K’s Kitchen: Sweet drink on a hot day

By Kathryn Reed

With the weather being so warm in Tahoe, it is time for summer drinks.

Often after a hike or snowshoe a beer sounds good. On Sunday, Sue surprised me with something she calls Rejuvenation. I’m not sure that it rejuvenated me, but I was feeling better by the time I was done with it.

Sue has been on this rum kick where she is trying new concoctions. She definitely is the one who likes sweeter drinks. The version of this for herself calls for more pineapple juice.

Like most sweet drinks it should be sipped instead of gulped so it doesn’t go to your head too fast. And if you are imbibing in a hot tub, drink slowly and get out slowly.

The nice thing about a drink like this is that the proportions can be changed to cater to individual tastes.

I can see this becoming a regular drink as the days keep getting warmer.



Rejuvenation

2 shots rum

½ C club soda

1½ shots pineapple juice

2 shots sweet and sour

Splash Grenadine

Pour all the ingredients over ice in a tumbler glass. Stir. Straw and umbrella are optional.

Movement under way to reverse online gaming

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – Nevada and Delaware's recent agreement to launch the nation's first collaborative, interstate online poker zone appears to have drawn a backlash from gambling's opponents in Congress, who are planning to drop a bill rolling back the legal opinion underlying the recent deal.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, is planning on formally releasing legislation to roll back the 2011 Justice Department reading of the Wire Act next week, when Congress returns to Washington.

Unlike many recent online gaming bills, the legislation would include no carve-out for online poker; it would simply undo the Justice Department opinion that determined Internet gaming transactions are legal between states where gambling is legal.

Read the whole story

Carbon monoxide alarms can save lives

By Teri Mizuhara

Carbon monoxide, aka CO, is widely known as the “senseless killer” because you can’t see it, taste it, or smell it.

Annually, more than 400 people die and another 20,000 are hospitalized due to CO poisoning.

So what exactly is carbon monoxide? CO is the result of burning of a fuel such as wood burning fireplaces, gas furnace, gas water heaters, gas stoves and ovens, portable generators, barbecue grills, even your running car or truck. The fumes from the combustion contain CO gas and when a person breaths this gas in, they are subject to CO poisoning.

If you are exposed to high levels of CO, you may feel flu-like symptoms such as a headache, nausea, shortness of breath, dizziness or light headedness because the CO replaces the oxygen in the red blood cells, which in turn does not allow oxygen to reach vital organs.

A person’s red blood cells actually bond with CO easier than it bonds with oxygen. High levels of CO can kill a person in minutes and it is the No. 1 cause of unintentional death by poison in the United States.

If you suspect CO poisoning, get the person or people to fresh air immediately, then call 911. In some cases CO poisoning can cause permanent brain and heart damage.

As of July 1, 2011, carbon monoxide alarms in single family dwellings are required. Minimally, you should have CO alarms

outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home including the basement. It also is a good idea to put a CO alarm in each sleeping area. If they are plug-ins, test them once a month and if they have a battery backup, change that battery annually. Don’t forget to vacuum the alarms often to keep them in proper working order.

Key points:

Never use a barbecue or outdoor space heater in your home or garage.

Do not leave your vehicle running in your garage, even for a few minutes.

Never heat your room or home with your kitchen oven.

Have your home heating system checked by a professional annually.

Have your wood burning stove or fireplace professionally cleaned annually.

If your CO alarm sounds, get everyone out of the house and call 911. If you cannot physically leave the house, move to an open doorway or open a window and stay there. Call 911. Do not close the window or door.

Teri Mizuhara works for the El Dorado-Amador Unit of CalFire.

Millions of U.S. seafood meals regularly dumped in sea

By Alastair Bland, NPR

Seafood often travels huge distances over many days to reach the people who eat it. And it’s often impossible to know where a fillet of fish or a few frozen shrimp came from – and, perhaps more important, just how they were caught.

Fortunately, activists are doing the homework for us, and what they’re telling us could make your next fish dinner a little less tasty.

According to a report released Thursday by the environmental group Oceana, commercial fishermen in the U.S. annually throw overboard as much as 2 billion pounds of so-called bycatch, much of which is edible fish equivalent at least half a billion seafood meals. Incredibly, much of this waste includes some of the most valuable – and delectable – seafood species in the world, like bluefin tuna, swordfish and Pacific halibut.

Read the whole story

Growth initiatives before El Dorado County voters

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

In El Dorado County, where growth wars have raged for decades, voters may face two or more dueling measures on the November ballot.

A group filed papers Tuesday for a ballot initiative it says will control growth, keep much of the county rural, fight congestion on Highway 50 and encourage more jobs. That petition drive, called Control Growth to Fix Our Local Roads

Initiative, is led by Region Builders, a Sacramento group of commercial builders, architects and engineers that recently led the political fight to build a downtown Sacramento basketball arena

The group's petition, if successful, would extend the county's Measure Y slow-growth initiative until 2025, allowing the county to continue collecting traffic impact fees, used to improve roads to match development. It would require the county annually to report on how it is spending road money.

Read the whole story

I-80 work to involve delays, road closures

Caltrans will soon begin some unusual work to raise the vertical clearance of nine structures in Placer County that cross Interstate 80.

The overcrossings include eight vehicle bridges and one railroad trestles from the Brace Road overcrossing in Loomis to the Magra Road overcrossing east of Colfax.

The vertical clearance of these structures is being raised to 16-feet 6-inches to meet current standards that improve access on I-80 through the Sierra for interstate commerce and national security.

Six structures will be raised using a complex system of jacks and reconstruction, while the roadway under the remaining three structures will be dug down to create the required clearance.

Work will begin this spring and continue through fall 2015.

Each of the six raised structures will require I-80 to be completely closed overnight for two nights, and the overcrossings will be closed for two months. Structures requiring the highway to be dug lower will require multiple long-term lane and ramp closures.

Traffic detours will be in effect during the construction work in the communities of Loomis, Penryn, Newcastle, Weimar and Colfax.

Updates me be found online.

Pain McShlonkey Classic coming to Squaw

The Pain McShlonkey Classic returns to Squaw Valley March 29. Now in its fourth year, this action packed on- and off-mountain event serves as a hilarious tribute to legendary skier Shane McConkey.

Hosted by the Shane McConkey Foundation, the event is a fundraiser for local nonprofits, with this year's event benefiting Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District's environmental education programs.

The festivities begin March 29 at 9am as athletes line up atop KT-22 for an all-out snowblade blitz. The pros will take on 30 amateurs in an anything-goes battle to the finish.

For event details, registration information, after party tickets or to make a donation to the Shane McConkey Foundation, go online.

Google wants email mining data to be secret

By Joel Rosenblatt, Bloomberg

Google Inc., the world's largest Internet-search provider, is seeking to black out portions of a transcript from a public court hearing that includes information on how it mines data from personal emails.

Google, fighting a lawsuit claiming its interception of emails amounts to illegal wiretapping, asked U.S. District Judge Lucy H. Koh in a filing last week to redact "confidential" information from the transcript, without being more specific. The main revelation at the Feb. 27 hearing was the existence of "Content Onebox," used by Google to intercept emails for targeted advertising and to build user profiles, Sean Rommel, a lawyer for plaintiffs, told the judge at the time.

Google's latest move to keep records in the case out of public view comes as Koh is weighing a request by companies including National Public Radio, New York Times Co. and Washington Post Co. to unseal other key documents filed earlier that the company contended were too sensitive to be revealed.

Read the whole story

Kings Beach residents want Tahoe Conservancy, State Parks to leave them alone

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – If State Parks, California Tahoe Conservancy and North Tahoe Public Utility District officials cannot find a way to work together in a manner that residents can live with, it's possible state legislation will resolve the issue.

State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, said in the next week he wants all parties to come together and figure it out. The *it* is what to do with Kings Beach State Recreation Area.

State Parks has owned the beachfront area since 1978, but it has always been run by NTPUD. Suddenly, State Parks wants to change how business is done. But neither State Parks nor CTC publicly has said a bad word about what NTPUD has been doing.

More than 150 people attended a meeting March 20 at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach. This building used to be a bowling alley, but is now the town's main gathering place. It is owned by NTPUD, while the parking lot and beach are owned by State Parks.



Parking could become an issue at North Tahoe Event Center. Photo/LTN

All of the 24 people who spoke want NTPUD to remain the operator of the recreation area.

Gaines and Assemblyman Brian Dahle, R-Bieber, hosted the meeting. They are behind Senate Bill 832, which would transfer ownership to NTPUD and keep it as the operator. A decision by the Legislature is likely to come by July.

Last week State Parks said it would close the area during the winter. On Thursday Jess Cooper, northern division chief for the agency, said it will remain open year-round.

But residents are not convinced. One after another commented on how state budget matters could change the policy.

It was pointed out how Van Sickle Bi-state Park on the South Shore is still gated even though there is no snow on the ground. Van Sickle closed for the season Oct. 31. Gates are set to open May 1.

Van Sickle was supposed to be operated by Nevada and California state parks. Instead it is a Nevada, CTC and Tahoe Rim Trail Association operation. State Parks continues to be a missing partner and the recreation area continues to be open seasonally. State Parks last week said it wants to revisit the possibility of being involved with Nevada.

Cooper, at the meeting, said his agency has the money and manpower to operate the Kings Beach facility. But he did not say why the state has not been investing in the property. There is $600,000 worth of improvements needed to bring the site into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, plus there are more than three-quarters of a million dollars in deferred maintenance that needs to be dealt with.

Paul Schultz, NTPUD general manager, explained that Placer County would not allow the district to go after grants for projects without a 25-year lease in place. He said the district would go bankrupt without assistance to fund improvements.

The contract NTPUD had with State Parks expired in 2008. Since then a month-to-month agreement has been in place.

State Parks has long talked about extending the pier from 140 feet to 545 feet. This would accommodate waterborne transportation. The Tahoe Transportation District is exploring the possibility of bringing a ferry to the lake that would at this time service South Lake Tahoe and the North Shore. It's said to be more of a commuter vessel than a tourist attraction.

"The biggest thing is we felt we would be in a better position to make improvements if we were in charge of operations," Patrick Wright, CTC executive director, told the crowd.

CTC owns Kings Beach Plaza, which is adjacent to the Kings Beach SRA. It also owns Coon Street, North Tahoe Beach, Moon Dunes Beach, Secline Beach and Sandy Beach.

It was announced last week that CTC and State Parks would be partnering on the management and operations of Kings Beach State Recreation Area. CTC does not manage entities like parks, that is why it would be State Parks doing the day-to-day grind in Kings Beach.

But the outcry from locals was they don’t trust the state and they don’t believe NTPUD needs to be replaced.

“I like local control. There is more accountability,” Gaines said.

Wright said, “Parks and the Conservancy felt we were in a better position to make investments if we managed the parks.”

But what no one from the two state agencies explained is why improvements cannot be made if NTPUD were to continue to run the facility. It was also not disclosed how taxpayers may benefit or be hurt by operational changes.

Wright and Cooper from the state agencies said there will be a transition team put in place by the time State Parks takes over in November. Neither one said anything after the state senator told the three parties to figure out a compromise.

Placer County would like to have lodging on the beach in Kings Beach. With the Tahoe Expedition Academy in Kings Beach going forward on the lakefront property where Ferrari Crown Motel, Falcon Lodge and Goldcrest Resort properties are, the prime lodging spot is eliminated. That leaves the event center location.

This adds to the distrust locals have when it comes to the state taking over operations. They don’t know that State Parks won’t make it impossible for the event center to operate, especially if access is limited because the state owns the parking lot. This could then open up the opportunity for new development.

Opinion: Meat production a huge user of water

By James McWilliams, New York Times

California is experiencing one of its worst droughts on record. Just two and a half years ago, Folsom Lake, a major reservoir outside Sacramento, was at 83 percent capacity. Today it's down to 36 percent. In January, there was no measurable rain in downtown Los Angeles. Gov. Jerry Brown has declared a state of emergency. President Obama has pledged $183 million in emergency funding. The situation, despite last week's deluge in Southern California, is dire.

With California producing nearly half of the fruit and vegetables grown in the United States, attention has naturally focused on the water required to grow popular foods such as walnuts, broccoli, lettuce, tomatoes, strawberries, almonds and grapes. These crops are the ones that a recent report in the magazine *Mother Jones* highlighted as being unexpectedly water intensive. Who knew, for example, that it took 5.4 gallons to produce a head of broccoli, or 3.3 gallons to grow a single tomato? This information about the water footprint of food products – that is, the amount of water required to produce them – is important to understand, especially for a state that dedicates about 80 percent of its water to agriculture.

But for those truly interested in lowering their water footprint, those numbers pale next to the water required to fatten livestock. A 2012 study in the journal Ecosystems by Mesfin M. Mekonnen and Arjen Y. Hoekstra, both at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, tells an important story. Beef turns out to have an overall water footprint of roughly 4 million gallons per ton produced. By contrast, the water footprint for "sugar crops" like sugar beets is about

52,000 gallons per ton; for vegetables it’s 85,000 gallons per ton; and for starchy roots it’s about 102,200 gallons per ton.

Read the whole story