

Free cycling event in Carson City

The 5th annual Tour of Carson City Bike Ride & BBQ is May 6 starting at 9:30am.

The route tours around the perimeter of Carson City for a moderately paced 27 to 30 mile bike ride.

Lunch will be provided and all are welcome.

This is a free event. Donations are being accepted to support Muscle Powered of Carson City, which promotes a more bike friendly community.

Call (775) 267.5053 for information.

Dinner benefits Truckee Donner Land Trust

The Truckee Donner Land Trust benefit dinner at the River Ranch is June 7.

The restaurant will donate 30 percent of of the evening's proceeds to the land trust. Reservations (530.583.4264) must be made at least a day in advance, and diners must say they are dining for the Truckee Donner Land Trust.

The event is from 6-9pm. River Ranch is on the corner of Highway 89 and Alpine Meadows Road.

'11 vintage has winemakers apprehensive; '10 looks OK

By Kathryn Reed

SOMERSET – Take a bottle of Zinfandel from any two years and they won't taste the same. In large part that is because the weather wasn't the same those two years.

While winemakers can work some magic with fermentation and blending, Mother Nature plays a huge role in what comes out of the bottle. But there is usually a consistency in flavors from an individual winery. The exception plays out with extreme weather. The 2011 vintage may just be that exception. The answer will be known down the road.

With the last two years being wetter and cooler than normal, many wineries in El Dorado County are certain the flavors will be less fruit-forward than years past. And the number of bottles will likely be less for 2011 because some of the grapes could not be harvested.



Wineries are hoping the 2012 harvest is better than a year ago. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The area received 60 to 70 inches of rain the previous two winters. About 26 inches have fallen this winter. Pam Miller with Single Leaf Winery said 30 inches is what the vines like to have.

"We lost an enormous amount of crop last year," Miller told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Zinfandel, which by the ton is the No. 2 grape in El Dorado County behind Cabernet, has a thin skin. Bunch rot can set in quickly. Then the season is over.

"I'm very reluctant to speak of 2011. Some is OK, some will take a lot more cellar work," Single Leaf winemaker Scott Miller said.



Scott Miller, right, of

Single Leaf talks about his wines with Pam Valentine and Tom Ward.

However, both Millers are excited with how the 2010s are coming out. Some started to be bottled a couple weeks ago. The Zins won't be released for three years, but the Barbera will be out late summer.

"Our '10s are just spectacular," Pam Miller said.

Elliot Graham at Busby Cellars told *Lake Tahoe News* the 2010 and 2011 vintages are not going to have big fruity flavors.

"2010 and '11 are different than any (before) because it never got warm," Graham said. "So, it will be a different style."

He is starting to bottle some of the 2010 vintage.

At Skinner winery the 2010 Mourvedre was being poured during the first weekend of Passport – the annual two-weekend wine tasting put on by El Dorado Winery Association. Only 800 acres of this varietal are planted in California, with 3 acres belonging to Skinner.



Elliot Graham of Busby is cautiously

optimistic about
2010 and 2011.

"We are excited by the '10 whites," Chris Pittenger, Skinner winemaker, said. "They are pretty elegant wines."

He's in the process of doing blending trials with the reds.

Pittenger isn't sure how the 2011 vintage will fare, but said with the similarity of weather to 2010, it might be better than people anticipate.

John Latcham, winemaker at Latcham Winery, is optimistic what ends up in the bottle from 2011 will be good, but he shakes his head thinking about what it took to make it through the harvest.

"Last year was a devastating year to the wine industry. We were picking between raindrops," Latcham said. "We literally handpicked every bunch."

That takes time and is an expensive process.

His crew was out there regularly putting down a mildew spray. But the rains came and just washed it away. It became a daily application.

The most upbeat winemaker was Rich Rorden at Cantiga.

"I've never witnessed a bad year, just differences," Rorden said. "If all the wines tasted the same, we would be Gallo. The weather always plays a role, but the grapes always ripen."

Facts from El Dorado County's 2010 harvest (the most current year available):

- \$4.9 million, the total value of grapes based on average open market prices
- 2,200 acres of wine grapes (this is twice the acreage of 12

years ago)

- \$1,279, average price per ton of wine grapes. This was a slight increase compared to 2009.
- 4,700 tons, amount of wine grapes grown.

—

Info:

Tickets are still available for Passport by going online. They are \$70, which includes the whole weekend – April 21-22. Thirty-two wineries are participating. The event is 11am-5pm each day.

California cutting back on prescription drug monitoring

By Sarah Varney, NPR

This is a story about what can happen when no one is looking. For the patients at Universal Pain Management, a medical clinic in northern Los Angeles County, Dr. Francis Riegler is always looking.

Riegler huddles with the clinic's nurse practitioner over a computer printout. The one-page report from the state's drug-tracking system shows that a patient was on the hunt for more Vicodin, a powerful pain reliever that he was already getting from Riegler's clinic.

California has the oldest continuous prescription-drug

monitoring program in the U.S., dating to 1939. It used to rely on carbon copies: one for the pharmacy, one for the doctor and one to be sent to the state's Department of Justice. The system went online in 1998, and that's when its full power was realized. Now, Riegler and other physicians can log in and see which prescriptions their patients have filled anywhere in California.

"I think it's fair to say that we were able to weed out a significant number of people who were either abusing or diverting their medications or hoarding them where we simply had no idea," he says.

So alarm bells went off among doctors and law enforcement when California Gov. Jerry Brown announced last year that, for budget reasons, he was eliminating the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, which had long managed the prescription-drug monitoring program. Dr. Scott Fishman, chief of pain medicine at the University of California, Davis, is among those fearful that if California's system closes down, the Golden State could attract pill pushers from around the country.

"The rest of the country is developing prescription monitoring programs, not abandoning them," Fishman said.

Read the whole story

Salt content in U.S. fast food outweighs other

countries

By Nancy Shute, NPR

Want extra salt with that fast-food meal? Then buy it in the United States, where chicken dishes, pizzas, and even salads are loaded with far more salt than in Europe and Australia, according to new research.

The McDonald's Chicken McNuggets in the United States have more than twice as much salt as their sister nuggets in the United Kingdom That's 1.6 grams of salt for every 100 grams of American nugget, compared to 0.6 grams in the U.K.

You could say Americans are getting more for their money. You could also say they're getting more high blood pressure and premature death.

McNuggets sold in Canada were about as salty as those in the U.S., while Australian, French, and Kiwi nuggets had significantly less salt, but not as little as in the U.K.

That may be because the United Kingdom has set voluntary limits on salt in processed food, according to Elizabeth Dunford. She's the lead author of this study, which was published today in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, and global database manager for the Australian arm of World Action on Salt and Health.

Read the whole story

Golf tournament in the snow at Alpine Meadows

Alpine Meadows' annual Snow Golf Tournament will tee off April 21 at 9am at the top of the mountain off the Summit Express chairlift.

This event features the only mountaintop snow golf course around. It's skiing or snowboarding combined with golf.

The nine-hole course starts at the top of the Summit Express chairlift off of Sunspot and weaves its way down the mountain to the bottom of Alpine Bowl chair. Players are provided scorecards, pencils, clubs and tennis balls. All competitors must be wearing skis or a snowboard to navigate from hole to hole, but are allowed to remove one foot to drive, chip and putt.

Registration starts at 9am at the top of the Summit Express chair and is free (with a lift ticket or season pass).

Sailing community invited to pasta feed

Lake Tahoe Windjammers is having a Getting to Know You Pasta Feed on April 28 at 6pm.

The event is at the Yacht Club Room in Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe.

The vice commodore is making pasta, but guests are asked to bring an appetizer, salad or dessert.

RSVP or for information contact Ernie at vicecommodorewyc@gmail.com or (775) 771.6869. Anyone interested in sailing is welcome.

Truckee Donner Land Trust dinner

The Truckee Donner Land Trust benefit dinner at the River Ranch is June 7.

The restaurant will donate 30 percent of of the evening's proceeds to the land trust. Reservations (530.583.4264) must be made at least a day in advance, and diners must say they are dining for the Truckee Donner Land Trust.

The event is from 6-9pm. River Ranch is on the corner of Highway 89 and Alpine Meadows Road.

Art-wine event funds El Dorado County scholarship program

The El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce Education Council's annual Wine Tasting/Art Auction is May 4.

Ten Thomas Kinkade framed prints, along with artwork from other area artists, will be auctioned off to the highest

bidder.

David Girard Vineyard will be the site of the event. Tickets are \$10 for the event that starts at 6pm.

Many artists who have participated in the past will be participating again. This is an opportunity to not only raise money for the Al Aguiar Memorial Scholarship to support the continuing education of El Dorado County residents, but the Wine Tasting/Art Auction also gives exposure to El Dorado County artists.

The Al Aguiar Memorial Scholarship enables employers in El Dorado County to assist their employees to increase their education and knowledge by allowing the employee to be trained while working, thus benefiting the employer as well.

Call the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce at (530) 621.5885 or the El Dorado County Office of Education at (530) 295.2337 for more information on the Al Aguiar Memorial Scholarship or the Wine Tasting/Art Auction.

Robber strikes BofA in South Lake Tahoe

Moments after the Bank of America in South Lake Tahoe opened Monday morning it was robbed.



A suspect entered the branch at 3344 Lake Tahoe Blvd. just after 9am April 16 and demanded cash from a teller. No weapon was seen.

Officers are not releasing how much money the suspect got away with.

The suspect is described as a white male, about 5-foot-11, medium build, between 50- and 60-years-old, and clean shaven.

If anyone has information, call (530) 542.6100.