Scary pancakes on IHOP menu

As Halloween approaches, be very afraid – and also a little hungry – because participating IHOP restaurants are bringing back the “Scary Face” pancake and pumpkin pancakes this month.

On Oct. 31, participating IHOP restaurants – including South Lake Tahoe – will offer kids 12 and under a “Scary Face” pancake free.

Order a “Scary Face” pancake and make it into as scary or funny face. The Scary Face is one buttermilk pancake, comes with a whipped topping mouth, a glazed strawberry nose, two mini-Oreo cookies to create eyes and eight pieces of candy corn to add teeth or fangs.

Shutdown threatens U.S. food safety

By Ron Nixon, New York Times

WASHINGTON – The government shutdown is endangering what America eats, food safety experts said this week, as all inspections of domestic food except meat and poultry have halted and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recalled furloughed workers to handle a salmonella outbreak that sickened hundreds of people in

Offices are dark across the federal agencies charged with making sure that the fruit, vegetables, dairy products and a vast array of other domestically produced food are safe to consume. Inspectors, administrative staff, lab technicians,

communications specialists and other support staff members have been sent home while lawmakers wrangle over government spending.

“This is a self-inflicted wound that is putting people’s health at risk,” said Representative Rosa L. DeLauro, D-Conn., a longtime food safety advocate.

Because the shutdown comes on top of earlier budget cuts to the agencies, she said, “you’re creating the potential for a real public health crisis.”

Read the whole story

Theaters were slow to embrace food during movies

By Pagan Kennedy, New York Times

In the 1920s, movie palaces rose up around the country like so many portals into a glamorous world. After you bought a ticket, you might pass through gilded archways and ascend a grand staircase lighted by a crystal chandelier to find your velvet seat.

Eating was not meant to be part of the experience, says Andrew F. Smith, author of “Popped Culture: A Social History of Popcorn in America.” Theater owners feared that audiences would strew popcorn and peanuts on those crimson carpets. They hung signs discouraging people from bringing in food from vendors parked outside and didn’t sell it themselves.

A widow named Julia Braden in Kansas City, Mo., was one of the rare concessionaires who managed to talk her way inside. She

persuaded the Linwood Theater to let her set up a stand in the lobby and eventually built a popcorn empire.

By 1931, she owned stands in or near four movie theaters and pulled in more than $14,400 a year – the equivalent of $336,000 in today's dollars. Her business grew even in the midst of the Depression, at the same time that thousands of elegant theaters went bust.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Enough cookies to share

By Kathryn Reed

When I can find multiple places to disperse homemade cookies, all the better for my waistline. After all, I've eaten my share of dough so no need to have much of the end product in the house.

With my youngest niece starting her first year in college, it was time to bake her some cookies. I still remember how much I loved receiving care packages from my mom and older sisters. Cookies are what I tend to send.



Her first shipment had half chocolate chip – with white chocolate chips, and the other half was peanut butter crisscrosses.

Because I chose to bring something sweet to consecutive tennis

matches Jacqueline benefited with getting variety in her box. Then Sue’s work each got a plate, too. And there are a few packaged in the freezer for when I have a sweet tooth. It’s also good to have some in the freezer because then I have a dessert for a last-minute situation.

To have enough cookies for everyone I made 1½ batches.

I’m not sure where the recipe originated. My mom wrote the card.

Peanut Butter Crisscrosses

1 C shortening

1 C white sugar

1 C brown sugar

1 tsp vanilla

2 eggs

1 C peanut butter

3 C flour

2 tsp soda

Dash salt

Cream shortening, sugars and vanilla. Add eggs, beat well. Stir in peanut butter. Add dry ingredients.

Form into small ball. Place onto ungreased cookie sheet. Press with fork twice to make cross.

Bake 375 degrees for 10 minutes. Makes 8 dozen.

Water rights war trickling into Calif. vineyards

By W. Blake Gray, Wine-Searcher

Two large harvests in a row are masking a scramble for vineyards in California that is only going to intensify in the next five years.

America's thirst for wines – and premium wines – continues to grow, while the prime areas in Napa and Sonoma counties are basically already planted out. Water rights in other areas of California are a huge issue, says vineyard appraiser Tony Correia.

"Water is the greatest limitation to the growth of our industry," Correia said last week at the Wine Industry Financial Symposium in Napa. "I think we'll see state control or at least state monitoring of groundwater use in the next few years."

Paso Robles, one of the hottest areas on California's coast both figuratively and literally, has seen its water level drop 70 feet in some areas. Local residents are complaining as their wells have run dry. And Paso is no isolated case.

"The city of Cambria just passed a law making it illegal to use district water for anything but human consumption," Correia said. "If you water your azaleas with it four times, the city cuts off your water." Cambria is in wine-producing San Luis Obispo County.

Read the whole story

Soroptimist wine tasting tickets for sale

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe's 43rd annual wine tasting is Nov. 15 at Harrah's Lake Tahoe from 6-9:30pm.

About 25 wineries from Northern California and 20 South Shore restaurants will be featured.

Proceeds go directed back into the community through educational scholarships, youth activity sponsorships and grants to organizations such as the Live Violence Free, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Lake Tahoe Boys and Girls Club, and numerous projects that enhance services and quality of life.

This year the Soroptimist are going retro with high school prom type events where people can have a professional photo taken plus a "Dress to Impress Contest" with the winning woman and the winning man to receive two tickets to next year's event.

There will also be a silent auction and raffle.

Tickets for the event are $65. They may be purchased from a SISLT member or online.

Climate change threatens maple syrup production

By Robert H. Westover, U.S. Forest Service

U.S. Forest Service research indicates that climate change will affect habitat suitability for maple trees, threatening the multimillion dollar maple syrup industry. Changes in climate have already had an impact on the iconic sugar maple trees of the Northeastern U.S.

Flow of maple sap, which is boiled down to make syrup, is controlled by alternating freezing and thawing cycles in the late winter. Maple trees also rely on snowpack during this time to protect their roots from freezing.

Climate stressors may decrease the availability of maple syrup or shift production northward by the end of the next century because of direct changes in temperature, decreases in snowpack or increases in weather disturbances such as ice storms.



Tapping maple trees in Vermont to get sap. Photo/LTN file

“Climate change will produce winners and losers geographically. Folks who retrieve sap from maple trees in the

far Northeastern region will get a longer sap flow season while those in the Southeastern regions will see a reduction," said Dave Cleaves, climate change adviser for the Forest Service.

A study conducted by the Forest Service and Cornell University examined the relationships between sugar maple sap flow and temperature over the last several decades, and used climate models to project sap flow into the future. The researchers found that the number of sap flow days may not change in the Northeast, but the timing of peak production will shift earlier.

By adapting to an earlier tapping season, maple syrup producers in Vermont and other northern states may be able to sustain their livelihoods for the next 100 years. However, at the southern extent of sugar maple habitat, such as Pennsylvania, overall production may be reduced sooner.

The Forest Service has developed an atlas of potential future habitat for 134 tree species in the Eastern United States. The atlas shows that climate change will likely reduce the amount of suitable habitat for maple trees in the coming century. While maple trees won't necessarily vanish from the landscape, there could be fewer trees that are more stressed, further reducing maple syrup availability.

Snack food industry trying to be healthy

By Anne Marie Chaker, Wall Street Journal

Is a seaweed flake the new potato chip?

Hoping to elevate snack foods out of junk territory and into a healthier zone, more companies are offering munchables made from ingredients with ironclad nutritional credentials, including black beans, brown rice, seaweed and parsnips.

Never mind that recommended serving sizes in many cases are minuscule, or that calorie, fat or sodium profiles can rival or exceed those of old-school pretzels and potato chips.

The snack-food aisle's neon-colored bags contain cheesy, spicy fare designed mainly for guys in their teens and 20s. The new munchies are directed at a potentially larger group—consumers who want to eat better but also love salty chips.

The proportion of consumers reporting that they eat three to four snacks a day in addition to meals rose to 31 percent in 2013, up from 19 percent in 2010, according to Chicago market research firm IRI.

Read the whole story

Fresh oil olive has the most health benefits

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

The Mediterranean diet is a pattern of eating that lately has become a darling of medical researchers. It includes vegetables and grains, not so much meat, and, of course, generous portions of olive oil.

Mary Flynn, an associate professor of medicine at Brown University, says the evidence that olive oil is good for your heart has never been more clear. "Olive oil is a very healthy

food, I consider it more medicine than food," she says.

She points to a big study published earlier this year in the New England Journal of Medicine where researchers in Spain had men and women in their fifties, sixties and seventies who were at risk of heart disease follow one of three diets.

Some ate a low-fat diet, another group ate a Mediterranean diet with nuts. And a third group ate a Mediterranean diet that included almost four tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil per day.

Don't hold back on the olive oil, a Spanish study concludes.

Surprise: Some of the best-tasting extra-virgin olive oils are now being produced domestically. Think Texas, California, Florida.

"So, they could compare the three diets: Was it nuts, was it olive or was the low fat diet beneficial," says Flynn.

Read the whole story

McDonald's adding fruit, vegetables to its menu

By Leslie Patton, Bloomberg

McDonald's Corp., which sells 750-calorie Double Quarter Pounders with cheese, will start offering fruit, salads and vegetables instead of fries with value meals in a push to get its diners to make healthier choices.

The world's largest restaurant chain also will only advertise

water, milk and juice for its kids’ Happy Meals, according to a statement from the company and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a group founded by the Clinton Foundation and American Heart Association that works to reduce childhood obesity. They didn’t specify the type of vegetables available.

McDonald’s and rivals have been trying to shed their image as purveyors of fatty foods in a nation where about two-thirds of the population is considered overweight or obese. While the Oak Brook, Illinois-based fast-food chain in 2012 introduced a lower-calorie menu, Americans are loathe to eat their vegetables, Chief Executive Officer Don Thompson has said.

Read the whole story