Food Fest benefits South Shore ed foundation

The 7th annual Food Fest is Oct. 8 from 6:30-10pm at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. This is the major fundraiser for the Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, which supports enrichment programs in all LTUSD schools.

The event features food from Tahoe restaurants, wine and beer from local wineries and distributors, music, and silent and live auctions.

Tickets are $35 and are available at all school offices, the district office, and Fox Gas station.

Mixologists test their prowess – raise money for Barton Foundation

By Kathryn Reed

With a full moon just days away and a chill in the air signaling the change of seasons, shooting the "Winter Skyy" seemed like the appropriate thing to do Thursday night.

Instead of sipping the cocktail, guests were told to knock it back in one gulp – like a shooter. That's how Christina, a waitress at Blue Water Bistro, was instructing people to drink the restaurant's libation.

This mix of vodka, Grand Marnier, cream, vanilla, nutmeg and

organic white chocolate shavings – plus a few other ingredients – was the winning cocktail of the night.



Blue Water Bistro's Winter Skyy won the Sept. 8 cocktail contest. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The sold-out fundraiser at Riva Grill is the kick-off fundraiser for Barton Foundation's Festival of Tree and Lights. That event is all about raising money for the community clinic while providing (primarily) locals with a weekend worth of holiday fun the first weekend in December.

The Sept. 8 cocktail event pitted eight restaurants and their bartenders against one another to come up with either a new drink just for the evening or bring a signature sensation.

Winter Skyy is a drink Blue Water has on its menu. At the lakefront restaurant it is served to sip, but with such small portions doled out Thursday night the best way to get the mix of flavors was to down it in one swig.

Coming in second was Naked Fish's "Naked Nectar", while last year's winner – Edgewood – came in third with "Over the Edge-wood".

Other competitors included Fresh Ketch, Lakeside, Riva Grill,

Capisce?, and Chart House.



Attendees enjoy a Tahoe sunset from Riva Grill's deck.

Organizer Laurie Brazil said with the 150 tickets selling out, a larger venue may need to be found next year. This was the second year for the cocktail fundraiser.



Judges Chris Larson, from left, Carol Chaplin and Howie Nave confer about cocktails.

Judging the drinks were weather dude Chris Larson of Channel 8 in Reno, LTVA head honcho Carol Chaplin and KRLT radio guy-Improv comic Howie Nave.

Before the judging, Larson told *Lake Tahoe News,* "I like

beer.”

Chaplin said, “I drink martinis and tequila so the vodka is absolutely the right ingredient for me.”

Nave, the only judge invited back from last year, seemed to be enjoying everything put in front of him.

9/11-themed wines making some families sick at the thought

By Mike Jaccarino, New York Daily News

A 9/11-themed wine – created to help fund raise for the Ground Zero memorial – has victims’ families seeing red.

Lieb Family Cellars of Mattituck, L.I., says it will donate up to 10% of each sale of the 9/11 Memorial Commemorative Merlot and 9/11 Memorial Commemorative Chardonnay to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum.

But critics say the pittance doesn’t justify the tackiness on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks.

“What’s next? A 9/11 pastrami sandwich?” asked Councilman Peter Vallone Jr., D-Queens.

“I don’t care about the small amount that they donate to charity. If anyone is profiting off of 9/11, then this wine leaves a very bad taste in my mouth.”

Retailers will pocket $6 from each bottle sold – at the tasteless price of $19.11.

Lieb Family Cellars says it will donate every cent not spent

on making the wine – an estimated $1.15 to $1.91 per bottle.

Read the whole story

Ravioli entries being accepted for Reno competition

Ravioli recipes are being accepted until Sept. 16 for the 30th Annual Eldorado Great Italian Festival at the Eldorado Hotel Casino in Reno.

The festival is Oct 8-9.

The ravioli winner will be a judge for the festival's sauce cook-off, and the winning ravioli will be served during the festival at La Strada.

Go online for more information.

Delay in warm weather means a late wine grape harvest

By Chris Macias, Sacramento Bee

September traditionally ushers in a key time for California's multibillion-dollar wine industry. It's the month when the state's grape harvest hits high gear, and for the past seven years, September has simultaneously been proclaimed California Wine Month by the governor.

But where are all the ripe grapes? 2011’s growing season has been hampered by unseasonably cool temperatures and a wet spring, delaying the grape harvest by a few weeks compared with a typical year.

Lodi’s looking at an overall light crop, with a little pinot grigio and chardonnay just starting to be picked.

“We’re starting about three weeks late, but the weather’s been ideal, and I think steadily we’ll catch up,” said Mark Chandler, executive director of the Lodi Woodbridge Winegrape Commission. “The quality looks excellent with the warm afternoons and cool evenings.”

The same just about goes for the Sierra Foothills. Paul Bush, the co-owner of Madroña in El Dorado County, says he doesn’t expect the bulk of his grape crops to be harvested until late September.

Read the whole story

Rib ‘experiment’ has grown to be ‘Best in the West’

By Mel Shields, Sacramento Bee

The growth of John Ascuaga’s Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-Off over its 23 years has been nothing short of phenomenal.

While other special events nationwide have gone begging for attendees in a sad economy, this one is expected to grow even more this year. The fact that it takes place Labor Day weekend, one of the busiest periods in Northern Nevada tourism, doesn’t hurt, but the fact that it has a reputation

for being well-run and providing a great atmosphere for families doesn't hurt either. It's remained remarkably blemish-free.

Last year, visitors to the Reno cook-off managed to polish off 200,000 pounds of ribs. There were a half million people in attendance. This year, the Nugget has ordered 280,000 pounds for the 24 competing cookers, all vying for a piece of the $14,000 cash purse. If that seems a bit small when compared with other competitions, remember that bragging rights are the big prize. The cook-off is usually cited as the country's most prestigious.

The cooker with the target on its forehead is last year's winner, Bone Daddy's BBQ of Midland, Mich. Bone Daddy's feat last year was more impressive because it also won the People's Choice Award.

New competitors are rare in the competition, and there's always a waiting list. This year has allowed for one – Uncle Bub's out of Westmont, Ill., one of the most popular destinations in the Chicago area.

Read the whole story

Study: Soy won't fight bone loss after menopause

By Daniela Hernandez, Los Angeles Times

Soy tablets do little to stave off bone loss among menopausal women, according to new research. Women taking soy supplements also reported more hot flashes and constipation.

After the landmark Women's Health Initiative showed that hormone replacement therapy carried health risks, many women gravitated toward soy products as a safer alternative because soy is rich in isoflavones, so-called "dietary estrogens." Western women were also encouraged by studies that showed that their Asian counterparts, who eat a soy-rich diet, have lower rates of bone fractures, breast cancer andcardiovascular disease.

In this new study, researchers conducted a clinical trial in South Florida between July 2004 and March 2009 to assess whether taking soy supplements delayed bone loss associated with menopause. Nobody – not the subjects, not the scientists – knew who was getting the soy and who was getting a placebo. Women in the trial, 248 in number, were between the ages of 45 and 60, had gone through menopause in the last five years and had hip or lower back bone mineral density T-scores less than -2.0.

Read the whole story

North Shore wine event to raise money for MS group

Wine lovers can enjoy early fall in the Sierra at the 23rd annual Alpen Wine Festival on Sept. 4 from 2-5pm at the Village at Squaw Valley.

All proceeds from the festival benefit Can Do Multiple Sclerosis, a national nonprofit organization sponsoring lifestyle empowerment programs for people with MS and their support partners.

For a $40 donation, guests can enjoy wine from more than 40 Northern California vineyards as live jazz from the Jackie Landrum Band and the Tristan Selzler Trio is played.

Guests can peruse the silent auction and raffle, which includes Squaw Valley lodging packages, shopping sprees, restaurant gift certificates, lift tickets, art and unique wines by the bottle and case.

Last year the Alpen Wine Festival raised more than $25,000 for Can Do MS.

Tickets for the event will be available on site at 1pm. The majority of wines served at the event will be available for purchase at Uncorked at Squaw in the Village at Squaw Valley.

K's Kitchen: Finding a use for oversized zucchini

By Kathryn Reed

Monster zucchinis have three purposes in my book – compost material, used for stuffing, or turned into bread.

I haven't composted since moving to Tahoe, so my choice is turn the green things into something edible. Bread is the choice this week.



With the recipe calling for 2 to 3 cups of the squash, I find it better to buy one big one at the farmers' market instead of several little ones.

For people who grow zucchini (something I did in a former lifetime), it’s easy to have a few get bigger than intended. They just hide so well under their big leaves. Bread and stuffing them – really, it’s the best use for the biggies.

A former massage colleague created the recipe below.

I think zucchini bread is a great breakfast food, good for school lunches, perfect for an afternoon snack, and a good thank you for people sitting at your table talking up your business at the Tuesday farmers’ market in South Lake Tahoe.

A bonus is the loaves can be frozen.

Marla uses Splenda for the white sugar. I always use sugar for baking. This sugar substitute measures up equally – as in 1 cup of sugar = 1 cup of Splenda. Other sugar alternatives are not one-for-one.

Applesauce helps reduce the need for oil. Pay attention to the sugar content on the jar – you don’t want too much.

Marla’s Zucchini Bread

Wet ingredients:

3 eggs

1 C brown sugar

¼ C oil

1/3 C currants, soaked or raisins (optional)

¾ C applesauce

2-3 C zucchini, grated

1 T vanilla extract

Dry ingredients:

1 C white sugar or Splenda

1½ C unbleached flour

1½ C whole wheat flour

1 tsp baking soda

¼ tsp salt

¼ tsp baking powder

1 T cinnamon

½ tsp ground cloves

½ tsp nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease and flour two loaf pans.

Mix wet ingredients together. Sift dry ingredients together. Fold wet mixture into dry mixture. Do not over mix. Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake 1 hour or until toothpick comes out clean.

Makes 2 loaves.

South Shore event pairs wine with barbecue

By Kathryn Reed

Food and wine pairings are nothing new, but beer is the beverage often associated with barbecue. But not if you are

Larry Rice.

Rice owns The Best Barbeque Catering Company in Gardnerville. He is bringing his cooking apparatus to Valhalla four times this season to pair his food with wines from El Dorado County.



On Aug. 24 will be the second event this year, with Bella Grace Vineyards being the featured winery.

“The inspiration for the pairings comes from my love of grilling. I’ve been doing this 20 years professionally,” Rice said.

He is familiar with the wines each winery has so that way he knows what best to put on the grill.

Primarily he cooks with mesquite charcoal for the smoky flavor.

Rice has created three rubs and a barbecue sauce (not yet sold commercially) that he likes to use on the meat and fish he barbecues.

“We have a couple barbecues on trailers and several smaller portable units as well,” Rice said. One trailer is what he brings to the South Shore event. “Everything we do we do on location. Nothing is parboiled or precooked. We put it on the grill fresh and it’s served as soon as it’s off the grill.”

Tickets to the events – Aug. 24, Sept. 21, Oct. 19 – must be purchased ahead of time so Rice knows how much food to bring. Tickets are $34.95 and available online.

This is the first year the Tahoe Tallac Association has had events like this. Fifteen percent of the proceeds go back to the organization.

A list of the remaining events at the Valhalla Art, Music and Film Festival are online.