K’s Kitchen: Spicy topping for vegetables

By Kathryn Reed

It seems like so many of the food magazines I was reading at the start of summer had a slew of recipes for burger toppings, dips and spreads. They all sounded so yummy, but I never made any of them.

This weekend Sue was barbecuing corn and I thought something other than butter would be good. I went searching for the recipes. I found torn out pages for burger toppings. They either sounded horrible for corn or I didn’t have the ingredients.



So, off to the kitchen I went to peruse what was in the fridge and cupboards. Below is the concoction I came up with.

It was good on the corn, but I have to agree with my mom when she says that sweet corn this time of year doesn’t really need anything – not even butter.

But a couple days later hot off the grill came portabella mushrooms and cauliflower. By this time the flavors of the spread had come together and tasted even better.

When you first mix everything together, stop if it seems a little mild. If you can chill the mixture overnight, that is best. But even a few hours would be good. Taste it along the way and add whatever you think it needs to have the level of spiciness you like.

Spicy Vegetable Spread

6 ounces Nonfat Greek yogurt

¼ C low fat mayonnaise

1 T lemon juice

Hot sauce (to taste)

Cayenne pepper (to taste)

Garlic salt (to taste)

Mix all the ingredients. Adjust seasonings to your liking.

12-week class to become master gardener

People who have aspired to learn more about high elevation gardening and landscaping and want to encourage other gardeners by sharing science-based, sustainable gardening and landscaping information may want to become a master gardener.

Training to become a Lake Tahoe master gardener will begin Sept. 6 in South Lake Tahoe. The training continues for 12 weeks each Friday from 1-5:30pm.

Tahoe basin residents from California and Nevada may participate.

The University of California Cooperative Extension-Central Sierra, in partnership with the Tahoe Resource Conservation

District, is offering this year’s Lake Tahoe Master Gardener volunteer training. Upon completion of the 50-hour training course, certified Lake Tahoe master gardeners will provide the community with research-based information about home horticulture and gardening.

The training will consist of core programs in horticulture and botany, native plants, soils, irrigation, pest management, plant nutrition, diseases, soil health, forest health, wildfire defensible space considerations plus additional topics specific to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Once certified, master gardeners volunteer 50 hours during their first year of service and 25 hours in subsequent years. Volunteer activities include answering questions via email, phone and at events such as the farmers’ market; developing and teaching workshops and classes; one-on-one consultations; writing articles for the media; as well as other outreach and educational opportunities.

The application is available online and is due by Aug. 14 at 5pm. For questions, call (530) 621.5528.

Stargazing event at Spooner Lake

Professional stargazer Gigi Giles will explain what’s in the sky on Aug. 24 at Spooner Lake.

Participants will be able to peer through high-powered telescopes and astronomical binoculars at elevation 7,000 feet.

Wear comfortable shoes and bring a light jacket and flashlight. Young children and pets are not advised to attend.

The park entrance fees are waived for the event. Meet at Spooner Lake Park's upper parking lot. The event is from 8:30-10pm.

2012 one of 10 warmest on record

By Neela Banerjee, Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON – Last year was one of the 10 hottest since global average temperatures have been recorded, according to an assessment of worldwide climate trends by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"The State of the Climate in 2012," released Tuesday, paints a sobering portrait of vast swaths of the planet transformed by rising temperatures. Arctic sea ice reached record lows during the summer thaw. In Greenland, about 97% of its ice sheet melted in the summer, far greater than in years past.

Greenhouse gas emissions continued to rise. In early May, the ratio of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere surpassed 400 parts per million in an average daily reading at Hawaii's Mauna Loa Observatory, thought to be the highest concentration in millions of years.

The report is a like "an annual check-up for the planet," said Kathryn Sullivan, undersecretary of Commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA's acting administrator. It documents "remarkable changes" in crucial areas like Arctic ice, sea

levels and greenhouse gas emissions, she said.

Read the whole story

Free bike racks available for S. Tahoe businesses

A few bike racks remain available free of charge to businesses within the city limits of South Lake Tahoe.

These racks are made available by the city and were designed by the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition.

Businesses interested in bike racks must request an application form from the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition which is managing the application process. The city will deliver the racks, but each business must install the racks.

Email biketahoe@aol.com to request the application packet.

Cash coming to help Nevada's mental health system

By Andrew Doughman, Las Vegas Sun

The legislative Interim Finance Committee approved $2.1 million in emergency mental health funding on Tuesday after spending hours criticizing Nevada's inadequate treatment of mentally ill residents and visitors.

Legislators said the state of Nevada's mental health system appears to have reached crisis levels. Failures in the system, they said, have led to overcrowding in emergency rooms, backlogs and delays in jails, loss of accreditation for one major state hospital, difficulties in recruiting quality staff because of pay that's not competitive, and inefficient, expensive practices of moving mentally-ill inmates between Southern and Northern Nevada.

The $2.1 million would allow the state to renovate and reopen a state facility in Southern Nevada, hire more staff, pay for a mental health "drop-in" center and provide for more patient beds.

Gov. Brian Sandoval's chief of staff called the funding "urgent" in the wake of a dramatic spike in the numbers of mental health patients flooding Southern Nevada's emergency rooms and a crisis at Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital in Las Vegas.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• MontBleu casino in Stateline will fire up the vats and get the stew pots steaming Aug. 24 with the inaugural Boil 'n Fry Day Festival featuring crayfish from Lake Tahoe.

• Labor Day weekend fireworks on the South Shore are that Sunday starting at 8:30pm.

• Long-time environmental advocate Warner Chabot has joined the Tahoe Fund board.

• Jazzercise and Harveys are sponsoring two one-hour free Jazzersie events. One is Aug. 12, the other Aug. 14; both at 6:30pm at the outdoor concert venue.

• The bus company – Standard Parking – that made a gay couple sit in the back of the bus is the same firm that used to run the South Lake Tahoe parking garage.

South Tahoe cracking down on hoarders



Hoarding issues become health and safety issues. These are before and after pictures of a South Lake Tahoe residence. Photos/Provided

By Bill Potts

Hoarding! We've all seen it, and shows like "Extreme Hoarders" have brought us up close and personal with some of the people and places afflicted with pathological collecting disorder.

I encounter residences affected by hoarding while investigating complaints of substandard housing or during required inspections under the Multi-Family Dwelling Inspection Program.

Typically, the heavy clutter within a hoarder's residence constitutes a violation of several health and safety codes and represents a potential hazard to all of the building occupants. Excessive storage of combustibles, blocking of exit pathways and obstruction of egress windows in bedrooms are some of the fire code violations observed. There may also be violations of health code, due to the propensity on the part of some hoarders to collect food and other perishables.

Ultimately, it comes down to evaluating the effect of the hoarder's habits on the building as a whole.

In high density apartment complexes many walls are shared and unfortunately one occupant's habits can have a profound effect on their neighbor's health and safety. In situations where an imminent fire and health hazard is present and the hoarder is unwilling to take immediate action, condemnation of the dwelling may be the only practical choice.

In such cases, removal of the hoarder and other occupants from the dwelling is necessary, followed by mandatory abatement (clean-up) of the premises.

The good news is that in the majority of cases, conditions are not severe enough to warrant immediate drastic intervention. Working with hoarders is difficult and may require the involvement of several government regulatory agencies, including county Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Protective Services (CPS), Mental Health, Environmental Management and, of course, the South Lake Tahoe's Building

Division.

However, using a firm, coordinated approach with monitoring and well defined goals, progress can be made until compliance is eventually achieved.

The pictures were taken in the residence of a hoarder that came to the attention of the building division nearly two years ago. I prescribed a prioritized, incremental method for reduction of combustible materials and clearing of exit pathways and egress windows. This gentleman still has work to do, but as you can see from the pictures, he has come a long way toward compliance and everybody is safer now.

I’m proud of what he has done so far.

Bill Potts is the senior housing inspector for South Lake Tahoe.

TOCCATA commemorating 9/11 anniversary

TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – concludes the 2013 Tahoe Summer MusicFest with a concert series commemorating the 12th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy.

The series features famed violinist Elizabeth Pitcairn performing Beethoven’s Concerto for Violin in D major Op.61 on the legendary Red Stradivarius Violin. The concert will conclude with Mozart’s symphonic choral masterpiece, Requiem, featuring vocal soloists and the Tahoe Symphony Chorus.

Concerts are:

Sept. 11 at 7pm at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church in Incline Village;

Sept. 13 at 7pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe;

Sept. 14 at 7pm at Sierra of the Shepherd – Carson City;

Sept. 17 at 7pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Reno.

Tickets are $30 for adults, $25 seniors, and $5 students ages 19-23. Students younger than 19 are admitted free. Preferred seating is available for $40 adults and $15 students and may be reserved online. Tickets can be purchased by credit card online or at the door by cash or check 30 minutes prior to the concert.

For more information, call (775) 313.9697.

Opinion: Congress must approve and fund LTRA

By Richard Solbrig

In the summer of 2007, the Angora Fire along Lake Tahoe’s South Shore scorched almost 5 square miles and destroyed more than 250 homes. A California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission Report issued after the Angora Fire included a finding that, “Much of the Tahoe basin public and private water distribution infrastructure is inadequate to provide fire flows necessary to meet fire codes and fire agency needs.”

The Lake Tahoe Community Fire Protection Partnership

(partnership), a bi-state collaboration, was formed in response to the report's findings. In 2009, with the active leadership of Sen. Dianne Feinstein the partnership began to implement an infrastructure upgrade program that will deliver enhanced fire protection to our bi-state region. The leadership of the congressional delegation and the U.S. Forest Service has provided $13 million in federal partnership assistance, leveraging local funding to secure improved fire suppression infrastructure for the region.

The partnership funding delivers improved emergency response capabilities. Partnership accomplishments are numerous and include:

• 80,901 linear feet (15.3 miles) of water line with new fire hydrants every 500 lineal feet that deliver reliable fire fighting response;

• 10 water storage tanks with a 3.8 million gallon storage capacity;

• 5 booster pump stations to increase water supply flow; and

• 6 emergency generators to provide backup energy to deliver water supply should energy disruptions occur.

The partnership illustrates the benefits of collaboration of all the public water systems in the Tahoe basin. The just introduced Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (S.1451) takes the lessons learned from the partnership and authorizes water infrastructure improvements for fire suppression, as part of a comprehensive strategy to restore and protect the environment in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The partnership applauds the sponsors of this bill – Sens. Feinstein, Boxer, Reid and Heller.

We urge all communities in the Tahoe basin to join with the partnership and support this important legislation that will deliver increased security for the unique ecosystem that is Lake Tahoe.

Richard Solbrig is general manager for the South Tahoe Public Utility District, the lead agency of the Lake Tahoe Community Fire Protection Partnership.