Food and beer festival in Truckee

Dragonfly’s Beer & Food Festival is March 7 from 6 to 8:30pm in Truckee.

Attendees can stop in anytime during the evening and roam the food and beer stations. Each of the six food items are not only paired with a specialty beer from Firestone Brewing Co., but created using the beer as an ingredient. Fireside is based in Paso Robles

Tickets are $35 per person. Tickets are available at Dragonfly or by calling (530) 587.0557.

Dragonfly is located upstairs at 10118 Donner Pass Road in Truckee.

Eat and ski to raise money

Experience the exhilaration of gliding through the forest on cross country ski trails working up a hearty appetite, and then enjoying gourmet grazing right on the trail.

Outdoor enthusiasts and foodies can ski or snowshoe from one food station to the next during the 11th annual Gourmet Ski Tour, a fundraiser for the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Association at the Tahoe Cross Country Center on March 11 starting at 1pm.

Dress in your favorite dance costume: this year’s theme is “snow dance” with such costume suggestions as disco, hip hop, or ballet. Winner of the costume contest wins a Tahoe XC ski

season pass.

Beginners may rent skis or snowshoes at the Tahoe Cross Country Center and move around at their leisure tasting everything from soup to nuts. The afternoon ends with margaritas and live music by The Drunken Neighbors from 2:30-5pm.

Tickets are $32 for adults (includes a half-day trail pass), $27 for juniors ages 13-17, children 12 and under can feast on complimentary hot dogs. A limited number of tickets are available. Call (530) 583.5475 or go online for tickets.

Redefining buying meat in bulk has nothing to do with big box store

By Blair Anthony Robertson, Sacramento Bee

Joshua Lurie-Terrell and his wife, Jineui Hong, often buy their meat in bulk. So do some of their friends and neighbors.

A caravan to the local big-box superstore? Hardly.

Part of a growing movement nationwide, they’re doing their shopping the old-fashioned way, albeit with some newfangled twists sending out emails to friends, pooling their money, logging onto an area farm’s website to size up the product and then placing the order.

They’ve had success going this route with Jenny Cavaliere, a

college-educated, first-generation farmer who owns and operates High Sierra Beef, a 63-acre farm in Oregon House, about 65 miles north of Sacramento.

“She’s very honest and upfront about the prices,” said Lurie-Terrell, who lives in midtown Sacramento. “I really like the idea of buying totally organic, grass-fed beef and getting it in exactly the cut that I want at a fair price.” He said it pencils out to $7 or $8 a pound.

Folks like Lurie-Terrell and his circle of friends are going this route, pooling money to buy large quantities of locally sourced meat.

Their motivations are varied. Folks want to buy locally. They demand high quality. They seek a personal connection with the farmers and they want to know the animals are treated humanely. They also see the environmental ramifications: Small, ethically minded farms tend to pollute less than massive corporate entities, and animals raised and sold locally have fewer miles on them.

“It was like this in communities 100 years ago. I truly believe that people want a connection. They’re realizing that the larger, corporate food systems are not the total solution,” said Cavaliere, whose farm is considered minuscule by factory-farm standards. California’s largest beef producer, Harris Ranch, for instance, has thousands of acres and manages a herd of about 100,000 cattle.

What’s new is the convenience of it all. With a phone call or an online transaction, the meat is butchered, packaged and made ready for pick-up or delivery. A simple Internet search reveals whose beef is grass-fed, which farms are organic. Some farms routinely update prices and product availability on their websites.

Cavaliere said that at least two distinct groups are leading this meat-buying movement: young and middle-aged adults who

are knowledgeable about quality food and the politics of corporate farming, and parents seeking healthier, more natural meat for their children.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Not the run-of-the-mill tofu dish

By Kathryn Reed

All of a sudden I hear a ruckus in the kitchen. Then the sounds of cooking follow. Pretty soon an aroma I can’t quite make out reaches the other side of the house. I go to investigate.



Sue is busy stirring this and that. Clearly, I had no idea dinner was going to be anything other than the popcorn we shared at the movie theater. Well, we didn’t really share it. I pretty much ate a whole large buttered popcorn by myself. No wonder Sue was hungry.

That’s why it wasn’t until the next day that I tried this concoction of hers. She got the recipe from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. It’s a keeper.

We both agreed it could use more peanut sauce. The cucumber adds a wonderful crunchiness. And, yes, there is a difference between an English cucumber and the regular ones.

Sue said it was easy and quick to make. She also used some sesame oil.

While it says it serves 3 to 4, it only fed the two of us once. But we didn’t have anything else with it.

Peanut Sauce-Braised Tofu (serves 3-4)

12 ounces extra-firm tofu

Black pepper, to taste

2 T olive oil

½ C jarred peanut sauce, plus more if desired

½ English cucumber, peeled and cut into sticks

2 green onions, trimmed and thinly sliced on the bias

Sesame seeds, for garnish

Cooked rice, for serving

Cut the block of tofu into 1/2 -inch slices. Cut again diagonally to make triangles, and lay on paper towels to drain for 5-10 minutes. Season with black pepper.

Warm the olive oil in a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat until very hot, but not smoking. Add the tofu triangles in one layer, being careful not to crowd the pan. You may need to do this in two batches. Cook until one side is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Flip over and finish cooking, another 2-3 minutes. Drain briefly on paper towels.

Return all the tofu to the pan, and reduce heat to low. Stir in the peanut sauce until the tofu is evenly coated; cook a couple more minutes until the tofu has soaked up some of the sauce.

Transfer to a bowl, and top with the cucumbers, green onions and sprinkling of sesame seeds. Spoon over rice to serve, adding more peanut sauce if desired.

Free IHOP pancakes raises money for children's hospitals

For the seventh consecutive year, IHOP restaurants nationwide will offer each guest a free short stack of its famous buttermilk pancakes on National Pancake Day in an effort to raise awareness and funds for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

For every short stack of buttermilk pancakes served on National Pancake Day – Feb. 28, IHOP guests are invited to make a voluntary donation to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Donations made at the IHOP in South Lake Tahoe will benefit the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals' program at UC Davis Children's Hospital.

IHOP hopes to raise $2.7 million this year, with a goal to bring the total amount of funds raised to more than $10 million.

To find a local IHOP or to donate, go online.

The promotion that Tuesday goes from 7am-10pm.

Since the inception of National Pancake Day in 2006, IHOP has raised nearly $8 million and given away more than 14 million pancakes to support charities in the communities in which it operates.

California wine grape harvest drops 7% in 2011

By Melonie Turner, Sacramento Business Journal

California's 2011 wine grape crush totaled 3.3 million tons, down 7 percent from 2010, according to a preliminary report by the state Department of Food and Agriculture.



Red wine varieties accounted for the biggest share of all grapes crushed, at 1.9 million tons, down 7 percent from 2010. White wine varieties totaled 1.4 million tons, also down 7 percent, according to the preliminary wine grape crush report.

"The crush report confirms what growers already know, prices have turned the corner and demand for California wine grapes looks strong," John Aguirre, president of the California Association of Winegrape Growers, said in a news release. "Our focus is to make sure California growers are positioned to meet the higher demand and that we don't lose market share to foreign growers."

Read the whole story

Winnemucca eatery's Basque dressing hits shelves

By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

A bit of Winnemucca Basque cuisine has made it to the aisles of Northern Nevada's biggest supermarkets.

The Martin Hotel dressing, the house salad topping on the historic site's dining room tables, now can be found in Raley's and Scolari's supermarkets from Reno to Elko.

It's been a remarkable ride for Martin owner John Arant since the idea crossed his mind in 2010 to bottle the oil, vinegar and garlic concoction and sell it beyond the restaurant's doors.

"It's been interesting to watch the way the big companies reach out to help the little guy," he said. "We've really gone to school in so many different ways."

The dressing was first made by the Martin's former owners, the Uriguen family, in the 1950s. Arant's product bears a narrative of the dressing's history on the back and acknowledges cook Rosie Uriguen. Each bottle has a 1-ounce container of "prairie dust" – salt, pepper and garlic salt – attached by shrink wrap.

Arant said the dressing has been such a staple of the restaurant's Basque fare over the years that he began chatting up a possible mass production option with one of his food suppliers who, in turn, connected him with a Salt Lake City packaging firm.

With the requisite permitting and labeling analysis from University of Utah laboratories, Arant's staff made the first batch of 50 cases, six bottles to a case, and persuaded the

Uptown Market in Winnemucca to sell it.

“I thought that (50 cases) would last six months. It lasted three weeks,” he said.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Mushrooms capture the heart and stomach

By Kathryn Reed

I have a feeling I won’t find much love Valentine’s night. I have my choice of two school board meetings to attend. Not that these boards aren’t made up of lovely people, but, well, it’s just another second Tuesday of the month for me.



That’s why I spent Saturday night making a special meal. I was trying out two new recipes – the entrée and dessert. Entrée is a keeper – and I’m so glad there are leftovers. Dessert – a bomb. Considering the latter came via a relative who when she died the song “The Wicked Witch is Dead” echoed through my head, maybe it was karma.

Ah, but the main dish – it is so scrumptious. I have this thing for mushrooms. The dish is definitely rich. My guess is it is not something kids would like – but that just means more for the adults at the table.

I just wish I had dried some of the wild edibles I found in Lake Tahoe last year. My goodness, they are pricy at the grocery store. Oh, but the dish is so good, so splurge a bit.

I didn’t find the exact combo of shrooms the recipe called for, but had the right quantity – even a little more because I really, really like mushrooms.

The meal was complemented by a spinach salad that had sliced mushrooms, dried cranberries and almond slivers. This was all lightly coated with a vinaigrette dressing.

The wine for the evening – a 2006 Caymus Cabernet.

The recipe is from the January-February 2012 *Cooking Light* magazine.

Mushroom Lasagna

1 C boiling water

1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms

1 T butter

2 T olive oil, divided

1¼ C chopped shallots (about 4)

1 8-ounce package presliced cremini mushrooms

1 4-ounce package presliced exotic mushroom blend

1 tsp salt, divided

½ tsp freshly ground black pepper, divided

1½ T chopped fresh thyme

6 garlic cloves, minced and divided

½ C white wine

1/3 C (3 ounces) 1/3-less-fat cream cheese

2 T chopped fresh chives, divided

1.1 ounces all-purpose flour (about ¼ C)

Cooking spray

9 no-boil lasagna noodles

½ C (2 ounces) grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine 1 cup boiling water and porcini. Cover and let stand 30 minutes; strain mixture through a cheesecloth-lined sieve over a bowl, reserving liquid and mushrooms.

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add shallot to pan; sauté 3 minutes. Add cremini and exotic mushrooms, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper; sauté 6 minutes or until mushrooms are browned. Add thyme and 3 garlic gloves; sauté 1 minute, stir in wine; bring to a boil. Cook 1 minute or until liquid almost evaporates, scraping pan to loosen brown bits. Remove from heat; stir in cream cheese and 1 tablespoon chives. Add reserved porcini mushrooms.

Heat a saucepan over medium-high heat. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add reaming 3 garlic cloves to pan; sauté 30 seconds. Add the reserved porcini liquid, 2¾ cups milk, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper; bring to boil. Combine remaining ¼ cup milk and flour in a small bowl; stir with a whisk.

Spoon ½ cup sauce into 11 x 7-inch glass or ceramic baking dish coated with cooking spray, and top with 3 noodles. Spread half of mushroom mixture over noodles. Repeat layers, ending with remaining sauce. Sprinkle cheese over top. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until golden. Top with 1 tablespoon chopped chives.

Conference focuses on survival of small farms

In the midst of a challenging economy, the 2012 Nevada Small Farm Conference looks to agriculture to help communities rebuild local economies.

Western Nevada College will host this year's Nevada Small Farm Conference March 8-10 at the Fallon Convention Center and Western Nevada College Fallon campus. The event includes four pre-conference workshops, two days of farming seminars, and a Friday evening reception. A variety of topics will be covered, including marketing local beef, small-scale cheese operations, organic farming, hops and barley production, food distribution, business planning and more.

Developing local food systems is a priority of the conference. Speakers from the 2011 conference will return to continue talks aimed at developing a system for small farms to compete in today's industrial food system. U.S. Foods and the Great Basin Community Food Co-op, two organizations at the forefront of these efforts, will highlight their operations.

The Great Basin Community Food Co-op will talk about its online ordering and distribution system for small farms. The program debuts with the opening of the expanded co-op this spring.

For conference details, registration information and fees, visit WNC's website or contact Ann Louhela at (775) 351.2551 or louhelaa@wnc.edu.

Dining at Dragonfly helps cancer foundation

Dragonfly Restaurant and Sushi Bar has paired up with Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation to help raise money for children battling cancer.

The Basa meal prepared by chef and owner Billy McCullough will donate $3 of the sales to this foundation to alleviate the burden for three Truckee families.

The Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation's vision is to reach every family affected by childhood cancer in the Northern Nevada and Eastern Sierra regions. Their mission is to enhance the quality of life for children with cancer and their families by providing financial assistance and compassionate support programs.

Take advantage of this chance to assist local families with children who are battling cancer from now through Feb. 28.

Dragonfly is located upstairs at 10118 Donner Pass Road, in the middle of downtown Truckee.