Dads needed to judge Truckee rib contest

The second annual Truckee RibFest needs your dad as an official rib judge. Kids, write Switchback PR saying why your dad deserves to be an official rib judge this Father’s Day.

One lucky father will get to sample each vendor’s ribs and will receive three additional Truckee Ribfest general admission tickets, a $60 value.

Submissions are due June 13 and should be no longer than one page. The winner will be announced June 16.

Writers can mail, drop off, or email their submissions to Switchback PR + Marketing, Inc. at 10075 West River St., Ste. 206, Truckee, CA 96161, or email ann@switchbackpr.com.

The second annual Truckee RibFest is June 19 from 1-6pm. Festivities also include a beer garden, bounce house and free live music.

Higher price for coffee beans hitting retail market

By Dayton Business Journal

J.M. Smucker Co. is again increasing the price of coffee it sells to retailers, citing the climbing cost of green coffee beans.

The Orville-based maker of Smucker’s jellies, Crisco

shortening and Jif peanut butter said Tuesday it has hiked prices 11 percent on most of the coffees it supplies to merchants.

The coffee brands hit by the price increase include Millstone, Folgers and Dunkin' Donuts.

J.M. Smucker is licensed to sell the Dunkin' Donuts coffee to retailers such as supermarkets, so its price hike does not change coffee prices at the doughnut shop chain.

Smucker joins Starbucks Corp., Sara Lee Corp. and Kraft Foods in raising prices since last spring, all of the companies saying the hikes were tied to increases in raw coffee bean costs.

Read the whole story

More craft brews turning to cans

By Tom Daykin, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

MILWAUKEE – For decades, the pffsst sound that comes from popping open a can of beer usually meant the drinker was about to imbibe a mass-produced brew like Budweiser or Pabst Blue Ribbon. Higher-priced craft beers, made in small batches for those seeking something outside the mainstream, were available in bottles only.



But a growing number of craft beers, including some made in Wisconsin, is being sold in cans, as brewers look to cut packaging and delivery costs, while finding a place at outdoor parties and other events where cans are preferred to glass bottles.

“It’s just a convenient package,” said Jeff Hamilton, president of Glendale, Wis.-based Sprecher Brewing Co. Sprecher is among Wisconsin’s oldest craft brewers, defined by the trade group Brewers Association as small, independent companies that use traditional brewing methods.

Sprecher this month becomes the latest Wisconsin craft brewer to sell its beer in cans, with its Special Amber brand.

That comes one year after Milwaukee Brewing Co. began selling two of its brands, Louie’s Demise and Flaming Damsel, in cans. Others selling canned craft beer include Stevens Point Brewery, which has begun putting some of its specialty brews in cans, and Middleton-based Capital Brewery Co. – Wisconsin’s second- and third-largest craft brewers behind No. 1 New Glarus Brewing Co., which does not sell its beer in cans.

“We’re really big on cans. We love them,” said Jim McCabe, Milwaukee Brewing president. His company this summer plans to launch two new brands in cans only: Godzilla, an Asian-spiced wheat beer, and Monkey Paw, an English-style ale.

By selling beer in cans, craft brewers reach certain venues – such as golf courses and baseball stadiums – where glass bottles are discouraged, or even banned. Canned beer appeals to drinkers going to outdoor events, like tailgating and picnics.

Read the whole story

Barbera Festival pits California vs. Italy

Wine lovers will converge at Cooper Ranch in Plymouth for the first Barbera Festival June 11 from 11am-4pm.

This outdoor wine and food festival will host more than 80 wineries from the Sierra foothills, Paso Robles, Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Lake County, the Santa Cruz Mountains, Ventura County, Lodi and the Bay Area. Approximately 1,500 people are expected to attend, with seven top area restaurants and caterers providing the best in cuisine.

In a partnership with a wine tasting event in Nizza Monferatto, Italy. on May 14, three California winemakers (Paul Cattrone, Nick Buttitta, and Gordon Binz) presented the Barbera wines of five California wineries (Paul D Cattrone Wines, Rosa d'Oro Vineyards, Cooper Vineyards, Muscardini Cellars and Boeger Winery). The event, called #barbera2, also featured the wines of five Italian producers (Cascina Garitina, Cascina Gilli, Iuli, Vigneti Massa and Varaldo Rino). The Italian wineries will be shipping their Barberas, not yet distributed in California, to the Barbera Festival. In a new twist on the wine festival theme, in addition to the many California wines, festival attendees will now be able to taste Italian wines as well.

Barbera originated in the Piemonte region of northern Italy. In California, about 7,000 acres of Barbera are planted. Today, nearly 200 California wineries produce Barbera.

Barbera is known for its generous acid structure. There are differing styles of Barbera ranging from brighter versions with flavors of tart cherry, raspberry, and spice, to riper

styles with flavors of black cherry, blueberry, blackberry, and vanilla.

Tickets are $30/person in advance. For more information about the event, to purchase tickets, a list of participating wineries, map and directions, along with local lodging and tasting tips, click to the official website.

Farmers' market season set to begin in Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Mother Nature is playing havoc with produce growers.

Despite the unseasonably cool weather and continuous rain, farmers' market season is here.

The two South Shore markets start operation the first week of June. The Ski Run Boulevard market between Birch and Larch streets will run every Friday starting June 3 from 9am-2pm. The El Dorado County Certified Farmers Market Association will be back at the American Legion Hall parking lot on Highway 50 on Tuesdays starting June 7, from 8am-1pm.



Javier Toscano will be at the

Tuesday farmers' market in South Lake Tahoe starting in June. Photo/LTN file

“I think people are removed from nature,” said Alex Mellon, who coordinates the Ski Run market. He said people ask why tomatoes aren’t at the market in June when they are in the grocery store. A definite disconnect exists between some people understanding where their food comes from.

The same goes with some people expecting produce to look perfect like it does in a grocery store. Naturally, it just doesn’t happen that way. Despite some imperfections to fruit and veggies at area farmers’ markets, it’s still good quality.

Another thing is most of the produce was picked the morning it is sold at a market – making it the freshest possible unless one were to grow it themselves.

Both South Shore markets rely heavily on El Dorado County farmers to supply the fruits and vegetables that are sold each week. Some farmers, though, come from the Central Valley. This is a good thing because it has been warmer there.

“Cherries are slow, but we have a grower from Stockton. Those look really good,” said Jim Coalwell, who runs the Tuesday market in South Lake Tahoe. “Our local ones are borderline because we need warm weather for the sweetness.”

Expect lettuces, cherries, peaches, nectarines, red onions and garlic to be some of the items available at the first markets.

El Dorado County’s initial peach harvest looks iffy because of the moisture that keeps coming.

“It’s going to be a sketchy peach season for sure. It will be good later on,” said Coalwell, who runs the Red Shack in Placerville with wife Lois.

Curly leaf is hurting the trees.

“The leaves curl up and dry up and fall off. If new leaves have not started, there is no protection for little fruit to develop,” Coalwell explained.

He’s lined up a grower from Fresno to bring peaches the first part of the season, with the hope El Dorado County’s trees will recover for later in the summer.

The Ski Run market is run in conjunction with Sacred Path Farms in Coloma. The idea last year when the market first opened in August was to operate in the late afternoon or evening, but some businesses on Ski Run made sure that did not happen. This is why it has the hours it does.

Both South Shore markets will have art booths and food vendors beyond produce.

New to the Tuesday market will be Sugar Lily Bakery from El Dorado.

Coalwell has his fingers crossed the South Shore will be able to keep supporting the market.

“The market is still doing good, but not like it was a few years a go. I don’t think a lot of those people are there any more,” Coalwell said.

He’s right. Plus, unemployment in South Lake Tahoe is close to 17 percent, so the number of those being able to afford any farmers’ market is dwindling.

As with all farmers’ markets, what is available is based on what the farmers have grown and what season it is. Don’t expect corn and tomatoes for a bit.

Other farmers' markets:

• Foothill Farmer's Market, which is scheduled lakeside at Tahoe City's Commons Beach, started May 26. It is every Thursday from 8am-noon until Oct. 13.

• The market opens in Kings Beach on June 14.

• Farm fresh fruits, vegetables, arts and entertainment are available every Saturday June 11-Sept. 17 at the 3rd and Curry Street Farmers Market in Carson City. The market runs from 8:30am to 1:30pm.

• Mills Park in Carson City hosts a farmers market every Wednesday at the pavilion from 3-7pm.

• Wednesday from June 1-Sept. 14 8am-1pm at Lampe Park, 1325 Waterloo Lane, Gardnerville.

Study: Coffee wards off prostate cancer

By Rob Stein, Washington Post

In case you needed one, here's another possible reason to have that cup of coffee in the morning: Men who regularly drink coffee appear to be less likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer, especially the most lethal kind, according to new research.

Lorelei Mucci of the Harvard School of Public Health and colleagues analyzed data collected from 47,911 U.S. men who participated in the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, a large, ongoing examination of a variety of health issues for

men. As part of the study, the men reported their coffee consumption every four years between 1986 and 2008. During that period, 5,035 cases of prostate cancer were reported, including 642 fatal cases.

The men who consumed the most coffee, which was defined as six or more cups every day, were nearly 20 percent less likely to develop any form of prostate cancer, the researchers reported in the May 17 issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

But, most strikingly, the heavy coffee drinkers were also 60 percent less likely to be diagnosed with a lethal prostate tumor. Those who drank between one and three cups a day were 30 percent less likely to develop a lethal case.

Read the whole story

Carson City becomes a food-wine mecca

Carson City’s 18th Annual Taste of Downtown is June 18 from 5:30-9pm.

It benefits Advocates Against Domestic Violence.

The event features more than 25 restaurants, wine bistros, pubs and more covering 11 city blocks.

Live bands at various locations ward off food comas and keep the atmosphere lively.

Tasting runs from 5:30 to 9pm and music continues until 11pm.

For tickets and more information, call (775) 883.7654.

Cherry season almost in full bloom

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

Here’s some cheery news for cherry lovers: After a slow start, it’s shaping up to be a good season.

“It’s just getting going,” said Jim Culbertson, executive manager of the Lodi-based California Cherry Advisory Board. “The season is five to six days late. That may not seem like much, but it makes a big impact, particularly on holiday sales.”

Memorial Day weekend is big for cherry sales. The Bings – California’s favorite sweet cherry – should start rolling in by May 25, just in time for holiday celebrations.

Currently in farmers markets and stores are the early season varieties: Brook, Burlat, Tulare and Coral. They’ll be followed by the yellow-and-red Rainiers and dark red Bings.

“The real volume comes in after Memorial Day,” Culbertson said. “But the entire season is only six to eight weeks long.”

California, which represents about one-third of the nation’s sweet cherry crop, will produce about 162 million pounds of cherries this season, with Bings representing about 45 percent. Oregon and Washington are the other major sweet cherry-producing states. Michigan grows tart or sour cherries.

Read the whole story

Combining cycling with wine tasting

By Blair Anthony Robertson, McClatchy-Tribune Newspapers

The rolling hills and the largely quiet country roads in and around Auburn make it one of the most reliable areas for a great cycling experience.

Over the years while riding these roads, we kept noticing the appealing little wineries that have cropped up. Wouldn’t it be nice if we could combine two of our favorite things bike riding and wine tasting?

In the Napa Valley, folks from around the world come to rent bikes, follow routes and hop from one great winery to the next. The Placer Wine Trail isn’t on that scale yet, but there is a map and a website that promotes the Sacramento-area wines.

In this installment of “Great Rides,” we’re going to give the activity a try in this emerging wine region. I’m no exercise physiologist, but I know that a sip or two of wine won’t interfere with a bike ride of moderate intensity. Wine has plenty of carbs for energy and tastes far better than Gatorade. And you don’t have to dress in Lycra from head to toe in order to do this ride. Less conspicuous attire might be more suitable if you plan to stop in at the wineries.

We’ve mapped out a route of about 25 miles that leads you past four wineries, gives you a good workout, and tests your legs on plenty of gentle hills and one long, steep climb on Baxter Grade on the way to Auburn that is so tough you’ll think you’ve stumbled upon a route suitable for the Tour de France.

If this hill isn’t tough enough for you, there’s a secret little hill thrown in as an option at the end of the ride. It’s not that long, but it is incredibly steep. If you’re not in tiptop shape, you may have to get off your bike and push it up the hill. More on that in a moment.

Of course, no one says you have to cover the entire route by bike. You can tackle some of it as a cyclist and some as a motorist. Or, if you’re not into cycling, this route makes for an excellent sightseeing drive.

Read the whole story

Lecture focuses on food for health

Join Barton Health registered dietitian Lynn Norton as for an educational and fun journey to better health on May 24 from from 6:30-7:30pm at Kahle Community Center in Stateline.

The talk is geared toward adults and for anyone looking to understand the impact of the food on our health. Norton will address the positive and negative impact of food choices, portions and habits, both long-term and short-term.

The talk will encourage audience commentary and will be followed with a formal question and answer session.

Go online for complete details and the 2011 lecture series line-up. For more information, call (530) 543.5656.