Learning is an ’emotionally charged experience’

By Annie Murphy Paul, KQED

When parents and teachers consider how children learn, it’s usually the intellectual aspects of the activity they have in mind. Sidney D’Mello would like to change that. The University of Notre Dame psychologist has been studying the role of feelings in learning for close to a decade, and he has concluded that complex learning is almost inevitably “an emotionally charged experience,” as he wrote in a paper published in the journal Learning and Instruction earlier this year.

During the learning experiments described in his paper, he notes, the participating students reported being in a neutral state only about a quarter of the time. The rest of the time, they were were experiencing lots of feelings: surprise, delight, engagement, confusion, boredom, frustration.

Another counter-intuitive contention made by D’Mello is that even negative emotions can play a productive role in learning. In this latest study, he and his coauthor Art Graesser examined the effects of confusion. They asked their subjects to interact with a computer program featuring animated agents discussing scientific case studies. The characters sometimes disagreed with each other, and sometimes conveyed information that was contradictory or just wrong. The students were then required to decide which agent’s opinion was correct. Subjects who reported feeling confused by the exercise actually scored higher on a test following the computer interaction, and when presented with new case studies, they were better able to spot the studies’ logical flaws.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Neighborhood Service Are Team #5 for Rancho Bijou and Bijou Acres is holding a meeting at 6pm on July 11 at Parks & Recreation, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.

• The Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival is still looking for volunteers for its upcoming season starting July 13. For more information, contact volunteer coordinator Ali Beltramo at ali@tahoebard.com or go online to sign up.

• Reggae/ska band Keyser Soze will be playing at the Lakeview Commons on July 12 at 4:30pm as part of an ongoing music series.

When the itinerary includes staying at strangers' houses

By Laura Bly, USA Today

It's billed as a "cozy and exceptional pool cabana" with a queen bed, "amazing 5-headed shower" and a "genuinely special location where connections deepen, hearts open and peace is found."

I've booked this yoga center retreat via Airbnb.com, a 4-year-

old, rapidly expanding vacation-rental service that lets socially minded travelers stay in strangers' beds – or entire homes.

The professionally staged photos? Gorgeous. The four (first-name only) reviews? Glowing. And the rate of $150 per night, not much more than what we would have paid for a room at the Motel 6 in this tony resort town? A certifiable bargain – at least until I factor in the additional $75 cleaning charge, strict cancellation policy and 12% booking fee to Airbnb.

Within minutes of our arrival at the one-acre, Spanish-style compound in a residential neighborhod about a 15-minute drive from downtown Santa Barbara, my husband and I are quaffing complimentary poolside gin and tonics with owners Jenn Houser, 42, an international business consultant, and Martin Clarke, 50, a veteran commercial airline pilot.

Granted, our cabana bed lacks a box spring, the lightbulb on a bedside table has burned out, and there's no closet or hooks for our clothes. And yes, it gives me pause when Clarke confides that the absent Airbnb host with whom I'd exchanged e-mails is actually their long-term renter – and that he, Houser and their disarmingly energetic Tibetan terrier, Tenzing, had flown in from Montana to make sure we were on the up-and-up.

Read the whole story

Tired of zucchini? Try the

flower

By Melissa Clark, New York Times

People are usually sick of zucchini before summer even reaches its sticky height.



Not so the gorgeous, ethereal zucchini blossoms.

Up until a few years ago, unless you grew them yourself, you would rarely come across those golden flowers, which are far too fragile for most supermarkets to handle. These days you can find them at farmers' markets, though they are not nearly as prevalent as the taut green and yellow fruit.

Whenever I see zucchini flowers, I buy them. They're just too pretty to pass up.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority is holding a board meeting July 11 at 4:30pm in the LTVA Executive Conference Room, 168 Highway 50, Stateline.

• The meeting of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority board will be July 12 at 3pm in the LTVA Executive Conference Room, 168 Highway 50, Stateline.



• County music singer Mark Chestnut is performing July 22 at 8pm at the Carson Valley Inn. Tickets are $25 and available at the hotel's front desk or by calling (775) 783.6606.

•The Zawadisha Fund is hosting a one-day workshop featuring author and CEO of the Institute for Women's Leadership, Rayona Sharpnack, who will speak on leadership development for women. The workshop will be held from 8:30am to 5pm on Aug. 24 at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach. Register online. The $195 registration fee includes lunch and a signed copy of Rayona's book, "Trade Up." All proceeds benefit the Zawadisha Fund.

El Dorado County animal group sues banks over foreclosure

The Grace Foundation, an El Dorado Hills animal rescue organization, said it has filed a lawsuit against Wells Fargo Bank and Bank of America for $20 million over the group's foreclosure.

The group says it is near bankruptcy as the costs of caring for 48 abused horses it received has reached $800,000 and continues to cost $50,000 a month.

"This is a nightmare we cannot wake up from," said Beth DeCaprio, executive director and founder of The Grace Foundation, in a statement. "The banks turned over ownership of the horses when they had no legal right to do so, the fact that they did this to simply to rid themselves of the

liability is a crushing blow. The banks played the game ‘hot potato’ with our organization and with the lives of these horses; we have the horses and all the financial responsibility. There is no one that will take over the responsibility of these horses. We have no money to continue to care for them without help and yet if we stopped we would go to jail.”

The foundation said the banks have offered a settlement that is less than half of what the foundation has already spent.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Squaw Valley hosts music, wine and art festival

The Art, Wine and Music Festival returns to The Village at Squaw Valley on July 14-15 from 11am to 5pm. The event partner is Sierra Nevada Classical Guitar Society and features fine wine, artwork from 30 artists and classical and world guitar music.

The festival features concerts on each day, including the Celso Machado and Friends, Thakur Chakrapani Singh, Rene Izquierdo, Connie Sheu, Giacomo Fiore, March Teicholz, Samantha Wells and Larry Aynesmith.

Wine samples from 18 wineries, including Zaca Mesa Winery, Lola Kay Wines, Domun Estate, Masut, Hatcher and Yorba will be offered each day from 2-5pm.

The event is free. Wine tasting is $25 each day and includes a

commemorative festival wine glass. All proceeds benefit Disabled Sports USA Far West.

Opinion: Political ads go on the attack in swing states

By Doyle McManus, Los Angeles Times

In this pivotal election year, fellow citizens, I give you a chilling vision of two Americas.

One America is the swing states, the dozen or so states that don’t fall into the Democratic or Republican camps and will ultimately decide the presidential election. Those unhappy states – they know who they are – are already being flooded with noisy political advertising, day and night.

The other America, the happier America, is what political strategists call “safe states.” In these lucky places, television viewers are mostly safe from being inundated with presidential political harangues.

Election day is almost four months away, but the bombardment has begun in key swing cities such as Columbus, Ohio, and Orlando, Fla., where television stations are already running short of advertising time to sell. One media consulting firm, Borrell Associates, forecasts that political advertising this year will approach $10 billion nationwide, a huge increase from the roughly $7 billion spent in 2008.

Read the whole story

Nevada AG encourages homeowners file for free foreclosure review

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – The deadline for a free, federal independent foreclosure review for Nevadans whose homes were in foreclosure in 2009 or 2010 has been extended to Sept. 30, 2012, Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto said today.

The previous deadline was July 31.

Ordered by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, the independent foreclosure review will determine whether individuals suffered financial injury and should receive compensation or other remedy because of errors or other problems which occurred during the foreclosure process.

“Do not wait until the extended Sept. 30 deadline to submit your application for a free and independent foreclosure review,” Masto said.

According to the OCC’s recent report, as of May 31, 108,687 Nevadans who are eligible for the review received a mailing and 4,267 Nevadans submitted requests for review.

Information about Independent Foreclosure Review may appear in this format in advertisements and postcard notices that eligible borrowers recently received by mail.

More information, including edibility and online applications is available online or at 888-952-9105 (between 8 am and 10 pm

(Eastern), Monday through Friday, and between 8 am and 5 pm Saturday). All requests for Review Forms must be submitted online or postmarked no later than September 30, 2012. Not every finding will result in compensation or other remedy.

In first announcing the program on May 31, Masto said: “I encourage Nevadans hurt by foreclosure errors and who are eligible, to apply for a free review before the July 31 (now Sept. 30) deadline. In doing so, beware of anyone who asks you to pay a fee for any foreclosure review service and immediately report those persons or companies to my office.”

To be eligible, the foreclosure process must have been active between Jan. 1, 2009 and Dec. 31, 2010. The property securing the loan must have been a primary residence, and the mortgage must have been serviced by: America’s Servicing Co., Aurora Loan Services, BAC Home Loans Servicing, Bank of America, Beneficial, Chase, Citibank, CitiFinancial, CitiMortgage, Countrywide, EMC, EverBank/EverHome Mortgage Company, Financial Freedom, GMAC Mortgage, HFC, HSBC, IndyMac Mortgage Services, MetLife Bank, National City Mortgage, PNC Mortgage, Sovereign Bank, SunTrust Mortgage, U.S. Bank, Wachovia, Washington Mutual, Wells Fargo, or Wilshire Credit Corporation.

More than 4.3 million forms and letters explaining the process were sent to eligible homeowners in 2011. Nevada residents who received a letter should be aware it is a legitimate program.

Anyone who wants to report an independent foreclosure review scam can contact the Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection Hotline at 702-486-3132 or go .

An overlooked alpine lake nestled in the Sierra

By Jill Oberly, Reno Gazette-Journal

There could have been ski lifts carved out of the mountainside, and crisscrossing trails leading the way down to a European-style village nestled on the edge of a clear blue mountain lake.

A picture of ski resort perfection.

Instead, reality is a different kind of perfection. Crisp, cold water laps against a rocky shore. And on a recent weekend hike, there is not a soul in sight.

Only 10 miles from Truckee, Calif., Independence Lake feels as if it is worlds away. The alpine lake has remained relatively untouched and unknown.

A partnership between NV Energy and The Nature Conservancy was formed to make sure it stays that way.

“When you see if from the air, it is hard to believe that it is only 10 miles from Truckee and Interstate 80. It is so close but relatively unknown,” said Jeff Ceccarelli, senior vice president of energy supply at NV Energy.

Read the whole story