Hunters prowling the woods for late King Bolete harvest

By Kathryn Reed

A secret handshake isn't part of the initiation process, but being sworn to secrecy and the threat of bodily harm if the secret is betrayed were all part of the indoctrination process.

Welcome to the world of King Bolete.

As with all edibles this year, the harvest is late – even for these mushrooms. Better known as porcini, especially in their dried form, these shrooms are still being plucked from the forest floor in the Lake Tahoe Basin.



A basket of King Bolete found in Tahoe in October. Photos/Kathryn Reed

So secretive is this foraging business, I'm neither allowed to say who I was with nor where we went. I can say she is a teacher in Lake Tahoe Unified and that we were near a body of water on the South Shore that wasn't Lake Tahoe.

Different theories abound regarding where they grow and the

best time to find them. My teacher likes going out at the break of day before school. I don't do mornings well so we went after school.

These mushrooms, which look nothing like the morels I was introduced to in May, are much larger, found in different areas and are not cooked the same.

King Bolete tend to grow near water, in the woods. Some say they will be near where snow plants have been. Some say the best hunting is near a full moon. I'm a believer in that scenario having gone out this month during the week of the full moon.

Most everyone, though, says moisture is key. It had just snowed, so the ground was still wet as we traipsed in the woods near a creek. When Tahoe gets thunderstorms in the summer the King Bolete are apt to show themselves shortly afterward.

They often hide. The tops blend into the terrain. Sometimes they are hidden in tufts of pine needles.

Once one is found, start walking in a line from there in all directions because they grow in a line – sometimes several feet apart.



Smaller, younger King Bolete are best to saute.

I’ve been told not to take ones that are near a rusted can or a poisonous mushroom.

A single Bolete can weigh several pounds. Dried, they can cost about $8 for a couple ounces in a store. It can take 10 pounds of fresh mushrooms to get a half-pound of dried, according to Gary Ottoboni.

Ottoboni, his brother and parents are part-time neighbors of my friend who is introducing me to the King Bolete. They are the ones who taught her to be a shroom hunter and how to “put them up”.

June Ottoboni uses a combination of boiled vinegar, cloves, peppers, cinnamon, and garlic to give them a pickled flavor.

Many people sauté them. Others grill them with olive oil and a little pepper.

Drying is the most common form so they can be used throughout the winter in soups, risottos and various Italian dishes.

Just before I called, Gary Ottoboni had sautéed some King Bolete to add to pesto.

“You have to sauté the young ones. The big ones you can only dry,” Ottoboni instructed this rookie. “You sauté them in olive oil and very little butter so the pan doesn’t get too hot. Add garlic and parsley. The secret is you squeeze a little lemon.”

There were other secrets to cooking the King this way, something about when to put the lid on, but I’m afraid of telling too many secrets.

The word “cult” comes to mind after talking to long-time shroomers.

Because mushrooms don’t have seeds – they have spores – they can’t be a row crop. Instead, they grow in the wild. This is

why they are so expensive.

Americans more often than Chinese can’t put food on table

By Zachary Roth, Lookout

The number of Americans who lack access to basic necessities like food and health care is now higher than it was at the peak of the Great Recession, a survey released Thursday found. And in a finding that could worsen fears of U.S. decline, the share of Americans struggling to put food on the table is now three times as large as the share of the Chinese population in the same position.

The United States’ Basic Index Score, a Gallup measure of access to necessities, fell to 81.4 in September—even lower than the 81.5 mark it reached in February and March, 2009. The recession officially ended in June of that year, but the halting recovery hasn’t given a sustained boost to the number of Americans able to provide for themselves. The government reported last month that a record number of Americans is living in poverty.

Read the whole story

Truckee police chief taking a turn in local kitchen

From running the police department to advocating for global causes, Truckee Police Chief Nick Sensley has another talent up his sleeve.

Sensley will connect with his New Orleans roots while whipping up Mardi-Gras style culinary creations when he takes to the Dragonfly kitchen as guest chef Nov. 11. This event coincides with Sensley's last day serving the town in his official role as chief of police. Sensley is leaving to be a consultant with Humanity United, a global peace building organization based in Washington, D.C.

Reservations for guest chef evenings are strongly recommended – (530) 587.0557. It will be a $48 prix fixe menu.

South Tahoe man behind bars on domestic battery charge

The brother of the man who killed several people, including himself, at a Carson City iHop restaurant last month was arrested this morning on domestic battery charges.

The .45-caliber semi-automatic pistol he left his residence will has not been located.



Israel Sencion Gonzalez

Israel Sencion Gonzalez, 38, was found about 9:30am Oct. 23 hiding in a bathroom at MontBleu casino in Stateline.

South Lake Tahoe officers had been looking for him since 2am when they were called to the 2500 block of Elwood Avenue. Officers said they found a 29-year-old woman with a bruised and swollen left eye and blood on her shirt. Officers said the victim told them Gonzalez, her boyfriend, inflicted the wounds.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Family Halloween night at St. Theresa

Saint Theresa Family Halloween Night is Oct. 28 from 7-9pm at Grace Hall, St. Theresa Church, South Lake Tahoe.

Wear a costume contest and bring a carved pumpkin for Jack-O-Lantern contest.

Cost is $12 for a family, with $2 for a canned food donation.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• On Oct. 28 from 6-8pm is a panel discussion in South Lake Tahoe about domestic violence. Click on flyer for details.

• Red Cross is having an orientation and training Oct. 27 from 6-9mp. Contact Colette Wigard for more information – (775) 588.5651.

• John Greenhut, former public works director for South Lake Tahoe, is one of 13 finalists to lead the town of Minden. They will be interviewed at the town council's special meeting Oct. 25.

• Placerville-based El Dorado Savings Bank, which has a branch in South Tahoe, posted nearly a 9.5 increase in year-over-year quarterly earning, with quarterly net income at $2.5 million.

• Here is Caltrans' El Dorado-Tahoe roadwork schedule for next week, as well as the Sierra schedule.

Meters getting little credit for less water consumption

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

As communities around the Sacramento region continue to install water meters, a number of local officials say the devices are not saving as much water as expected.

Water usage is definitely declining, but other factors – including a poor economy and years of conservation education efforts – are having as much or more effect than meters, they say.

“People are more aware of being green and using water efficiently,” said Shauna Lorance, general manager of the San Juan Water District. Water savings are less dramatic when people are already in conservation mode, she said.

Over the last decade, water usage by area households has dropped from about 290 gallons to 240 gallons per person per day, about 17 percent, according to the Sacramento Regional Water Authority, an umbrella agency of water districts from West Sacramento to El Dorado and Placer counties.

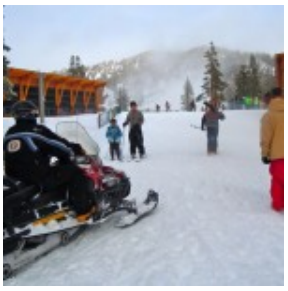
In Roseville – which just this week completed a 10-year, $12 million project to retrofit 16,000 homes with meters – usage has dropped steadily since 2006, according to city data.

Read the whole story

Ski readers: Heavenly best Lake Tahoe resort

Now in it’s 24th year, *Ski* magazine’s reader survey offers a glimpse into what people have to say about resorts in North America and provide a bit of insider info about why it’s time to get out the wax.

The survey is divided between the West and East. No California (or Nevada) resort made it in the top 10. Deer Valley came in at No. 1. Heavenly did the best overall for Tahoe resorts at No. 13. Readers consider the proximity to the Stateline casinos a plus and a minus.



Heavenly is ranked the highest of any Tahoe resort in Ski magazine. Photo/LTN file

The magazine's editors, though, say keep an eye on Squaw Valley with all of the planned upgrades.

Mammoth Mountain was in the top 20 at No. 17.

No Tahoe area resort made it in the top 10 for snow, value, service, weather, on-mountain food, lodging, dining, character or overall satisfaction.

For grooming, Mammoth is No. 6, Northstar No. 7 and Heavenly No. 8.

Terrain variety: Mammoth No. 4, Squaw Valley No. 7

Terrain challenge: Squaw No. 3.

Lifts: Mammoth No. 7.

Access: Sugar Bowl No. 10.

Après/nightlife: Heavenly No. 5

Off-hill activities: Heavenly No. 2.

Family programs: Northstar No. 10.

Scenery: Heavenly No. 3, Homewood No. 5

Terrain parks: Mammoth No. 1, Northstar No. 2

Digital programs: Heavenly No. 9, Mammoth No. 10.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snowboarding movies mean revenue for Tahoe Bicycle Coalition

The premiere of Absinthe Films double feature snowboarding films “twel2ve” and “YES” help support the mission of the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition.

Doors open at 8pm Oct. 28 at 50-50 Brewery in Truckee. Buy the $10 tickets at Porters and Dave’s or at the door.

Obama administration going

after whistle-blowers

By Morgan Watkins, Quill

Jesselyn Radack has blown the whistle. She's also been punished for it.

As an ethics adviser in the Justice Department in 2001, she advised the government not to interrogate John Walker Lindh without his counsel present. When she learned that the FBI had questioned the American found fighting for the Taliban in Afghanistan, she warned government officials not to use his confession for a criminal prosecution.

The government used it anyway.

Radack later received a harsh performance review and was told she may be happier at another job. These unfavorable responses surprised her, as she hadn't received any prior negative feedback about her work.

In early 2002, she learned that the judge in the Lindh case had requested copies of all Justice Department correspondence relating to his interrogation. She discovered that the government had not turned over most of her correspondence warning against the actions taken in the case. Radack resigned from her job and blew the whistle. It didn't take long for retaliation to come.

Radack was placed on the no-fly list. The government tried to get her disbarred in Washington, D.C., and Maryland. While the Maryland charges were dropped in 2005, the D.C. charges are still pending nearly a decade later. She also became a target of a federal criminal leak investigation.

"Why crucify me when one of their cases tanked because of their own misconduct?" said Radack, who serves as the national security and human rights director for the Government

Accountability Project.

She had a rough experience as a whistle-blower during the George W. Bush administration. When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, she thought things would change under his leadership.

As far as she can tell, it’s only gotten worse.

Read the whole story