own paper airplane. They will test how far it goes, discover how long it stays in the air, and aim their plane through a target.

The Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park is located at 1450 Highway 88 in Minden.

For more information, call 775.782.9841.

Nevada GOP primary signals move to middle

By Scott Sonner, AP

RENO – Republican regulars are relishing what they view as a return to normalcy after mainstream candidates defeated more conservative primary challengers in their struggle with tea party activists for control of Nevada's GOP.

Political analysts said it won't be clear until November whether the results of Tuesday's primary were driven most by the hugely popular Gov. Brian Sandoval's coattails, the power of incumbency or a move toward moderation with fading support for the right wing's agenda.

The rift between the mainstream and the more conservative politicians who have assumed state GOP leadership positions was in the spotlight, most notably in the lieutenant governor's race, where Sandoval's backing helped carry Mark Hutchison past the GOP-endorsed Sue Lowden.

The governor's picks also prevailed in a key 4th District congressional primary where first-term Assemblyman Cresent Hardy defeated tea party strategist Niger Innis, and in the Legislature where Senate Minority Leader Michael Roberson of Henderson, Assembly Minority Leader Pat Hickey of Reno and assistant Senate floor leader Ben Kieckhefer of Reno all

withstood anti-establishment challenges from the right.

“We saw races where conservatives were trying to prove they were more conservative, and in those elections, it did not go well for tea-party types,” said Fred Lokken, a political science professor at Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno.

“It could be the first indications that Republican conservatives are tiring of the fight,” he said. “They may be realizing the split is providing far more damage than any benefit – that you either produce a weakened candidate more likely to lose to a Democratic challenger, or someone who does not work and play within the government process that elected them, and doesn’t get anything done for the district or the state.”

Republican angst had been growing in Nevada since tea party darling Sharron Angle beat Lowden and Danny Tarkanian for the GOP’s U.S. Senate nomination in 2010 before losing to Democratic Sen. Harry Reid, 50 percent to 46 percent.

Mainstream GOP leaders like their prospects for unseating the U.S. Senate’s majority leader much better if Sandoval takes him on in 2016. The governor insists he plans to serve a full four-year term if re-elected, but his impressive showing with 90 percent of the vote in Tuesday’s primary will only encourage his cheerleaders.

“It is tough to get 90 percent even if you are running unopposed,” said Eric Herzik, a political science professor at UNR.

Sandoval’s popularity helped scare off serious Democratic challengers in an eight-candidate field, where relative unknown Bob Goodman claimed the nomination with 25 percent of the vote in an embarrassing primary where “none of these candidates” led with 30 percent.

Even Democrats at the polls voiced support for Sandoval.

“As a Democrat, I can’t vote for Sandoval, but I feel he’s doing a good job and I hope he continues,” said Las Vegas resident Celso Adriano, 87, who is a World War II veteran. “I was watching what he’s doing. … He keeps good track of the budget.”

Lokken said that should get the attention of state party leaders, who last year elected Michael McDonald chairman over the Sandoval-backed Robert Uithoven, then later changed the party’s endorsement process over the governor’s objections.

“The primary was kind of a setback for the attitude the state GOP could go its own way. The governor is for all intents and purposes the leader of the party,” Lokken said. “The message back to the state GOP is it probably should be working much harder to work with the sitting governor, who is very popular and pretty mainstream.”

For his part, Nevada GOP chairman McDonald immediately issued a post-primary call for unity that he says is the key to winning in November “by practicing the politics of addition, not division.”

“I urge you to end the Republican ‘civil war’ that is so often reported about,” he said in an email to party members. “Now is the time that we must band together and truly become the Nevada Republican Party.”

Herzik said it’s too early to tell if the Republicans’ internal wounds are healing. He also cautioned against reading too much into the tea party setbacks.

“If traditional Republicans overstate this, that it means they are not important, that would be a mistake,” he said. Herzik said Hutchison and Hardy both were better-financed favorites in their races and the “conservative challenges to Roberson and Kieckhefer in particular, didn’t have any legs.”

“This kind of conservative backlash was louder than it was actual,” Herzik said. “I don’t think this election brought peace and harmony to the Republican Party. I don’t think there is any guarantee that the disaffected conservative Republicans will fall in line and immediately back their fellow Republicans.”

Cooler uses dirt instead of ice

By Jenn Harris, Los Angeles Times

Ice-cold beer is essential to any summer party, but no one volunteers to pick up the ice, then to restock halfway through the party. eCool, a company in Denmark, is attempting to solve the party ice predicament with an ice-less cooler.

The eCool earth cooler is an underground cooler that uses dirt to chill your beer instead of ice. According to the website, you use a garden drill to create a hole in the ground. Or it says that if “you’re a real man” you can dig one yourself.

Once you place the cooler in the ground, you use a lever to lower up to 24 cans of beer into the cooler. You use the same lever to lift the cans out of the cooler when you’re ready to drink.

Read the whole story