

Study: Dogs can read people's emotions

By Jane J. Lee, National Geographic

Science is still undecided on the matter, although evidence in favor of the idea is stacking up.

Now, a new study has found that dogs are able to tell the difference between happy and angry human facial expressions.

Biologist Corsin Müller of the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, Austria, and colleagues tested 11 dogs – including border collies, a fox terrier, a golden retriever, a German shepherd, and some mutts – using a touchscreen. The scientists trained the dogs to touch either a happy face or an angry face for a treat.

They presented dogs with either the top half or the bottom half of the faces to ensure the animals weren't just responding to a smile or the baring of teeth. Emotions show on all parts of a human face, not just the mouth, says Müller, whose study was published Feb. 12 in the journal *Current Biology*.

[Read the whole story](#)

Carson City woman cut from 'American Idol'

By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal

Molly Seals' attempt to be the next American Idol ended Wednesday, but not her love of singing.

The 22-year-old Carson City cosmetologist was cut from the "American Idol" competition on Wednesday's program, during the group singing auditions, but she already has several singing performances scheduled.

"It's been such great experience," Seals said of her time on the Fox network program. "I can't find anything negative about it.

"I didn't feel it was unfair," she said of the judges decision to send her home from the competition. "It felt like, 'it is what it is.' It was a great experience, but most people there have so much (singing) experience. I do not have that."

Read the whole story

Gaming industry to launch outreach initiative for presidential campaign

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The American Gaming Association will launch a national initiative in conjunction with the 2016 presidential campaign aimed at showing the industry's economic benefits to candidates for the nation's highest office.

The effort, dubbed "Gaming Votes," is twofold – to educate casino industry employees, vendors and other stakeholders on candidate positions on gaming, and to ensure candidates

understand the industry's economic contributions.

The organization wants to make gaming issues a topic for discussion during the campaign and change "false" perceptions about the casino industry.

During a presentation on the effort in Las Vegas on Thursday, the association cited a new Oxford Economics report on the broad base of jobs gaming companies provide and diversity in the industry's workforce.

Read the whole story

Raley's extinguishing tobacco sales

By KXTV

You won't find cigarettes and tobacco chew on the store shelves of Raley's, Bel Air and Nob Hill Foods by the end of February, according to Raley's.

The West Sacramento-based grocery store chain has made the decision to cease sales of tobacco products to promote health and wellness.

According to Raley's public affairs director Chelsea Minor, the company has already stopped ordering tobacco products.

In a statement, Raley's said, "the evidence against tobacco usage is simply too strong to ignore. Raley's decision to remove tobacco products is our next big step in ongoing efforts to provide healthier options and to raise awareness about health and wellness."

Last year, CVS drugstores stopped selling tobacco products and renamed itself CVS Health. Other big retailers, such as Walmart and Walgreens, said they have no plans at the time to halt tobacco product sales.

Read the whole story

Smoking more dangerous than previously thought

By Denise Grady, New York Times

However bad you thought smoking was, it's even worse.

A new study adds at least five diseases and 60,000 deaths a year to the toll taken by tobacco in the United States. Before the study, smoking was already blamed for nearly half a million deaths a year in this country from 21 diseases, including 12 types of cancer.

The new findings are based on health data from nearly a million people who were followed for 10 years. In addition to the well-known hazards of lung cancer, artery disease, heart attacks, chronic lung disease and stroke, the researchers found that smoking was linked to significantly increased risks of infection, kidney disease, intestinal disease caused by inadequate blood flow, and heart and lung ailments not previously attributed to tobacco.

Even though people are already barraged with messages about the dangers of smoking, researchers say it is important to let the public know that there is yet more bad news.

"The smoking epidemic is still ongoing, and there is a need to

evaluate how smoking is hurting us as a society, to support clinicians and policy making in public health,” said Brian D. Carter, an epidemiologist at the American Cancer Society and the first author of an article about the study, which appears in the New England Journal of Medicine. “It’s not a done story.”

Read the whole story

Then and now: Highway 50 in S. Lake Tahoe



Highway 50 at Upper Truckee in the mid-1960s.

Photo/South Lake Tahoe

Highway 50 in the Tahoe Valley area in the early 1960s had overhead wires and billboards, like the distant Bank of America billboard seen halfway up the right margin.

There was a second billboard to the right of that one, out of view here. The gap between the bridge and those billboards was a large vacant lot which now is the site of Motel 6 and restaurant.

Across the street, built on landfill, was the ever-popular Outdoorsman, now the Grocery Outlet. The bridge was replaced and the roadway widened in the 1990s.



Foliage is more over grown today along the highway.
Photo/Bill Kingman

– Bill Kingman

Northstar redefines ski lodge

dining



It takes a culinary team to serve up to 80 people at once at the Mountain Table Dinners at the top of Northstar. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Long wooden tables elegantly adorned with place settings, each with four wine glasses, three forks and three knives. This was no ordinary dinner at a ski lodge.

Foie gras is coming out of the kitchen, bubbly is being poured. Helena Kletch and JT Chevalier are providing background music. There is no fried food, no hot cocoa, no loud screaming children. Nor are there ski boots or ski attire of any kind.

Zephyr Lodge at the top of Northstar turns into a fine-dining restaurant twice a month in what is being billed as Mountain Table Dinners. The five-course meals are created to complement

that evening's winemaker. On this particular night Frank Family Vineyards of Calistoga is featured.



Plenty of reasons to toast – to good food, good wine, good friends. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

Groups of friends fill up the two long tables. Some are from Tahoe, others from Sacramento, the Bay Area and farther away. It's a festive atmosphere, especially as more wine is consumed. As the musicians played John Denver's "Country Roads" nearly everyone started to sing the words, though not necessarily in perfect harmony.

Executive Chef Steve Anderson is a proponent of using locally sourced food as much as possible. For the pluot demi that went with the bison tenderloin he thawed a stone fruit puree that he had frozen in the summer.

Tahoe Food Hub, the nonprofit beneficiary of the night, is a main source for his fresh vegetables.



The Zephyr Lodge becomes a fine dining restaurant. Photo
Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

Anderson and Chef Chad Shrewsbury are discussing how best to plate one of the dishes as servers are at the ready.

“We have completely different styles, but the same palates,” Anderson tells *Lake Tahoe News* of the three chefs responsible for the meal. Dan Carter is the third. “We argue back and forth.”

It’s hard to know who won, but every dish coming out of the kitchen is exquisite.

But the meal was a bit of a dichotomy by wanting to use locally sourced products while serving controversial items like foie gras – duck liver was just allowed to return to California menus; Chilean sea bass – which has environmental concerns; veal cheek – an unusual cut of an animal more people are eating less of; and bison – which is more common in the Midwest, than California.



The winery says the Chardonnay has a creme brulee finish. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

Despite what seemed to be a conflict between philosophy and what was practiced last month, dinner guests (80 is the maximum) left little if anything on their plates. And the portions were more than ample.

The sea bass was Ann Kramer's favorite morsel of the night, but the Sacramento woman was also pleasantly surprised by the veal cheek – something she had not had before.

Bob Keller of Zephyr Cove was also impressed with the sea bass and veal. "It's fabulous. It's hard to cook fish. This is cooked perfectly," Keller said.

And the veal – "It's the best I've ever had," Keller said. "It's a fabulous dish with a lot of different flavors."

The veal cheek was served with sweet potato gnocchi, Humboldt Fog brulee and a bing cherry glaze. It was paired with a 2013 Pinot Noir, which was one of the favorite wines of the evening. It's one of those wines that can stand on its own

without food, but when paired with food has a more complex flavor and enhances the dish.

Carolyn Wright had the highest praise for the bison.

"I love game of any type. It was tough to cut, but not tough to chew. The flavors are great," the Zephyr Cove woman said.

The 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon was paired with the bison, which Wright thought was very good, and someone else found to be young.

Everyone was complimentary of the food arriving at the tables at the same time, all hot and all plated as though it came out of a high-end kitchen. But there were no refills on any of the wines.



It takes two gondola rides to get to the restaurant.
Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

The most disconcerting part of the evening was getting to and from the venue. It required taking the gondola from the village to mid-mountain, then walking to the Zephyr lift. That

lift has a few gondola cars interspersed with the regular chairs. This meant waiting in the cold for enclosed seating – which people were warned might happen. And while skiing from the top of the lift to Zephyr Lodge is no big deal, that distance suddenly seems like a ways when walking on slick, icy snow, with the wind blowing and the temperature at or below freezing. The snowmaking gun blowing on us on the way back was not pleasant.

It would seem like Northstar being a Vail Resorts property could look east for better ways to transport dining guests. At Vail, to get to Game Creek for dinner one takes the gondola out of Lionshead and from there a tricked out snowcat takes people on a 6-minute ride to the restaurant. And at Beaver Creek's Beano's Cabin, diners are hauled up at dusk in a sleigh pulled by a snowcat. But this is Northstar's inaugural season to have these dinners and the other locales are seasoned venues.

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Notes:

- The remaining dinners are Feb. 27 featuring Ferrari-Carano Vineyards & Winery (\$120), March 13 is 50/50 Brewing Co. (\$85) and March 27 is with Frog's Leap Winery (\$120).
- Must be 21 to attend.
- Vegetarian options available.
- For more info, go online.

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Editorial: Freedom of Information Act upgrade a good start

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Feb. 10, 2015, Los Angeles Times.*

The Freedom of Information Act, first enacted in 1966, allows the public to see how their government functions – and fails to function – by providing access to official records. In fiscal year 2013, government agencies released some or all of the information sought in 440,997 requests.

But too often, information that should be released isn't because agencies invoke one of nine exemptions spelled out in the law, ranging from protections for personal privacy to considerations of national security.

Critics have focused especially on the overuse of an exemption for "inter-agency or intra-agency" documents that has come to be known as the "withhold it because you want to" exemption. For example, the CIA invoked that exemption to deny a request for release of a 30-year-old internal history of the 1961 Bay of Pigs operation in Cuba.

Read the whole story

PG&E outage affects Sierra-

at-Tahoe, Meyers

Updated Feb. 15 11:45am:

Sierra was able to operate on generators when the power failure occurred and never had to stop operations. Power was back on by 5am Sunday.

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An underground failure has knocked out power to residents and businesses in the Echo Summit area, including the upper lifts of Sierra-at-Tahoe.

The outage started about 3:10pm Feb. 14. Power is expected to be restored by 8am Feb. 15. Initially 49 customers were without power, as of 9:30pm seven were in the dark.

No one from the ski resort was available for comment. It is not known if the outage affected the resort on Saturday.

JD Guidi with PG&E told *Lake Tahoe News*, "We will be working the Echo summit ski resort area behind the lodge (to fix the problem)."

For about 30 minutes Liberty Utilities customers in Meyers were also without power on Saturday night. This is because Liberty supplies PG&E with power to Echo Summit area as well as a ways down Highway 50.

"They have a reclosure that should have isolated us from that," Randy Kelly with Liberty told *Lake Tahoe News*. This means PG&E outages are not supposed to affect Liberty customers.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Prescribed fires slated for Lake Tahoe Basin

The U.S. Forest Service may continue prescribed fire operations in numerous areas around the Lake Tahoe Basin beginning Feb. 17.

On the South and West shores of Lake Tahoe, operations may take place north of Tahoma near Elizabeth Drive, southwest of Meeks Bay, on Gardner Mountain near South Tahoe High School and Gardner Street, Christmas Valley, Luther Pass near Grass Lake, and Ski Run Boulevard near Heavenly. On the East Shore, operations may take place near Logan Creek Drive and off Highway 28 north of Spooner Summit. Operations will last through the next several weeks as conditions allow.

Fall and winter bring cooler temperatures and precipitation, which favor prescribed burning. Each operation follows a prescribed fire burn plan, which considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke.

Before conducting prescribed fire operations, agencies may post road signs around affected areas and make email or phone notifications. The Forest Service updates the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6.