K's Kitchen: Frozen foods have history that dates to 1000 BC

By Kathryn Reed

When I first heard this is national Frozen Food month I didn't think much about it. I didn't think I ate many frozen foods.



Then I looked in the freezer. For the most part it's leftovers that are in there. There's also coffee, tater tots, butter, chocolate chips and fake hamburgers. From last summer's farmers' market I made pesto and have that frozen to use all winter, as well as tomatoes that I had bought at the market, stewed and now have in the freezer.

Then it made me think about the old icebox I have in my office that instead of having cold food stores my cold weather clothing. It's hard to imagine living when there weren't freezers like we know them.

Either there was a lot of wasted food in years gone by or people cooked more efficiently than I do. But I absolutely love leftovers.

It was Clarence Birdseye who in 1924 began freezing foods as we think of frozen foods today. He used a quick freezing method that eliminated the slower freezing technique that caused ice crystals to form on food.

The National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Association says, "The first to harness the power of freezing foods beyond the winter months were the Chinese, who used ice cellars as early as 1000 B.C. The Greeks and Romans stored compressed snow in

insulated cellars, and the Egyptians and Indians discovered that rapid evaporation through the porous walls of clay vessels produced ice crystals in the water inside the vessels."

According to the USDA, food stored at zero degrees is safe because it inactivates any microbes – bacteria, yeasts and molds. Nutrients are not lost.

The Department of Agriculture folks also say, "Freezer burn does not make food unsafe, merely dry in spots. It appears as grayish-brown leathery spots and is caused by air coming in contact with the surface of the food. Cut freezer-burned portions away either before or after cooking the food. Heavily freezer-burned foods may have to be discarded for quality reasons."

Next time I shop in the frozen food section or pull something out of the freezer, I won't take it for granted.

Regional transit ideas to be discussed

Tahoe Transportation District is having two public workshops next week to talk about transit options that would link the South and North shores.

Carl Hasty, executive director of TTD, told *Lake Tahoe News*

nine proposals have been whittled down to three.

However, those proposals are not available online for people to review before the meetings. The only obvious information is for what is being called an aquabus.

No details of the meetings have been released to the media other than the dates-locations. The first meeting is March 6 at 6pm at 128 Market St., Stateline (the TRPA office); the second is March 7 at 6pm at 221 Fairway, Tahoe City (the Tahoe City PUD office).

The transportation board is expected to vote on a preferred alternative at the April meeting, then the environmental review process begins after that.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Opinion: Pettiness and mudslinging bring down GOP candidates

By Thomas Sowell

The only good news for the Republicans coming out of the seemingly endless presidential candidate "debates" is that some Republican leaders are now belatedly thinking about how they can avoid a repetition of this debacle in future elections.

What could they possibly have been thinking about, in the

first place, when they agreed to a format based on short sound bites for dealing with major complex issues, and with media journalists – 90 percent of them Democrats – picking the topics?



Thomas
Sowell

The conduct of the candidates made things worse. In a world with a record-breaking national debt and Iran moving toward creating nuclear weapons, they bickered over earmarks and condoms. I am against earmarks, but earmarks don't rank among the first hundred most serious problems facing this country.

Mud-slinging has replaced rational discussions of differences on serious issues – not only during the debates themselves, where the moderators sic the candidates on each other, but even more so in the massive television character assassination ads in which Romney supporters seem to specialize.

Groups supporting Mitt Romney have turned character assassination almost into a science. You take something that most people, outside of politics, do not understand and twist it to sound terrible to those who are unaware of the facts.

Blanketing Florida with misleading ads attacking Newt Gingrich won that state for Romney, after Gingrich scored an upset victory in South Carolina. The ads made a big deal out of charges that the former Speaker broke tax laws – charges that the Internal Revenue Service exonerated him of, after a long investigation.

When Rick Santorum suddenly surged after his upset victories in Minnesota, Missouri and Colorado, the Romney character assassination machine attacked him for having voted in the Senate for various things that conservatives don't like.

But, when it comes to voting in Congress, seldom do you get a pure bill that you can agree with in all its parts. If you never voted for bills containing anything you didn't like, you might get very little voting done.

But, if it is a bill to provide American soldiers with the equipment they need to fight a war, and somebody has put into it an earmark for a federal boondoggle in his district, are you going to vote against that bill and let American soldiers go into battle without all the equipment and supplies they need?

Taking advantage of the public's lack of knowledge is something that Barack Obama already does very effectively in his political propaganda. But is that something the Republicans want to imitate?

It has worked during the primary season, when the media are perfectly happy to see Republicans destroying each other. But it will not work in the general election campaign, when even truthful criticisms of the president will have a hard time getting out through the media, which hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil when it comes to Obama.

The pettiness and mud-slinging during the Republican primary campaigns is especially irresponsible during a time when there are very serious problems, at home and abroad, that need to be addressed in a serious way.

Discussions of particular issues, one by one, often miss the larger point that goes beyond the issue at hand – namely, this administration's steady movement toward arbitrary government that circumvents the restrictions of the Constitution.

Nothing demonstrates this more starkly than the president's arbitrary power to waive the requirement that employers have to provide ObamaCare coverage for their workers. That can be the difference between paying, or not paying, millions of dollars. What does that mean for anybody's other rights?

What does freedom of speech mean if criticizing the administration can mean you get no exemption, while your competitor who keeps quiet, or who praises the administration, gets a waiver? The Constitution requires "equal protection of the laws" for a reason.

And what about nuclear weapons in the hands of Iran, the world's leading sponsor of international terrorism? Is that not worth discussing in something other than sound bites?

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institute and author of "The Housing Boom and Bust".

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2 Heavenly Ski Foundation athletes headed to Junior Worlds

Two Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation athletes have received invitations to attend the Junior Worlds in Valmalenco, Italy, March 20-24.

Representing the Heavenly Freestyle Team in singles moguls and dual moguls will be Anna Park. Park is 14,-year-old ninth-grader at Harper Junior High in Davis.

Park has been training with the Heavenly Freestyle Team under Coach Jere Crawford for the past three years and skiing for 11. In order to receive the invitation for Junior Worlds, Park had to be ranked in the top four U.S. athletes for freestyle aged 19 and under.

Representing the Heavenly Alpine Team in skiercross will be Whitney Gardner. Gardner is 18 years old and a senior at Whittell High School. Gardner has been training with the Heavenly Alpine Team under Coach Noel Dufty for the past six years and has been an athlete at the foundation since age 6.

Old ski lodge set to open on top of Echo Summit

By Kathryn Reed

ECHO SUMMIT – A true old-style mountain lodge is about to open in Lake Tahoe. Through large pane windows expansive views of rugged Sierra peaks are visible. A woodstove flanks one wall, ready to get people warm.

This isn't some newfangled structure designed to look old. This is the lodge that was built in the 1970s at the old Nebelhorn Ski Resort atop Echo Summit. For years it has sat idle.



Adventure Mountain's lodge at the top of Echo Summit is expected to open this month. Photos/Kathryn Reed

When Jim and Linda Mueller opened Adventure Mountain sledding hill six years ago their desire was always to have the lodge be part of the mix. Once the Lake Valley fire marshal signs off on the paperwork the Muellers will unlock the doors. That’s expected to happen this month.

Food choices will be limited to begin with –pizza, chili, hot dogs, hot cocoa and other drinks.

A beer and wine license might be secured down the road.

“It will be a work in progress,” Jim Mueller said standing in the lodge.

Old skis still need to be mounted on the walls and a little bit of artwork hung. Plenty of stacked wood is out back.

The Muellers have made a substantial investment in the property. When they entered the lease with the U.S. Forest Service there was no running water and the septic system wasn’t working. Code upgrades were also necessary.

While the No. 1 complaint on Yelp is the vault toilets that sledders must use, when the lodge opens people will be able to use flush toilets.

The roof has been replaced, too.

“In the summer it will be available for weddings, conferences and day camps,” Mueller said.

Cathedral-like windows reveal some of the 13 machine groomed sledding runs. Soon those people – there were 50,000 last season – will be able to come inside.

But guests have adapted to playing in the outdoors. Some bring barbecues and chairs, making a day of it. About 80 percent of Adventure Mountain’s guests are day visitors from the Bay Area and Central Valley. The other 20 percent are mostly visitors to Lake Tahoe who are staying a week and want a break from skiing.

New this season is a beginner snowboarding run.

All the hills are accessed by walking as far up as allowed or until the person wants to start sledding.

There are also four miles of marked, ungroomed trails for snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

The old ski resort closed in 1988, with the Forest Service taking out the two chairlifts and rope tow 10 years later.

In 1968 a running track was put in so athletes could train at a high elevation for the Summer Olympics in Mexico City. (The track was later moved to South Tahoe Middle School, but was replaced a few years ago.)

The California Conservation Corps called this site home for years before moving to their Meyers location in 2002.

Mueller said it’s possible the lodge will be open in the summer for recreationists.

From the parking lot several hiking and biking trails go off in nearly every direction. The Pacific Crest, Pony Express and Tahoe Rim trails touch the property. Mueller said the bike ride to Kyburz on the Pony Express Trail is a good one.

The Muellers, who live in Meyers, have big plans beyond opening the lodge this month.

“We hope to eventually have a special needs youth camp up here,” Mueller said.

He said regulators won’t allow overnight lodging even though the CCC did for years. The shower facilities remain. It is possible log cabins would be constructed.

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Details:

• Website

• Hours – weekdays 10am-4:30pm; weekends 9am-5pm

• Cost – $18 to park, unlimited sledding

• Other – equipment available to rent, small retail center.

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‘March Madness’ concert at STMS

Lake Tahoe Unified School District’s “March Madness” bands in concert is March 7 at 7pm.

The free event is at South Tahoe Middle School.

The concert features 170 middle school and elementary advanced fifth-graders performing for one hour.

Whittemore case leaves political fundraising void

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

For decades, Harvey Whittemore was considered one of Nevada's key political fundraisers, thanks to his effective lobbying skills, powerful clients and seemingly endless energy.

But after his former partners accused him of embezzling money and the FBI began investigating his campaign contribution activities – highlighted Wednesday by federal grand jury hearings that could lead to felony charges – Whittemore is all but gone from Nevada's fundraising landscape. Many recipients of his efforts have dumped the money he raised for them in an effort to distance themselves from his troubles.

As the 2012 election cycle heats up, the void left by Whittemore's departure from high-profile fundraising activities will need to be filled by a list of other well-connected supporters, some political watchers said.

"Harvey's departure won't change anything," Las Vegas political consultant Sig Rogich said. "There are a handful of guys around the state who are significant fundraisers – we've raised a lot of money throughout the years. There still will be contributors out there. They'll just deal with a different individual."

But Pete Ernaut, president of government and public affairs at R&R Partners, a high-powered political consulting firm, said

Nevada’s fundraising environment has changed during the past decade. Candidates no longer rely on a few key people for their fundraising needs, he said. Instead, they look to professional companies to handle those tasks, he said.

“The era of the prominent fundraiser is over,” said Ernaut, who has managed campaigns over the years for a variety of candidates, including governors, members of Congress and judges. “The modern campaign is more sophisticated, more scientific and more organized, and these companies can provide call lists, fundraising events and distribute direct mail.

“They can do everything, not just bringing in big donations, but also reaching small donors.”

Read the whole story

Biomass meeting

Placer County has proposed developing a biomass power generation facility near the Eastern Regional Material Recovery Facility at Cabin Creek. The proposed biomass power generation facility would be located on county-owned land off Highway 89 between Squaw Valley and Truckee.

A meeting to discuss the project is set for March 13 from 9am-1pm at 305 Squaw Valley Road, Olympic Valley, First Floor Community Room.

For more information, call (530) 745.3011 or email bstorey@placer.ca.gov.

5 snowmobilers accused of riding in closed area

Five men were cited by the U.S. Forest Service for riding snowmobiles in the Mokelumne Wilderness on the Eldorado National Forest.

The five riders, residents of South Lake Tahoe and the Carson Valley, received mandatory notices to appear before the federal magistrate in Sacramento.

Per Forest Service policy the names of violators are not released when a citation has been issued. If they are arrested, the names become public information. The South Lake Tahoe man is 46-years-old, the Douglas County residents are ages 30, 41 and two 42-year-olds.

The wilderness area is accessed from the Blue Lake trailhead and the Forestdale area on Highway 88. The area is posted as closed to motorized use and maps are readily available.

“While on patrol, officers observed fresh snowmobile tracks passing directly underneath closure signs,” a USFS press release said of last weekend’s incident.

If convicted, the offenders would face a fine up to $5,000 and jail time of six months. They were cited for wilderness trespass, not damaging the terrain.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Landromat fire ruins load of clothes

Instead of just drying clothes, a unit at a Laundromat in South Lake Tahoe charred a load on Friday.

A small fire at the laundry facility on Harrison Avenue in the Globin Building was contained to the dryer.

Fire Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* the fire started in the lint trap about 3:30pm March 2, damaging the clothes that were in the dryer.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report