

Standing may be the answer to better meetings

By Anne Miller, NPR

The secret to more productive meetings? You might simply need to stand up.

This we know, to some degree. Just take as examples the growing popularity of standing desks, which took off after a flurry of reports found that sitting for long periods of time can significantly, negatively, impact employees' health.

That set a pair of professors at the Washington University's Olin Business School, Andrew Knight and Markus Bear, wondering: Should the standing trend expand beyond cubicles? Could it help meetings, too? The academics looked at 54 meetings, each about 30 minutes long (since about 75 percent of meetings run for 30 minutes or less).

Their answer: Yes, yes it could.

Read the whole story

Vending machines go upscale

By Shan Li, Los Angeles Times

At Hollywood & Highland Center, mere steps from Hollywood Boulevard's souvenir-hawking dives, tourists can drop up to \$1,000 on fine caviar.

But they aren't pampered with white-glove service. Tins of the

delicacy are dispensed at the tap of a button – from a vending machine.



Veronica Wong buys cupcakes from an ATM in New York.
Photo/LTN

After decades of serving up junk food, vending machines are putting on airs.

High-tech versions are popping up at gas stations and shopping malls, peddling edibles more commonly found at restaurants or specialty stores. Some offer free Wi-Fi and touch screens that entertain shoppers while they wait. Many accept credit or debit cards, and a few even sell outrageously expensive items such as jewelry.

Sprinkles Cupcakes is installing its “Cupcake ATM” at all 16 bakeries around the country.

Read the whole story

Large pool of players for

World Series of Poker

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

A summer series that has already produced the second- and third-largest tournaments in poker history can now add a third top-10 event of all-time.

The 2014 World Series of Poker Main Event had attracted the seventh-most entrants of any live tournament in history by the time registration closed Monday evening. After three separate starting days beginning Saturday, 6,683 players had paid the \$10,000 entry fee to compete in poker's world championship.

While that falls short of the 7,977 players who entered the \$1,500 buy-in Millionaire Maker and the 7,862 who paid \$1,500 for the Monster Stack event earlier this summer, it's still an upward tick for the Main Event. For the first time since 2010, the Main Event beat the previous year's number.

Read the whole story

Recovery evident as U.S. residents hit the road



Tahoe was a definite destination Fourth of July weekend. Photo/Bill Kingman

By Steve Matthews, Nina Glinski and Nadja Brandt, Bloomberg

Traci Butler and her husband cut out vacations after the U.S. recession five years ago. This week, the couple is taking their two boys on a weeklong trip that includes a July 4th visit to the nation's capital, just a few weeks after touring Italy on their own.

In the aftermath of the recession, "things were much tighter," said Butler, a special education teacher from Washington, Illinois, whose husband works for construction machinery maker Caterpillar Inc. "We didn't have bonuses for a while. The last two years have been better."

About 34.8 million people planned to drive 50 miles or more from home during the five days ending July 6, up from 34.1 million last year and the most since 2007, AAA, the biggest U.S. motoring organization, said. The travel recovery is boosting sales for hotels and attractions, a sign that consumer confidence and consumer spending are on the mend, said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics Inc. in West Chester, Pa.

Hotel occupancies across the U.S. averaged 62 percent during the first five months of this year, up from 60 percent during the same period last year and the highest average for that time frame since 1996, according to data provided by Hendersonville, Tenn.-based research firm STR Inc. Average room rates climbed 4.1 percent to \$113.58.

Read the whole story

Is Flores the Latina star Dems have been waiting for?

By Benjy Sarlin, MSNBC

LAS VEGAS – “I don’t have the background of a typical politician, right?” Lucy Flores told a crowd of Democratic activists as she accepted the party’s nomination for lieutenant governor of Nevada in June.

It’s a line you’ve heard before: Candidates love to brag about how they didn’t grow up like those “typical” politicians. But there’s no other way to describe Flores, a Latina rising star who was born into an impoverished family of 13 children, whose mother abandoned her in grade school, who fell in with a gang, who was sentenced to a youth prison, who dropped out of high school and who became a lawyer and a state legislator— all by age 31.



Lucy Flores

“There are Lucys in every town across this state,” she told activists. “That’s why my focus is on making sure that this is a state that works for every Nevadan, not just the privileged few.”

Flores isn’t the only one betting big on her life story

either. Nevada Democrats are looking to her underdog tale to lead their entire party in a challenging year.

Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval is running virtually unopposed and may challenge Sen. Harry Reid in 2016. Because the lieutenant governor would take over if Sandoval wins, Reid and Sandoval are each throwing their full weight behind strong candidates for that office – Flores for the Democrats and Mark Hutchison, a state senator and successful attorney, for the GOP. This proxy fight makes the Flores-Hutchison matchup one of the most closely watched races of the year in the West.

Read the whole story

Reid leaves Searchlight a richer man

By Rosalind S. Helderman, Washington Post

SEARCHLIGHT – Harry Reid grew up in a shack in this dusty old gold-mining outpost in the middle of the desert.

As he rose to political power, he amassed personal wealth and began living part time in a condo in Washington. But he never stopped holding tightly to a gritty public persona grounded in his Searchlight roots – building a house here and keeping the town his official residence.

Along the way, a tiny town that thrived only briefly during a gold rush more than a century ago gained bragging rights as home to the most powerful man in the U.S. Senate.



Sen. Harry Reid sells Searchlight property to gold mining company. Photo/LTN file

But this month has brought a remarkable turn of events for Searchlight and its population of a few hundred: A new gold rush has reignited investor interest here. And Reid, whose land quite literally sat on a gold mine, has seized the opportunity to cash out of the town at the center of his political identity.

He announced last month that he had sold his house along with 110 acres of Joshua-tree-dotted, rocky land to Nevada Milling and Mining, a small South Dakota company that bought an abandoned mine next door in 2010 and has high hopes for a new era of gold production.

The \$1.75 million deal was a handsome payout for the Democrat, who is paid a Senate salary of \$193,400 per year. Nearly all of the land had been in Reid's family for decades, much of it originally deeded to his father and some bought by Reid from family members. His brother will continue to live in Searchlight, where Reid will also retain some holdings.

Reid, 74, said he and his wife, Landra, wanted to be closer to their children and grandchildren, as well as his political base in Las Vegas, an hour's drive across the desolate Mojave Desert.

Now Reid, who as Senate majority leader is presiding over the Democrats' efforts this year to retain control of the Senate and looking ahead to his own potentially difficult re-election in 2016, will need to adjust the carefully tended life narrative he has presented to voters since he entered politics in the late 1960s. And Searchlight is pondering a new but possibly brighter future without its native son.

"We're all very, very sad to see Harry go," said Reggie Doing, 32, whose family owns the Searchlight Nugget Casino and Restaurant, which offers 10-cent coffee, \$1 beer and is the town's main gathering place. But he said the return of gold mining marked by the sale could renew the town. "Nothing is guaranteed and nothing is forever. Change can be a blessing."

A video that Reid recorded to break the news of his land sale to constituents shows the senator lovingly describing Searchlight trinkets he keeps in his Washington office, including an old miner's helmet with a carbide lamp. "Even after all these years, you can still smell the carbide," he said, sniffing the item.

"Searchlight is my birthplace, it is my home, my favorite place in the world," Reid said in a statement provided to the Washington Post. He called the sale a "a very difficult decision."

The return of gold mining to Searchlight is part of a new rush throughout Nevada made possible by a spike in gold prices following the economic crash of the last decade, when gold was thought to be a safe investment in a volatile financial world. The price of gold soared to over \$1,900 an ounce in 2011; it has now settled back to about \$1,300 an ounce, still a historically high price.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Rocky

Rocky is one of many special dogs at the shelter right now. He's had a rough start in life, but he's still a happy, friendly, and affectionate boy.

He's 18 months old, 45 pounds, and should probably weigh about 10 to 15 pounds more. He loves other dogs, playing with toys, and going for walks. He is well-behaved at home, sleeping through the night, but does like to climb into your lap and will jump on the counter to see what's up there.

He needs just a little house training reinforcement, and will quickly learn more commands in addition to the sit and down he already knows. Rocky has a beautiful coat and classic Rottweiler markings, but he has the slender head and body of a small shepherd.

Rocky is neutered, microchipped, tested for heartworm, and

vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Mancuso not letting up with summer workouts

By Lara Rosenbaum, Shape

Last summer, multi-medal-winning Olympian Julia Mancuso was prepping hard for the Sochi Olympics, hoping to add more hardware to her collection.

Her days ran like Excel sheets: each dialed to the hour, with most of those hours involving a workout. Her training paid off, and she came away with a bronze in the combined, making her the most decorated American female alpine skier in Olympic history. This off-season, though, the Squaw Valley skier taking a different approach.

“Because of the stress of the Olympics, this summer is more relaxed for me. I’ve decided to just do what feels good for myself,” she says.

Not that she's slacking. Here's how Mancuso enjoys summer—all the while staying in tip-top shape.

Read the whole story

Stewart Indian School offers little-known U.S. history

By Susan Winlow, Daily Republic

CARSON CITY – A strong wind bullied through the Carson Valley last weekend. It whistled and pushed itself through the trees, which isn't too difficult since you can see a lone tree from 10 miles away.

Sand, dirt and knee-deep brushy stuff is the norm in this high desert.

However, that terrain changes as you turn into the parking lot of the historic Stewart Indian School, situated on 240 acres on the Stewart Indian Colony (reservation) three miles southeast of Carson City on Snyder Avenue. The central part of the large campus – operational from 1890 to 1980 – is a treed oasis, punctuated by the unique stone masonry that makes up most of the buildings. About 60 stone buildings, according to Nevada Indian Commission information, were built over a 16-year period starting in 1919 by students learning stone masonry from their teachers, who included Hopi stone masons.

The government-mandated school's original goal was to train and educate Native American children and assimilate them into white society. School curriculum offered some reading, writing and math, but focused on vocational training in the trades

such as agriculture and the service industry. It opened with 37 students from the Washoe, Paiute and Shoshone tribes and by 1919, 400 students called the school home during the school year. As the student population rose, more buildings were built.

Sherry Rupert, the executive director of the Nevada Indian Commission, created the Stewart Indian School Trail in September 2008 with several purposes, she said.

“First is to preserve those precious memories and oral histories of the school,” she said. “Second is to bring awareness to this widely unknown history of the Native American boarding schools.”

Rupert rethought her sentence and added, “unknown to the public.”

Read the whole story

Plastic garbage patch movie to air in Truckee

“Plastic Paradise: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch” will be shown at the Cedar House Sport Hotel in Truckee on July 8.

Bay Area native and award-winning television host/journalist, Angela Sun, has documented the Great Pacific Garbage Patch long rumored to exist. Her film premiered at the San Francisco Green Film Festival in June 2013 and has since garnered 12 independent film festival awards, including the Jury Award for the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in early 2014.

Truckee instituted a plastic bag ban following in the

footsteps of many other concerned communities throughout the world. The ordinance restricts the distribution of single-use plastic carryout bags and allows single-use paper bags only if the bag is purchased for a charge and made of a minimum 40 percent post-consumer recycled content, containing no old-growth fiber.

Doors to the screening open at 6pm. Tickets may be purchased in advance at Cabona's in downtown Truckee or by calling 530.587.3161. They are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. Tickets will be available that night for \$25. Proceeds from ticket sales benefit Mountain Area Preservation.