

FNEW to hold meeting March 12

NORWALK — The Fairfield Network of Executive Women will hold a meeting entitled “Content Marketing: Blog Yourself Viral” at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12, at Norwalk Inn & Conference Center at 99 East Ave.

Lori Greene, senior content partner at Maxus, will be the guest speaker. She is a proven multi-platform content executive.

The cost for the event is \$25 for members and \$35 for nonmembers. Walk-in guests are welcome for an additional \$5 surcharge.

RSVP by Monday, March 10, to fnew.org@gmail.com or by calling Terri Boustead at (203) 506-3176. Checks may be mailed in advance to FNEW, PO Box 262, Westport, CT 06881. Or you may register and pay via PayPal at our website <http://www.fnew.org>.

Norwalk Chamber schedules event

NORWALK — The Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce will hold a networking breakfast at the Norwalk Fire Department at 121 Connecticut Ave. from 7:45 to 9 a.m. on Friday, March 7. The cost is \$15 for members and \$25 for nonmembers.

To register or for more information, call (203) 866-2521.

Cold weather heats up sales for some

By **JOSEPH PISANI**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The harsh winter has been rough for some businesses, but for a lucky few, the frigid weather means more cold, hard cash.

Ace Hardware is having its best winter in more than a decade for snow blower and shovel sales. Waterproof boots are on a long backorder at clothing maker L.L. Bean. And more people are staying home and ordering gooey grilled cheese sandwiches and booze from Delivery.com.

“The concept of a polar vortex doesn’t feel good, but it’s good for business,” said Kane Calamari, a vice president at Ace Hardware Corp.

Much of the country has been in a deep freeze. Only 32 winters have been colder in the last 119 years, according to Jake Crouch, a climate scientist at the National Climatic Data Center, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration.

With more Americans stuck indoors, customers are ordering up more meals and arranging to have their laundry picked through Delivery.com’s website and smartphone app. Sales at the company, which operates in major metro areas such as New York, Chicago and Washington D.C., rose 30 percent in January and February compared with the year before. Orders for soups, wine and vodka have spiked.



Coleen Riley purchases a snow shovel at Ace Hardware, in West Lafayette, Ind.

AP photo

People are “trying to stay warm,” said Neeraj Sharma, the site’s vice president of marketing. “They’re hibernating.”

But sooner or later, they have to dig out. Sales of shovels and snow blowers have doubled at Oak Brook, Ill.-based Ace Hardware. The company is also shipping salt and other ice melters to southern regions such as Atlanta, which rarely have to deal with severe weather. Total sales are up 20 percent so far this year compared with a year ago.

The bad weather hasn’t been so kind to other companies. Businesses that rely on customers to come to them have been hit hard. Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Macy’s Inc. said their sales were hurt because of store closures. At one time during January, about 30 percent of Macy’s total stores were closed. Whole Foods Market Inc. said shoppers are making

fewer trips to its grocery stores.

When people do venture out into the cold, they stock up on products that protect against frigid temperatures. Carmex, known for its yellow jars of lip balm, said sales are up 9 percent over the past eight to 10 weeks from the same period a year ago. Pawz Dog Boots, which makes colorful rubber booties that safeguard paws from salt and snow, said its sales in North America have more than doubled.

L.L. Bean can’t make its rubber and leather boots fast enough. The boots, known as Bean Boots, are made by hand in Freeport, Maine. The company hired 40 new workers, but it will take them at least six months to be fully trained.

“We’re making them as fast as we can,” said L.L. Bean spokeswoman Carolyn Beem. “You can’t just increase production overnight.”

Ridgewood, N.J.-based Xtreme Snow Pros, which provides businesses with snow-removal services including plowing, de-icing, and hauling, has enjoyed its best winter sales since the business started six years ago. Business is up 15 to 20 percent compared with last year, said Manager Matt Malyar.

“For a company like us, it’s been an awesome year,” Malyar said. “But it’s also great for the workers,” who have logged nearly three times as many hours as they did two years ago, when the winter was mild.

When snow falls in Philadelphia, more smashed cars pile into Nigro’s Auto Body Repair. Icy roads, gaping potholes and the city’s second-largest snowfall in more than 70 years have helped the auto shop’s business triple from a year ago. “One guy was parked and a snowplow ripped his car apart,” owner Domenic Nigro said.

Vehicles need so much work that the average bill has jumped to \$7,500 this year, up from last year’s average of \$4,000. There are currently 30 cars in Nigro’s garage and 20 more on a waiting list. “We try not to turn people away,” he said.

A simple errand in the snow can turn costly. Chicagoan LeShele Silas-Armour had to unexpectedly spend \$500 to fix damage to her car after driving through an unplowed street. To avoid rough roads, she no longer makes the 20-minute drive

to cheaper supermarkets in Indiana and sticks to shops that are closer to her.

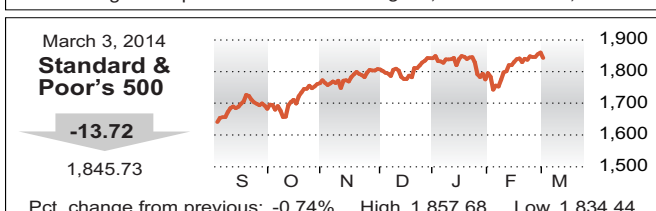
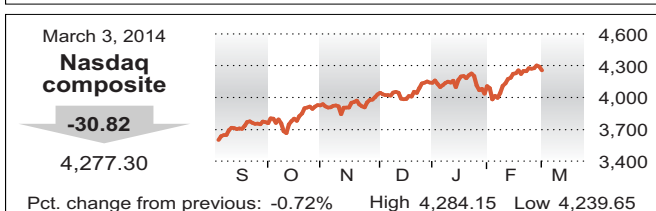
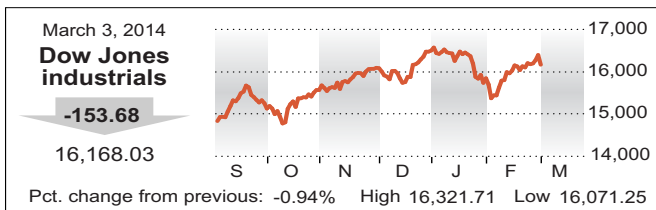
Weekly dinners out with her husband and two young children stopped about a month and a half ago. “We stay home and do arts and crafts or watch a movie on Netflix,” said Silas-Armour, who oversees government grants at a nonprofit organization.

“After you get home and bundled up, you don’t want to go back out there.” Other Chicagoans are ready to flee. Online travel company Orbitz.com said Chicago residents, who experienced the third-coldest winter since 1872, booked more trips to the Caribbean and Arizona in January and February. Jet-setter.com, whose customers are mostly on the East Coast, said bookings for the Caribbean, Mexico, Florida, California and Hawaii are up 38 percent from the previous winter.

Others have found cheaper ways to defrost. For \$32.95 a ticket, guests at Sahara Sam’s Oasis can lie in an inner tube and float by plastic coconut trees in the indoor water park’s lazy river. The temperature inside the West Berlin, N.J., theme park is always set to a balmy 84 degrees during the cold months.

“The people over here, they’re just over it,” said Chris Peters, the park’s marketing director. “It’s beyond cabin fever.” The extra business has given the company its busiest winter since it opened five years ago.

A DAY ON WALL STREET



STOCKS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Company	Sector	Yesterday's			Div.	Yield	52-week	
		High	Low	Close			Chng	PE
AT&T Inc	N	31.98	31.76	31.86	-.07	1.84f	5.8	10 39.00 31.74
Aetna	N	72.62	71.60	72.26	-.45	.90	1.2	14 73.86 46.86
AsburyA	N	51.17	50.06	50.78	-.06			14 55.82 32.66
AvisBudg	O	46.96	45.84	46.84	-.17			47 48.75 23.41
BoltTech	O	20.21	19.70	19.82	-.20	.36a	1.8	20 22.76 14.69
CblvsnNY	N	17.87	17.28	17.64	+.04	.60	3.4	10 20.16 13.62
CampSp	N	43.34	42.85	43.03	-.28	1.25	2.9	26 48.83 38.30
Corning	N	19.15	18.84	19.04	-.23	.40	2.1	14 19.44 12.29
Crane	N	71.65	70.34	71.42	...	1.20	1.7	18 71.77 51.71
Diageo	N	123.95	122.80	123.32	-2.39	3.09e	2.5	134.08 111.87
DowChm	N	48.77	47.93	48.44	-.27	1.48f	3.1	13 49.23 29.81
EMCOR	N	46.56	45.74	45.89	-.89	.32f	.7	25 47.10 35.58
FactsetR	N	104.99	102.96	104.18	-1.11	1.40	1.3	23 119.08 88.67
FstBcpPPR	N	5.19	5.02	5.07	-.14			dd 8.70 4.36
FrontierCm	O	4.90	4.82	4.90	+.02	.40	8.2	41 5.15 3.71
Gartner	N	69.84	68.28	69.50	-.06			36 71.49 49.53
GenElec	N	25.21	24.92	25.12	-.35	.88	3.5	17 28.09 21.11
InteractB	O	22.27	21.68	21.77	-.47	.40	1.8	29 25.03 13.72
IrtPap	N	48.17	47.44	47.78	-1.11	1.40	2.9	15 50.33 42.36
MarshM	N	47.95	47.02	47.67	-.49	1.00	2.1	20 48.83 36.40
MStewrt	N	5.33	5.10	5.12	-.14			dd 5.50 2.20
MeadWvco	N	37.75	36.92	37.37	-.06	1.00a	2.7	8 39.38 33.38
NoestUt	N	44.51	43.84	43.95	-.50	1.57f	3.6	18 45.66 39.35
NorthropG	N	121.79	119.69	121.02	-.01	2.44	2.0	14 123.30 64.20
Olin	N	26.40	26.00	26.22	+.03	.80	3.1	12 29.52 21.79
PerkElm	N	45.16	44.45	44.78	-.54	.28	.6	31 45.86 29.50
PitnyBw	N	25.69	25.09	25.67	+.22	.75	2.9	37 26.00 12.98
Praxair	N	130.71	129.11	130.29	-.08	2.60f	2.0	22 134.23 107.69
priceline	O	1342.03	1321.00	1338.24	-10.60			37 1375.41 677.72
StarGas	N	5.65	5.60	5.60	-.05	.33	5.9	10 5.94 4.32
SturmRug	N	63.87	62.63	63.60	-.14	2.26e	3.6	11 85.93 44.76
Terex	N	44.40	43.25	44.05	-.48	.20	.5	23 44.64 25.60
ThomsonR	N	34.23	33.74	33.96	-.38	1.32f	3.9	100 38.73 30.26
UBS AG	N	20.72	20.39	20.46	-.90	.16e	.8	21.61 15.08
UtDhthGp	N	77.46	76.53	77.10	-.17	1.12	1.5	14 77.71 53.13
VerizonCm	N	47.68	46.82	47.31	-.27	2.12	4.5	12 54.31 45.08
WldWEnt	N	23.39	22.60	23.20	+.28	.48	2.1	97 24.96 8.37
Xerox	N	10.98	10.76	10.87	-.12	.25f	2.3	12 12.65 8.01

EXCHANGE KEY: N=New York, O=Nasdaq, A=American

A bite out of your money

By **JOSEPH MATTHEWS**

Every year, the Discovery Channel broadcasts Shark Week, a seven-day series of featured programs about sharks. First aired in 1987, Shark Week was originally created to raise awareness of and respect for sharks; it is now the longest-running cable television programming event in history. It is broadcast in 72 countries and fills social media streams for months afterward.

America’s obsession with the giant fish exploded after the publication of Peter Benchley’s blockbuster novel, Jaws, and Steven Spielberg’s 1975 film that followed. In the story, a man-eating great white shark attacks beachgoers on Amity Island, a fictional summer resort town, prompting the local police chief to hunt it down before it can chew up any more tourists.

Like Martin Brody, the police chief in Jaws, investors are equally anxious to protect their assets from shark-like forces. As a financial advisor — and a fisherman who has caught sharks in the past — I can truly attest, no one wants to see a bite taken out of his or her money! There are a number of cautionary steps investors can take to ensure the health and well-being of their estates:

Don’t wait too long to invest. Being ultra-conservative and leaving your money in a savings account can be costly, as inflation can take a hefty bite out of your buying power. After last year’s stock market record highs, this may be the year to jump into the markets if you haven’t done so already. Morgan Stanley’s outlook for the U.S. economy in 2014 and 2015 is for more sustained expansion. A re-

cession in 2014 is unlikely and that makes the environment a good one for stocks.

A recent Morgan Stanley poll of investors surprisingly showed that 23 percent of Tri-State investors favored cash for allocation of their assets in 2014, despite the near-zero return on such investments. The poll also showed that technology, energy, biotech and pharmaceutical sectors are among equity investors’ favorites — worthy of consideration by those seemingly married to cash.

Pay off debt. Interest payments will eat into your money faster than a shark on a tuna. The best investment is to pay off high-interest credit cards, loans and similar debts. It is unlikely that any investment or savings account would yield the interest being charged on your credit card debt.

Don’t ignore foreign companies for your portfolio. There is a growing interest in emerging markets as many manufacturers are expanding in these regions. In fact, the recent poll showed that investors apparently agree that India, China and Brazil are among the favored countries for investor dollars.

These are markets some analysts see as offering national growth rates potentially greater than those of developed regions and countries such as Europe and Japan.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Proposed investments that offer freakishly high returns are likely freakishly risky. As the current movie “The Wolf of Wall Street” highlights, investing in penny stocks can easily cause you to lose your dollars.

Remember to fund your re-

irement accounts. Whether it is a 401(k), IRA, or other vehicle, putting money into these accounts is likely to save you near-term tax dollars while helping secure your old-age comfort too. Interestingly, 83 percent of the high-net-worth investors surveyed in the New York Metro area said they were confident they would achieve their long-term financial goals, with 77 percent of those not yet retired saying they were confident they were on track with their planning.

Watch your spending. Small tweaks to your high cost of living can substantially reduce your expenditures in ways that won’t necessarily alter your lifestyle. Bundling your television service and your phone service may not sound like a financial windfall, but why not add the extra few dollars into your pockets? Alternative electricity suppliers, as well, often can save additional money.

Unless you are in Shark Tank (another hit reality show in which the “sharks,” or business tycoons, entertain pitches by aspiring entrepreneurs, critique their business models and consider the investment potential of their products and services), there is much you can do to prevent sharks from biting you in the assets.

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Global stocks slide on Ukraine tensions

NEW YORK (AP) — Rising tensions over Russia’s military advance into Ukraine pushed stock markets around the world sharply lower on Monday.

The Standard & Poor’s 500 index dropped the most in a month, following stock markets in Europe and Asia lower, as Russia’s military tightened its grip on the Crimea region. Investors sold stocks and bought less risky assets such as Treasuries and gold.

The price of crude oil also rose on concern that Russian oil exports could be disrupted if Western countries impose sanctions on Moscow.

It’s the second time this year the U.S. stock market has been roiled by developments in emerging markets. Stocks slipped in January as investors worried about slowing growth in China and other emerging economies. Now a showdown in Ukraine has

grabbed investors’ attention and stoked fears of a tit-for-tat campaign of economic sanctions between Russia and Western powers.

The S&P 500 index fell 13.72 points, or 0.7 percent, to 1,845.73, the biggest drop since Feb. 3.

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 153.68 points, or 0.9 percent, to 16,168.03. The Nasdaq composite fell 30.82 points to 4,277.30.