

Inland waters expert to give talk in Incline

Professor Geoff Schladow of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Sierra Nevada College will give a talk at the Incline Village school on March 28.

He was appointed founding director of the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center in August 2004. As director of the largest limnological (the study of inland waters) facility west of the Great Lakes, he is the point person for UC Davis research, teaching, and outreach agenda at Lake Tahoe.

Schladow is an expert in the areas of environmental fluid mechanics, water quality modeling, and the dynamics of inland waters. He is developing computer models to link streamflow measurements with meteorological and other remote-sensor information to provide Tahoe decision-makers new management tools.

The talk is free and open to the public. It will be in room TCES 139/141 from 11:45am-12:45pm.

Why Americans are unhappier than ever

By George Ward, The Conversation

March 20 is International Day of Happiness and, as they've done every year, the United Nations has published the World Happiness Report. The U.S. ranks 18th among the world's countries, with an average life satisfaction of around 6.88 on

a scale of 10.

While that may be relatively near the top, America's happiness figures have actually declined every year since the reports began in 2012, and this year's are the lowest yet. The question, then, is whether the government has a role to play in improving the happiness of its citizens. And if so, how might policymakers go about it?

Fortunately, a growing body of work by economists and psychologists can give governments access to the kind of data that can inform the way they think about policy and happiness.

In our new book, "The Origins of Happiness: The Science of Well-Being Over the Life Course," my colleagues and I provide a systematic account of what makes for a satisfying life.

The role of government

The idea that government ought to focus attention on the well-being of its citizens goes back centuries. Thomas Jefferson himself said, "The care of human life and happiness ... is the only legitimate object of good government."

Historically, this has meant increasing economic productivity and growth to increase personal happiness. But as the data suggest, and many countries are beginning to realize, this isn't likely to be sufficient. As a result, many governments around the world are now taking steps to broaden their policy goals beyond GDP.

This is not just a question of leaders being benevolent. Electoral data suggests that governments of populations that are unhappy do not tend to stay in power very long.

But how can governments change the way their citizens feel? Ultimately, changes cannot be made without good data. If governments are going to use well-being as a serious measure of success and progress, they need solid evidence of what lies

behind people's happiness and misery.

To make rational decisions about where to spend finite public funds, they need to know how potential policy changes will affect people's well-being – and at what cost. Without these numbers, governments risk looking for happiness in all the wrong places.

Causes of happiness and misery

For “The Origins of Happiness,” my colleagues and I analyzed a large amount of survey data from around the developed world in order to document what determines life satisfaction over the life course.

We found that income plays an important role in determining happiness – but it's not as significant as people might think or expect. Highly important are social relationships, be they at home, in the workplace or in the community.

That suggests that, to boost happiness in America, policymakers should look to counter adverse trends in inequality, the erosion of social trust and increasing isolation.

Our research finds that mental illness explains more of the variation in happiness than physical illness. In the U.S., mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, are a major cause of suffering. Yet many can be treated, for example through evidence-based psychological therapy. Public health spending on mental illness is therefore not a luxury, but a necessity.

In fact, our calculations in the book suggest that mental health treatment usually turns out to be cost-neutral, given the large benefits that alleviating mental health problems brings in terms of lower physical healthcare costs, absenteeism and crime, as well as increased productivity.

Much of increasing happiness in adults begins with addressing the needs of children. We found that schools – and even individual teachers – have just as large an effect on the happiness of children as do their families. So schools and governments can and should do a great deal more to ensure that they teach the kind of key life skills and resilience that foster happiness, both in childhood and right through into adulthood.

Not surprisingly, the world of work has a huge influence on our happiness as adults, providing not only income but also important social interactions as well as routine and purpose. The leading drivers of a satisfying work life include job autonomy, work-life balance and the quality of social interactions with coworkers and managers.

Ultimately, a great deal more can be done to make work more satisfying and enjoyable. Again, the evidence suggests this is not a luxury, but can make for a more profitable business environment.

Policymakers now need a host of carefully controlled experimental trials of particular policies in order to obtain precise estimates of their effects on happiness – which can then be compared with their financial costs. And although a great deal remains to be done, the Enlightenment ideal of focusing government attention onto making life satisfying and enjoyable is slowly becoming an ever more viable reality.

George Ward is a doctorate student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Sibling trio to bring music to LTCC

Derik Nelson and Family will be at the Lake Tahoe Community College Duke Theater beginning at 7pm March 23.

Siblings Derik, Riana, and Dalten have been performing together since childhood. They've garnered more than 3.6 million views on YouTube, performed in more than 90 cities across the country and reached over 50,000 students of all ages with educational music workshops and fundraising assemblies.

Admission will be at the door beginning at 6:15pm. Doors open at 6:30pm. Adult tickets are \$15 and children (through high school) \$5.

Derik Nelson and Family will be performing in the South Shore schools the week of March 20-23.

Inaugural Truckee Craw Thaw Music Festival in April

A New Orleans-inspired spring festival, the inaugural Truckee Craw Thaw Music Festival, will bring a lineup of American roots-inspired musicians, Cajun-style street fare and more.

The April 27-28 event will be in downtown Truckee.

Festivities kick off that Friday with two live bands set up on Bridge Street outside Moody's Bistro. The entertainment will be complemented by a selection of Cajun-style street fare.

On Saturday, there will be music, food and games designed to be a fun event for the whole family.

For more information, go **online**.

Out of the doghouse, into the bed

By Jen A. Miller, New York Times

For most Americans, dogs are no longer relegated to the doghouse. According to the American Pet Products Association, an industry trade group, almost 60 percent of dog owners say they regard their pet as a child or member of the family. And many let their dogs snuggle up to sleep right in their human owners' beds, often alongside their owners.

But is sleeping in the same bed with your dog a good idea? Wouldn't they be disruptive to our sleep?

According to a recent study, not really.

Read the whole story

Rim Trail, Genoa Cemetery

part of library events

Friends of the South Lake Tahoe Library have two diverse events coming up in April.

The first is April 11 at 6pm – Trail Talk: Everyday Trails. Feel like you do the same hike, ride, or run every time? Not sure where to look for a new, exciting adventure? Come ask the experts.

This event will feature a panel of Tahoe Rim Trail Association guides and trail enthusiasts.

On April 21 at 1pm the event is: Genoa Cemetery, Markleeville Ghosts & More. Local authors Karen Dustman, Laurie Hickey, and photographer Judy Wickwire will tell stories from their recently-released book, “The Old Genoa Cemetery.” The first in a four-volume series, this book takes readers on a tour of the southern-most section of this historic cemetery, and honors the lives of some of Carson Valley’s earliest and most prominent settlers who are buried here.

Both events are free and will be at the library on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

What sustainable cities really need

By Trina Hamilton and Winifred Curran, *The Conversation*

There are many indexes that aim to rank how green cities are. But what does it actually mean for a city to be green or sustainable?

We've written about what we call the "parks, cafes and a riverwalk" model of sustainability, which focuses on providing new green spaces, mainly for high-income people. This vision of shiny residential towers and waterfront parks has become a widely-shared conception of what green cities should look like. But it can drive up real estate prices and displace low- and middle-income residents.

As scholars who study gentrification and social justice, we prefer a model that recognizes all three aspects of sustainability: environment, economy and equity. The equity piece is often missing from development projects promoted as green or sustainable. We are interested in models of urban greening that produce real environmental improvements and also benefit long-term working-class residents in neighborhoods that are historically underserved.

Over a decade of research in an industrial section of New York City, we have seen an alternative vision take shape. This model, which we call "just green enough," aims to clean up the environment while also retaining and creating living-wage blue-collar jobs. By doing so, it enables residents who have endured decades of contamination to stay in place and enjoy the benefits of a greener neighborhood.

'Parks, cafes and a riverwalk' can lead to gentrification

Gentrification has become a catch-all term used to describe neighborhood change, and is often misunderstood as the only path to neighborhood improvement. In fact, its defining feature is displacement. Typically, people who move into these changing neighborhoods are whiter, wealthier and more educated than residents who are displaced.

A recent spate of new research has focused on the displacement effects of environmental cleanup and green space initiatives. This phenomenon has variously been called environmental, eco- or green gentrification.

Land for new development and resources to fund extensive cleanup of toxic sites are scarce in many cities. This creates pressure to rezone industrial land for condo towers or lucrative commercial space, in exchange for developer-funded cleanup. And in neighborhoods where gentrification has already begun, a new park or farmers market can exacerbate the problem by making the area even more attractive to potential gentrifiers and pricing out long-term residents. In some cases, developers even create temporary community gardens or farmers markets or promise more green space than they eventually deliver, in order to market a neighborhood to buyers looking for green amenities.

Environmental gentrification naturalizes the disappearance of manufacturing and the working class. It makes deindustrialization seem both inevitable and desirable, often by quite literally replacing industry with more natural-looking landscapes. When these neighborhoods are finally cleaned up, after years of activism by longtime residents, those advocates often are unable to stay and enjoy the benefits of their efforts.

Tools for greening differently

Greening and environmental cleanup do not automatically or necessarily lead to gentrification. There are tools that can make cities both greener and more inclusive, if the political will exists.

The work of the Newtown Creek Alliance in Brooklyn and Queens provides examples. The alliance is a community-led organization working to improve environmental conditions and revitalize industry in and along Newtown Creek, which separates these two boroughs. It focuses explicitly on social justice and environmental goals, as defined by the people who have been most negatively affected by contamination in the area.

The industrial zone surrounding Newtown Creek is a far cry from the toxic stew that The New York Times described in 1881 as “the worst smelling district in the world.” But it is also far from clean. For 220 years it has been a dumping ground for oil refineries, chemical plants, sugar refineries, fiber mills, copper smelting works, steel fabricators, tanneries, paint and varnish manufacturers, and lumber, coal and brick yards.

In the late 1970s, an investigation found that 17 million gallons of oil had leaked under the neighborhood and into the creek from a nearby oil storage terminal. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed Newtown Creek on the Superfund list of heavily polluted toxic waste sites in 2010.

The Newtown Creek Alliance and other groups are working to make sure that the Superfund cleanup and other remediation efforts are as comprehensive as possible. At the same time, they are creating new green spaces within an area zoned for manufacturing, rather than pushing to rezone it.

As this approach shows, green cities don't have to be postindustrial. Some 20,000 people work in the North Brooklyn industrial area that borders Newtown Creek. And a number of industrial businesses in the area have helped make environmental improvements.

Just green enough

The “just green enough” strategy uncouples environmental cleanup from high-end residential and commercial development. Our new anthology, “Just Green Enough: Urban Development and Environmental Gentrification,” provides many other examples of the need to plan for gentrification effects before displacement happens. It also describes efforts to create environmental improvements that explicitly consider equity concerns.

For example, UPROSE, Brooklyn's oldest Latino community-based

organization, is combining racial justice activism with climate resilience planning in Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhood. The group advocates for investment and training for existing small businesses that often are Latino-owned. Its goal is not only to expand well-paid manufacturing jobs, but to include these businesses in rethinking what a sustainable economy looks like. Rather than rezoning the waterfront for high-end commercial and residential use, UPROSE is working for an inclusive vision of the neighborhood, built on the experience and expertise of its largely working-class immigrant residents.

This approach illustrates a broader pattern identified by Macalester College geographer Dan Trudeau in his chapter for our book. His research on residential developments throughout the United States shows that socially and environmentally just neighborhoods have to be planned as such from the beginning, including affordable housing and green amenities for all residents. Trudeau highlights the need to find "patient capital" – investment that does not expect a quick profit – and shows that local governments need to take responsibility for setting out a vision and strategy for housing equity and inclusion.

In our view, it is time to expand the notion of what a green city looks like and who it is for. For cities to be truly sustainable, all residents should have access to affordable housing, living-wage jobs, clean air and water, and green space. Urban residents should not have to accept a false choice between contamination and environmental gentrification.

Trina Hamilton is an associate professor of geography at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. Winifred Curran is associate professor of geography at DePaul University.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Rhomi

Rhomi is a 3-year-old Husky/pit bull girl who loves to play at the dog park and go for hikes. She has lived with children and is very affectionate.

Rhomi is house trained and crate trained. She pulls a bit on the leash and will chase cats.

Rhomi is spayed, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. She 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**.

What hotels are doing to adapt to travelers

By Nancy Trejos, USA Today

Guests have a lot of demands these days. And hotels are changing their tactics to meet those demands.

Hotels can no longer offer a simple bed and a bathroom. They have to think through every decision when designing a guestroom, from the type of mattresses to the bathroom lighting to storage areas.

“You need to engineer everything that goes into a room,” says Richard Born, co-creator of Pod Hotels, which has micro-rooms.

[Read the whole story](#)

Road Beat: Kia Niro Hybrid impresses



The Kia Niro Hybrid fuel economy is outstanding. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

After setting records like driving across the United States in a Kia Niro Hybrid averaging 78 mpg, it apparently wasn't good enough for the folks at Kia as for 2018 Kia has introduced a new Niro plug-in hybrid version with a claimed all electric range of 26 miles. In reality, that range could extend out to 35 miles or more, as I found in many of my shorter trips.

About the only external difference to the Niro's very attractive body, well proportioned body, is the plug-in battery door on the side of the left front fender which looks like a second fuel tank door, which is exactly what it is, a place to add electrons from a special charging cable. Otherwise the dimensions are the same for a small compact almost CUV, 172 x 71 x 61 inches for length, width and height. Wheelbase is a long 106 inches and track is a wide 62 inches and will be appreciated when it comes to changing directions.

As to almost being classified as a small, compact SUV, ground clearance is good at 6.3 inches. And its Home Depot/Lowe's credentials are substantial at 55 cubic feet behind the front seats and almost 20 cubes behind the second row. And this is a vehicle that is 10 inches shorter than your average compact sedan. While the electric system, it's 8.9 kWh L-I battery (about 7.5 kWh more energy than the conventional hybrid) and the rest of the electrical stuff (hey, the charger cable probably weighs 5 pounds) add just about 250 pounds (the battery is listed at 258 pounds), total weight still remains about 3,450 pounds and with its small 11.4-gallon fuel tank, that saves about 20 pounds.



Specifications

Price \$28,840-\$34,500

Engine

1.6L DOHC, 16 valve, GDI
Atkinson cycle inline four
cylinder 104 hp @ 5,700 rpm
109 lb.-ft. pounds of torque
@ 4,000 rpm

Electric power

8.9 kWh L-I polymer battery
Battery weight 258 pounds
60 hp electric motor
Combined max power 139 hp

Transmission

Eight-speed dual clutch

automated manual

Configuration

Front engine/front wheel
drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.3 inches

Length 171.6 inches

Width 71.1 inches

Height 60.8 inches

Track (f/r) 61.6/62.2 inches

Ground clearance 6.3 inches

Fuel capacity 11.4 gallons

Weight 3,450 pounds

GVWR 4,409 pounds

Steering 2.66 turns lock to
lock

Turning circle 34.8 feet

Cargo volume (rear seats
up/down 19.4/54.5 cubic feet

Wheels 16-inch alloys

Tires 205/60X16 inches

Performance

0-60 mph 7.66 seconds

50-70 mph 4.38 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 7.22
seconds

Top speed Officially listed
at 106.9 mph

Fuel economy EPA rated
48/44/46 mpg
city/highway/combined.

Expect 60 plus mpg in short
drives under 35 miles with
full charge and 52 mpg on a
level highway at legal
speeds.

Under the hood you will find a 1.6L DOHC, i6 valve Atkinson cycle inline four that makes 104 hp at a low 5,700 rpm and 109 pounds of twist at 4,000 rpm. But it's kicker is a 60 hp electric motor which brings the combined output to 139 hp. The battery itself is capable of putting out the equivalent of 79 hp, so the Niro has good margins to perform at its peak 139 hp level at any time, even when in straight hybrid mode when the main pure electric part of the battery is exhausted. More on that later.

First let's talk performance, which the Niro PHEV has plenty of. How about a 0-60 mph time of just 7.66 seconds, but it feels quicker and with or without a charged battery, the Niro flat out performs. Passing times of 50-70 mph averaged 4.38 seconds and up a 6-7 percent grade that time only slows to 7.22 seconds. Part of this high performance can be attributed to the Niro PHEV's eight speed dual clutch automated manual tranny. It was faultless, super-slick smooth and extremely intuitive.

Niro PHEV is a high performance and satisfying car to drive. When the big battery is done after about 30-35 miles, it can still go pure EV at 70 mph and performance doesn't degrade one iota. I don't know how they do it, but this Kia is a great car.

Fuel economy while rated in the EPA cycle at 48/44/46 mpg, city/highway/combined, it does significantly better. In my first 187 miles, Niro averaged 69.7 mpg with a couple of plug-ins. Steady 70 mph highway mileage averaged 52.4 mpg, eight mpg better than the EPA number. My trip over the Sierras to South Lake Tahoe and back averaged 46.6 mpg for the 130-mile trip and it was done with no battery as I was at zero EV miles when I started the trip and the drive was aggressive. In regular driving, averaging 60 plus mpg should be a lead-pipe cinch. Now the issue becomes what is the cost of electricity, as at 20 cents a kWh, a fill up will cost you about \$1.60, so the cost per mile will be the same as gasoline. But there are

other benefits.

First, the drive is exceedingly smooth and quiet. And you give up nothing in handling as it has extremely quick, accurate steering (2.66 turns lock to lock), the aforementioned track is wide, suspension is state of the art four wheel independent and turning circle is under 35 feet. Tires and its alloy wheels are a bit underwhelming at 16 inches and 205/60 rubber, but handling is still excellent, changing directions nimbly and with aplomb. It is fun to drive.

Ride quality is quiet on smooth roads, especially when running pure electric. The build quality is vault like and the ability to absorb punishment is apparent in its supple ride control. Niro PHEV does not ride like a sub-compact or compact car, but at a much higher level, but not quite as high as cloud like.

Safety is all there with smart radar cruise, front collision warning, autonomous emergency braking and lane keep assist all standard as well as all the other acronyms. Four-wheel discs brakes are strong with excellent pedal feel (remember as a hybrid there is regen braking) and the standard HID head lights are excellent.

Inside this EX Premium is a leather interior with all surfaces covered in first rate luxu or near luxu materials. Seats are comfortable if not on the firm side which is preferable for longer hauls and this Niro even with its smaller fuel tank will still get you well over 500 miles with reserves.

Three can fit reasonably well in the second row, but the real deal is the compact CUV like cargo capacity mentioned above. This Niro PHEV can haul the mail and plenty of it and for a long way.

While prices start for a well-equipped Niro LX PHEV at \$27,900 plus \$940 for the boat ride from Korea, my super well-equipped EX Premium stickers for \$34,500 with the boat ride included. Nothing else to buy, it comes loaded up. The question becomes

is the Niro PHEV going to save you money? At \$0.30 per kWh as I pay for PGE power (you can blame that high price on stupid environmental laws), it really doesn't make economic sense. But in the rest of the country where electricity sells for about 12-15 cents a kWh it will save you a little money, but not nearly enough to make up the price difference over a nice Kia Forte5. It might make you feel virtuous, but there are better ways to raise your feelings of virtuosity or self-esteem. But as an automobile, the Niro PHEV is quite a car/CUV, lots of guilt free performance, but instead of paying at the pump, you pay at the showroom and your electrical receptacle.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.