Are food tastes evolving or cyclical?

By Jennie Yabroff, Newsweek

A writer declares in the *New York Times* that Americans eat far too many animal products; he advises that if we do as the French do and limit our intake of meat, we will be healthier and spend less money on food. Michael Pollan, in this month's food issue of the *Times* magazine? No, a reader with the initials A.B.C., writing to the paper—in 1856. Instead of bacon and eggs, A.B.C. suggests Americans begin their mornings with café au lait, defined as a "decoction" of coffee with boiled milk—still a popular breakfast choice, as the lines at any Starbucks will attest.

Food writing is almost always infused with nostalgia. But when it comes to food trends, we have a recurring case of cultural amnesia. The Food Network, molecular gastronomy, vegans, locavores, heritage chickens, the obesity tax: it's easy to assume that our current obsession with food is unprecedented. Surely our palates are more sophisticated, our recipes more complex, and our ideas about health and nutrition more enlightened than ever. In fact, most of our current obsessions are as old as Spanish cream. Never tasted it? It was all the rage in 1878, and, after reinterpretations as Bavarian cream, pot de crème, and crème brûlée, was featured on the Food Network's Everyday Italian in its current faddish, egg-free incarnation, panna cotta, last May.

The Essential New York Times Cookbook, a nearly 1,000-page, bright-red doorstop (ideal for pressing terrines, says the book's editor, Amanda Hesser), proves that when it comes to what we eat, there's no such thing as invention, merely reinterpretation. In compiling the book, the first compendium of *Times* recipes since Craig Claiborne's 1961 version, Hesser

solicited suggestions from readers, ransacked the Times's archives, and tested recipes spanning 150 years, throwing out any she wouldn't make again. She found that not only have our tastes changed less than we think they have, but food has always been a key indicator of who we think we are—and who we aspire to be.

Read the whole story

Wish list for Truckee Community Christmas program

The Truckee Community Christmas program is asking locals to open their hearts to help make the holidays brighter for several hundred less fortunate local families and individuals.

Serving the community in its seventeenth year as an all-volunteer umbrella organization coordinating the efforts of several groups that rally to assist fellow townspeople in need, the Truckee Community Christmas program oversees the collection and distribution of food, toy, and clothing donations.



Here are things that are needed:

Food: Look for food collection barrels to appear at local grocery stores the week before Thanksgiving. Cash and gift card donations are gratefully accepted as well. Suggested food

item lists are posted at the collection barrels.

Toys: New unwrapped toys can be placed in collection bins at banks, real estate offices, schools and businesses. Toys that are often in short supply include gifts for infants and teens.

Coats: Warm, clean coats that you are ready to pass along to other families are greatly appreciated. Drop-off gently used winter outerwear at Church of the Mountains, located on Church Street in downtown Truckee.

Senior Holiday Wish program: Donors can provide necessities according to wish lists that residents of the Truckee Senior Center complete. For more information, contact Jesse Griffin at (530) 587.5152 or email xmas.wish@hotmail.com. Area homebound seniors will be taken care of by a team representing the Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation’s Queen of Hearts.

Sorting, packing and wrapping: The Sierra Mountain Community Education Center on Donner Pass Road will serve as command central Dec. 16-17 for sorting, packing and wrapping of all donated items.

For those who prefer to help by writing a check, contributions may be mailed to Truckee Community Christmas, P.O. Box 2955, Truckee, CA 96160. Money will be primarily used to purchase food gift cards. All donations are tax deductible.

For general information about any component of Truckee Community Christmas, call the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce at (530) 587.2757.

Acceptance – the dominating theme at South Tahoe schools

By Kathryn Reed

“There is no alternative for being yourself.”

That is the message on the back of South Tahoe High School Ally T-shirts.

Ally isn’t an acronym. It means friend or supporter. It is, though, the name of the gay straight alliance at the high school.



Adam Northam presents Rachel's Challenge at STMS on Nov. 9. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Bridey Heidel has been the adviser for all six years it has been active at STHS. Tuesday night was the first time she and students spoke to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education about the club.

“We are not a tolerance group. We are an acceptance group,” Heidel said.

It was a fitting presentation considering across the parking lot Adam Northam was giving a presentation to approximately 60 people, with a third of them youngsters, about Rachel's Challenge. He had been at South Tahoe Middle School all-day; first for two student assemblies and then working with nearly 80 students on a leadership piece of the program.

Rachel Scott was the first person kill April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School in Colorado.

The message in her story is students have the power to generate a chain reaction of kindness, which will ideally silence bullying.

In some ways, that is exactly what Heidel has done with Ally. One way she knows she is getting the acceptance message out is no longer are the group's bulletin boards torn down.

It's not just gay teens in the group. It's for anyone who believes in equality and standing up for the rights of all.

Last year Heidel took a group of students to a gay prom at UNR that was geared toward high school and college students.

"It was great to watch kids dance without looking over their shoulder," Heidel said.

She hopes one day a club like Ally is not needed because the acceptance will be that universal.

It's programs like Rachel's Challenge that STMS Principal Beth Delacour says need to keep coming into the schools to deliver the message that bullying isn't acceptable, small gestures like a smile can go a long way, and pre-judging isn't the answer.

After the 9:30 assembly the morning of Nov. 9 many students were in tears. The message was powerful at times – certainly the images of Columbine are gripping. For many of these students it was likely the first time they had seen them. Some

were not born when this tragedy happened.

The message to dare to dream, choose positive influences and utter kind words are all worthy.

Lost, though, in some of Rachel's Challenge, is the message. This is because the delivery gets bogged down in some farfetched coincidences and stories that don't ring true.

As a man devoted to God, Rachel's father, Darrell, first started the nonprofit Columbine Redemption. From there, Rachel's Challenge took off. It's a mega-business.

At least for eighth-grader Samantha Buscher, it was a mega-message that she heard.

"It was really inspirational to me, just knowing this girl gave her life to help change the world," Buscher said.

Chase realty wins 2 marketing awards

Top luxury real estate professionals from across the U.S. and Canada gathered in Austin late last month to compete for "best in the business" marketing awards. Lake Tahoe-based Susan Lowe and Shari Chase of Chase International came home with two of the five top awards: Best Property Marketing and Best Market Update Report.

Best Property Marketing entry was based on marketing done for Tranquility, currently the nations' third most expensive home for sale, which Lowe has co-listed with Chase.



Sue Lowe

Lowe’s Best Market Update Report win was based on her quarterly statistical analysis of the Lake Tahoe market by price band and by community.

Judging is done each year by independent advertising professionals.

Celebrating Mark Twain’s 175th birthday

On the occasion of Mark Twain’s 175th birthday, the Mark Twain Cultural Center will host a celebration and the old boy himself (impersonator McAvoy Layne) will hold forth on the balance of the autobiography that Twain asked be withheld for 100 years after his death.

The celebration, which honors one of Lake Tahoe’s most well-known writers and pioneers, takes place Nov. 30 at 7pm at the new Mark Twain Cultural Center at 760 Mays Blvd., Ste. 10 in Incline Village.

General admission tickets are $19.99 for adults and $9.99 for students.

For 20 years, in more than 2,000 performances from Leningrad University in Russia to C-Span, McAvoy Layne has preserved the

wit and wisdom of Mark Twain. McAvoy is also the author of the soon to be published “Becoming Mark Twain” and winner of the Nevada Award for Excellence in school and library service. He portrays the ghost of Mark Twain in A&E’s “Biography of Mark Twain” and in the Discovery Channel’s Cronkite award-winning documentary, “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.”

For more information about Mark Twain’s 175th Birthday Bash and to purchase tickets, go to www.GhostofTwain.com or call (775) 831.2820.

North Face Masters at Kirkwood

The fourth annual North Face Masters is the largest big mountain snowboarding competition in the country, and it provides a venue for the best snowboarders in the world to compete for a total $45,000 cash prize purse.

Competitors will be at Kirkwood March 3-5.

Holiday jazz at Hyatt in Incline

Ring in the holiday season with the Holiday Jazz Fest at Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa & Casino, Nov. 26-27. This annual two-day celebratory musical event features Peter White, Rick Braun, Mindi Abair, Gerald Albright, Lalah Hathaway and

Kirk Whalum.

Doors open each evening at 7pm and live entertainment begins at 8pm.

Two ticket options are available. Individual VIP Tickets, priced at $95 each/per night include preferred seating at the concert, plus access to the pre-concert wine reception in the high limit slot area of Hyatt's casino featuring select wines from Rodney Strong Vineyards. Reserved Seating Tickets are also available for both concerts at $65 each/per night.

Individual tickets to the Holiday Jazz Festival may be purchased through Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe's Concierge Desk, or through Omega Events at www.omegaevents.com or

(949) 360.7800.

Tree, menorah lighting in South Tahoe

South Lake Tahoe's annual Community Tree and Menorah Lighting is Dec. 3 from 5-7pm at the visitors center on Highway 50 by the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center.

Festivities include:

· Santa Claus and his elves

· Free sleigh/carriage rides from Borges Sleigh and Carriage Rides compliments of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority

· Music by Derek Tarpey, Lake DJ, and carols sung by Tahoe Schools Choir

· Complimentary hot chocolate, cider and cookies.

· Food and toy drive – please bring donations for Christmas Cheer

· Santa will be available for picture taking – bring your own camera

Additional parking available at South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

ShelterBox relief org speaker at Soroptimist meeting

On Nov. 11 at 8am, Ryder Evans will speak at the Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra meeting about ShelterBox.

ShelterBox is an international relief charity that delivers emergency shelter, warmth and dignity to people affected by disaster worldwide. This organization responds instantly to disasters delivering aid as quickly as possible to the people who need it most.

Evans is on the Douglas County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue team, which has ties to this international organization.

ShelterBox is helping with the relief from the tsunami in Indonesia.

ShelterBox relies solely on public donations.

The Soroptimis meeting, which includes breakfast and coffee, is at the Lake Tahoe Senior Center at 3051 Lake Tahoe Blvd.,

South Lake Tahoe.

For more info, call (530) 409.2791 or go to www.SITahoeSierra.org.

Lakeview Commons looks better without orange fences

South Lake Tahoe City Councilman-elect Tom Davis and *Lake Tahoe News* Publisher Kathryn Reed were having a casual conversation last week about the orange fencing around trees at Lakeview Commons – and why it's there when a chain link fence keeps people out of the dormant construction zone.

Shortly thereafter Davis spoke to City Manager Tony O'Rourke and City Attorney Patrick Enright about the unsightly orange fencing.



Orange fencing at Lakeview Commons is gone. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The orange is gone.

Though this is just a small gesture, it’s one that was acted upon quickly, decisively and makes one of the central areas of South Lake Tahoe look much better.

Lake Tahoe News says thank you to everyone involved and hopes many more beneficial acts – small and large – are in store for the South Shore in the immediate future.

– Lake Tahoe News