Dry farming turning out sweet produce

By Alastair Bland, NPR

A week without water can easily kill the average person.

But a garden that goes unwatered for months may produce sweeter, more flavorful fruits than anything available in most mainstream supermarkets – even in the scorching heat of a California summer. Commercial growers call it “dry farming,” and throughout the state, this unconventional technique seems to be catching on among small producers of tomatoes, apples, grapes, melons and potatoes.

At Happy Boys Farms, near Santa Cruz, sales director Jen Lynne believes dry farming could be an important agricultural practice in the future, when water will likely be a less abundant resource.

But the taste of her dry-farmed Early Girl tomatoes is the main reason chefs, wholesalers and individuals around the country are increasingly calling to place orders. She notes that many calls come from places where rain falls through the summer, making dry farming impossible.

Read the whole story

Grass Valley command center

hub for fire activity

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

On Aug. 17, as the first calls for assistance came in from a fire 150 miles away near Yosemite, the ridgetop Interagency Command Center in Grass Valley was already at full throttle.

A shared room for tactical supervisors of the U.S. Forest Service, CalFire and the state Office of Emergency Services was directing materiel to the American Fire near Foresthill, then just 7 days old.

Outside, Grumman S-2 air tankers – dubbed "pink bellies" for the color of the fire retardant they drop – were taking off from the Grass Valley Air Attack Base. They were flying sorties over the Foresthill area's deep forest canyons, where the stubborn fire was soon to top 26,000 acres.

Suddenly, this new Rim Fire was burning in treacherous terrain to the south in the Stanislaus National Forest. Within 24 hours, thunderclouds triggered vicious downdrafts, endangering firefighters and fanning a massive blaze toward the communities of Groveland, Tuolumne City and Pine Mountain.

Read the whole story

Spees steps down as FRC's leader

By Kathryn Reed

Delicia Spees doesn't know what the word quit means.

Even though Friday was her last day as executive director of the Family Resource Center in South Lake Tahoe, she is still going to be working there. But now she will be the coordinator working with families for about 15 hours a week.

“I have worked and done what I have done because I have this amazing mother who said you have got to give to people,” Spees told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I was lucky to work for people who needed me and I needed them too because they fulfilled me.”



The 63-year-old is looking forward to spending more time with family and friends, and enjoying Tahoe.

“I want to be a domestic goddess again and play with my girlfriends,” Spees said with a laugh.

She will continue to be involved on the board of directors for the Senior Plaza, being part of the Kinship Program at Lake Tahoe Community College and hoping to volunteer at Bookworks. The used bookstore near Freshies is one of the primary funding sources for FRC.

Karen Tinlin, who has known Spees since she was Spees’ oldest daughter’s third-grade teacher at Meyers Elementary School, said her friend is an advocate for people, even if it isn’t work related.

“She has a real special place in her heart for young children and wanting to make sure their lives are good,” Tinlin said. “She knows the families, their stories. She is connected.”

Spees started at the FRC’s predecessor about 20 years ago and has been the director for the last 13 years. It started as a

nonprofit people had to be referred to, and now is open to anyone and includes programs. It used to mainly be a welcome center for new students, where they would enroll and officials would ensure all the paperwork and immunizations were in order.

Now mental health services, translations, food and clothing give-aways, English as a second language classes, one-on-one counseling, parenting classes and advocacy all come under the FRC umbrella.

“I definitely think there should be a FRC in every school if you could afford it. Every school has its own needs,” Spees said. “This FRC doesn’t just cater to Bijou. We work with the school district to do different programs at different schools.”

Rick Meyer, who started on FRC board in 1999, said to this day he remembers the first time he was at the facility.

“I walked into the Family Resource Center and here was the executive director handing out bread, handing out clothes, the phone is ringing, people needed her to do this and that,” Meyer recalled. “She is completely involved with all the people who need to be served.”

He admires that she created an organization from humble beginnings to a stable, respected nonprofit.

Besides more programs, Spees also has seen a growth in need. And while many think FRC only helps the Latino population or those associated with Bijou Community School because its offices are there, the truth is everyone is welcome.

“Because of the economy we have seen a growth in the Anglos coming in,” Spees said.

She knows FRC will continue to evolve.

“We built something that means a lot to the community,” Spees

said.

De-Anne Hooper, who at one time was the executive director of the local Boys & Girls Club and has worked closely with FRC and Spees, will now be at the helm of FRC.

Hooper has been on board for the last month to learn the ropes from Spees.

NV, N.J. may partner in online gaming

By Sue Zeidler, Reuters

MGM Resorts International is working with Nevada officials who are discussing banding together with New Jersey to create a joint online gaming market, CEO Jim Murren told *Reuters* in an interview.

“I think it’s likely that in 2014 we’ll see a compact between New Jersey and Nevada,” Murren said in an interview following the company’s second-quarter earnings call.

In the past, Murren contended that Nevada alone may be too small a state to provide a large enough online market.

“We’ve really been focusing on Nevada’s ability to compact with other states, create more liquidity,” said Murren.

A.G. Burnett, chairman of the Nevada State Gaming Control Board, told Reuters he shared Murren’s optimism.

“Nevada is striving to do what it can in regards to compacts. We do not jump into the fire without having done a lot of

cautious research and study into the particulars of such agreements, and that phase is nearing completion," he said.

Read the whole story

Luetta (Lue) Dressler Bergevin – 1921-2013

Luetta (Lue) Dressler Bergevin passed away peacefuly on the morning of Aug. 24 surrounded by her family. She was 91.

Luetta, a fourth generation Nevadan, was born on Sept. 6, 1921, on the Dressler Home Ranch, to Fred H. and Anna (Neddenriep) Dressler. Luetta was the last baby delivered by her great-great-aunt Dr. Eliza Cook, Nevada's first woman physician.

She developed an early appreciation for the beauty of the outdoors, having spent the first years of her life on the family cattle ranch that encompassed parts of Carson Valley and Alpine and Mono Counties in California.



Luetta (Lue) Dressler Bergevin

At the age of 7, she boarded in Centerville at the home of

John and Mildred Drendel in order to attend the Centerville School. Due to consolidation, she continued her education the following year at the Minden Grammar School where she graduated from the eighth grade in 1936 as valedictorian of her Class.

She graduated from Douglas County High School, where she was an active member of the class of 1940. Luetta served as secretary of the student body, editor of the Garminada, and was a member girls basketball team.

She continued her education at the University of Utah where she received her B.S. degree in nursing education and her degree as a registered nurse from St. Marks Hospital School of Nursing in Salt Lake City. She was a member of Delta, Delta, Delta sorority and was active in campus life.

During World War II, she worked as a U.S. naval cadet nurse at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Seattle. Following V.J. Day she returned to St. Marks in Salt Lake City, where she passed her state boards with honors, and was employed as the head nurse on the orthopedic floor.

In June 1946, she returned to Gardnerville and in August married her high school sweetheart, Louis Bergevin. Following their marriage they lived near Mesa, Ariz., where her husband was a captain in the Air Force at Williams Field. After his discharge as a major, they moved to Reno.

While in Reno, she worked as a head nurse on a surgical floor and then as O.B. supervisor at the Washoe Medical Center (now Renown). In time they moved to the Dressler Ranch and Carson Valley where they would raise their family.

After the move, Luetta did private duty nursing at the first Carson-Tahoe Hospital for Dr. Ontie Hovendon and Dr. E.G. Hand. She volunteered at health fairs and assisted in giving the first polio injections in Carson Valley. She served on the board of the first Carson Valley Emergency Medical Center.

Later she served as a nurse at the Lake Tahoe 4-H camp.

Following her retirement from nursing, she revived her interest in art. She was a member of the Carson Valley Art Association and the East Fork Gallery, serving as president in each. She was also a charter member of the Brewery Arts Center in Carson City.

She loved to paint and worked in oil and watercolor with watercolor being her favorite. She was a self taught artist until her first painting lessons from Geraldine Lawrence. In 1981 she traveled to China with a group of artists who took every opportunity to sit down and paint or sketch while on the trip. They met with Chinese artists and exchanged ideas and techniques. It was an experience she never forgot. Over the years she painted numerous landscapes, florals and other varied subjects. She sold several of her works and her family members each have a favorite.

Aside from her paintings, Luetta was an avid gardener, an incredible cook and a beautiful seamstress. She enjoyed hiking, especially in the mountains of Alpine County and outlying areas of Nevada. On these hikes she would collect numerous photos that would later be inspirations for many of her paintings.

She was never inactive and her involvement in community life included membership in the Carson Valley Literary Club (past president), the Nevada State Cattlewomen (formerly Cowbelles) (past president), Douglas County Republican Women, Parent Teachers' Association, 4-H Leader, 4-H chaperone on educational trips, and she was a lifetime member of the St. Mark's nurses' association. She also served on the Nevada Historical Commission, Nevada 4-H Foundation, Douglas County Historical Society Board and was chairman for the National "Beef for Father's Day" campaign.

She enjoyed working with people and put in many hours

assisting her husband in his many campaigns for the Nevada State Assembly. She was a lifetime member of Trinity Lutheran Church and was a substitute organist for Ruth Felten at the old church and often taught Vacation Bible School.

In April 2010 she moved to Merrill Gardens Gardnerville where she enjoyed much love, friendship and attention. The family would like to thank all of the wonderful staff at Merrill Gardens along with Linda from Gentiva and Brian from Vista Care Hospice for all of their kindness, efforts and care in making Luetta comfortable.

She is survived by her son Lee (Sharon) Bergevin and his family: Debbie Curry Flaherty (Amber and Chris Weller, Jordan Flaherty), Greg (Jennifer) Curry (Kaitlyn, Joshua & Julianna Curry), Lynda Curry, Shannon Bergevin (Al) Garner (Abigail and Genevieve Garner), Andrew Bergevin and Erin Bergevin; her daughter Jeanne (Todd) Russell and her family: Matthew (Carolyn) Russell (Nathan and Charles Russell), Timothy (Cassidy) Russell (Brynn and Larkin Russell); her brother Frederick Dressler; as well as numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

In addition to her husband, Louis, Luetta was preceded in death by her parents.

A celebration of life will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1480 Douglas Ave., Gardnerville on Sept. 14 at 10am. In lieu of flowers, Luetta would be happy to know that she inspired donations in her name to the Douglas County Historical Society, 1477 Highway 395, Suite B, Gardnerville, NV 89410 or the East Fork Gallery, 1503 Highway 395 N, Suite K, Gardnerville, NV 89410.

Tahoe City making plans for the future

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – As Tahoe City celebrates its 150th anniversary this weekend, it's not just one big party. Some serious philosophical discussions about the town's future are going on.

Tahoe City was once the gateway to Lake Tahoe. It was the transportation hub. It used to have an active nightlife.

Now it is full of rundown buildings, with many of them empty. Tourists tend to stay in Truckee, Northstar and Squaw instead. And the nightlife, well, it's lacking.

Bright spots, though, are the increasing number of bike-pedestrian trails and the excitement of what the now-city owned golf course could evolve into. Think cross country skiing and other winter recreation.



A rendering by Design Workshop of what Tahoe City could look like in the future.

A vision. That is what Tahoe City is creating. For about a year people have been meeting to define this area's future. On

Aug. 28 a group gathered at Granlibakken to find out where the plans are and to offer more input.

A concern many have is the height of future buildings. They don't want the charm of the town to be eroded with high-rises or for tall buildings to further prohibit views of Lake Tahoe. Many people are concerned that future development would obscure views of the lake.

Some are also worried things are being done for tourists only – like the idea of putting a hotel along the water. While this keeps surfacing as an idea, it was also brought up that the beach could remain public.

An issue with doing anything – development or redevelopment – is that like Kings Beach many of the parcels are small. It will take adjoining property owners working together to have a significant impact.

But it was also noted that the majority of land is owned by a small number of people.

Integrating the golf course with other recreation was brought up.

Incorporating the Truckee River into the city is an idea. This could be done with a trail or promenade. And some would like to see the river and lake tied together in a manner that is easy for people to experience both.

With the rerouting of Highway 89 because the bridge over the river is no longer seismically safe, it may make the river-lake idea more of a possibility. The realignment of the highway is being studied now.

Design Workshop, which with Placer County planning officials has been leading the vision process, foresees creating side streets so it's not just Highway 28 people are on, as well as having walkways so the golf course would be one of the views

as people stroll.

Stephanie Grigsby with Design Workshop said at meetings people have talked about creating a world-class recreation-visitor center of a resort destination quality that locals and visitors would use.

Besides commercial interests, there is the realization of the need for housing, especially for young families. Truckee has done a good job in capturing that segment of the population.

Key obstacles to doing any of these things are all the agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Tahoe City residents feeling like their voices aren't heard because the county seat is off the hill.

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Notes:

• There will be a town hall meeting Sept. 11 at 6pm at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach that will be about the Tahoe City and Kings Beach plans and Placer County's community plan for the areas.

• The Placer County Planning Commission will hear the Tahoe City vision in October.

Prosecutors link murderer to Tahoe woman

By Gary Klien, Marin Independent Journal

Joseph Naso, the 79-year-old man convicted last week of murdering and dumping four women in the 1970s and ’90s, is also the prime suspect in the murder of a former Lake Tahoe woman who was found in Tiburon in 1981, prosecutors disclosed in court Wednesday.

Sharileea Patton was 56 when her body washed ashore near the former Tiburon Naval Net Depot off Paradise Drive. She had been strangled and placed inside two plastic garbage bags.



Joseph Naso

The reason the case is surfacing now is because prosecutors want to include Patton’s murder as even more evidence why Naso should receive the death penalty. Prosecutors are asking Judge Andrew Sweet to let them present evidence about other alleged Naso sex crimes that were excluded from the trial, including the Patton case.

The jury that convicted Naso returns to court next week to decide on his sentence. Naso argued that the jury should not be allowed to hear about the Patton investigation because the allegations cannot be proved.

Investigators found a Naso diary that mentioned a woman with references to Leavenworth, Lake Tahoe and the Los Angeles area.

Patton — who also used the last names Heckert, Duvalle and Withrow — was a former resident of the Los Angeles area and worked for the county sheriff’s department. She later moved to Lake Tahoe, but a few weeks before her death, she relocated to

the Bay Area in search of work.

Naso was arrested in South Lake Tahoe in April 2011 on the murder charges out of Marin County. He had been in custody on unrelated charges.

In 2010 Naso spent a year in El Dorado County jail for a probation violation. In 2008 he had been convicted of committing a burglary in South Lake Tahoe.

Lake Tahoe News contributed to this report.

Gas likely to cost more over Labor Day holiday

By Shan Li and Andrew Khouri, Los Angeles Times

Motorists hitting the road over the Labor Day weekend may find themselves paying more at the pump as the Syrian conflict fans tensions in the Middle East and roils gas markets.

Experts speculate that prices could shoot up 10 cents a gallon or more in the coming days, a reversal of the lower prices road-trippers have enjoyed this summer thanks to increased U.S. production and higher inventories. A gallon of regular gasoline might again vault past $4.

Prices “are definitely going up,” said Amy Myers Jaffe, executive director of energy and sustainability at UC Davis. “The situation in the Middle East is very volatile, and it goes beyond the Syrian conflict.”

The question is: How much will prices rise, and for how long?

Read the whole story

It was downright Fun – period



Fun’s high-energy music kept people on their feet all night Aug. 27 at Harveys. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – Against a hazy, blood-orange Sierra Nevada sky, indie band Fun lived up to its name with a red-hot performance that energized a youthful crowd at Harveys Lake Tahoe this week.

The electric production is one of the last of the outdoor concert series as the summer winds down.

John Packer, Harrah’s spokesman and entertainment director, was optimistic Tuesday night before the show because the poor air quality from the massive Rim Fire raging in the Yosemite area had improved. He promised a “smokin’ good time” based on the promise of Fun, with the help of opening synthpop act Tegan and Sara of Canada.

And boy, Fun delivered – period.

After a stunning performance by sister duo Tegan and Sara, the three core members of Fun, the high-energy New York-based band led by vocalist Nate Ruess, entered the dark stage in tuxedos and quickly tore them off as if stripping themselves of all inhibitions.

Take the bellowing vocal chords of U2’s Bono, the perfectly synchronized ’70s rock band Yes with Rick Wakeman and the pulsating rhythms of David Byrne’s Talking Heads – and throw in Styx, Queen and Electric Light Orchestra – and you’ve got a new generation’s modern-day band with a dynamic stage presence, diverse music style and even a civil rights conscience. (The band has brought the Ally Coalition and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays on tour with them to support LGBTQ equality.)

“It’s really important for Jack (Antonoff, Fun guitarist) to cultivate a safe space (for the LGBT community),” Michael White of Boston, who has toured with the band in 15 cities, told Lake Tahoe News. He was joined at the Stateline concert tables by local volunteer Betti Christensen of Minden who was there in support of her gay nephew “to protect him from the big bad world.”



Sara and Tegan are destined to be headliners.

Serious activism aside, Fun soon showed how the band raked in last year's Grammy Award for Best New Artist and another for Song of the Year, "We Are Young" – which had the Harveys crowd roaring and mouthing all the words near the end of the show. In the bridge where the song stops before the chorus, one could hear a rare silence.

For the entire show, the audience stood in anticipation of what would happen next on stage and on the flashy giant video screen behind it.

Ruess, with Antonoff and keyboardist Andrew Dost, wove a web of recognizable and lesser-known tunes and fed off the enthusiasm of the audience.

Their hit single "Carry On" had the entire crowd dancing, swaying and singing. They even brought out their version of an old favorite, the Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want." The baby boomers danced and sang in unison to that number.

They were often personable and seemed so enthused to be in Tahoe that Ruess pledged to bring the band back during another tour. This one, which started July 6 and ends in September, is expected to be followed by the making of another album to follow the ever-popular "Some Nights." The title track was the encore of the night, upon the demands of thousands of dedicated, screaming fans.



Nate Ruess rarely stops moving on stage.

The adoration and respect was reciprocated when, in so many words, Ruess and Antonoff broke between songs to tell the locals among the crowd how lucky they are to live in paradise – despite the residual smoke. He reminded those who may fret over the smoky haze that he was unsure he could even sing a few days ago. But Ruess was so spot on with the melodies his vocals could fill Yosemite Valley.

“I’m so sorry it smells like a wilderness campfire,” Ruess said, after declaring it was the first time the band spent time in the Tahoe region. The band apparently took full advantage of the three-day experience, going out on Jet Skis and golfing. He added the band members liked Edgewood Tahoe so much they let the cost of the activities cut into the show’s proceeds.

Fun was not alone in their fun that night.

The up-and-coming band Tegan and Sara – with a loyal following of their own electro-induced sounds and deep, angst-filled lyrics – insisted a few times how they enjoyed coming to Tahoe.

Tegan Quin especially liked watching some people chair

dancing.

“We are thrilled to be here,” she yelled out to the crowd. This was a notable tip of the hat to Tahoe from a duo that country sensation Taylor Swift singled out as a favorite act of hers to listen to. The Quin sisters have enjoyed a diverse appeal through the years, touring with the Pretenders, Neil Young, The Killers and Cyndi Lauper. They recently performed for a Major League Baseball Fan Cave online concert.

The Harveys show was a testament to vibrant, synthesizer-driven keyboards in concert with flashy images on the video screen behind the duo and the three-member backup band.

Mostly, it was the dark side of the lovelorn that the Quin sisters belted out in their self-written lyrics. They both seemed to be in a perpetual breakup. But in the music world, that’s what so many in the fan base can relate to. In their popular “I Was a Fool,” the lyrics appeared to bleed down the video screen. It was almost reassuring between sets when they smiled and seemed jovial.

The show turned a little torchy with their hit “Closer,” with lyrics highlighting the excitement of sexual energy between two people. Anyone who’s lived through puberty, high school or even the exhilaration of the pursuit could relate.

“There’s something so liberating about their music. It’s amazing with an ’80s influence. I feel they’re charismatic and honest on stage,” said Taylor Gaddy of Reno, who has listened to Tegan and Sara for three years.

And yet there is more to come before the summer closes its doors at the Harveys Lake Tahoe outdoor concert series.

Country superstar Brad Paisley hits the arena tonight, the Dave Matthews Band comes to Tahoe Sept. 4 and rock band Journey follows 10 days later.

Minimum wage an ongoing issue

By Eleazar David Melendez, Huffington Post

Even as he'd confidently promised before television cameras in January that he would deliver an astounding increase in the minimum wage, the president knew it would be a difficult fight. Unprecedented federal debt and thorny unemployment weighed heavily on Washington, both cautioning against forcing businesses to give low-paid workers a raise.

The president's own top economic expert had told him the government shouldn't further distort the dynamics of the free market. Big business was adamantly against the plan.

And Congress? That lot of obstructionist conservatives and their "do nothing" attitude would relish any chance to get in the administration's way, especially if its members could call him a "socialist" and once again bring up his controversial universal health care plan.

So it was in 1949, when President Harry Truman declared the federal minimum wage ought to be nearly doubled, from 40 cents an hour to 75 cents. Using a measure of what minimum-wage earners could purchase with that amount compared with the rest of society, the 1949 increase is roughly the equivalent of a wage today jumping to $10.70 from $5.70.

As labor activists across the U.S. begin a round of Labor Day strikes this week in a bid to increase the wages of low-paid workers, raising the minimum wage from $7.25 to $15 has become a rallying cry of the boldest proposals. With most political forecasters declaring President Obama's more modest call for a minimum wage raise to $9 dead in the water, the idea of more than doubling the minimum wage is generally dismissed as

fanciful.

Read the whole story