By Valerie Costa

Meet your local farmers with Sierra Harvest

Sierra Harvest, a nonprofit organization in Nevada City, seeks to connect the public with their food and the farms (and farmers) that grow it. Every year, Sierra Harvest hosts a series of farm potlucks on the first and third Thursdays of each month from 5:30-8 p.m. This is the group’s eighth year hosting farm potlucks.

The first two potlucks of the year were on May 20 at Fowler Family Farms, a meat farm that raises cows, pigs, chickens, goats, and more, and continued at Mountain Bounty Farms on June 3. Mountain Bounty is the largest CSA in Nevada County and offers vegetables, fruit and flower shares to their members. “These potlucks are a great opportunity to tour our local farms and meet other people who are interested in food and farming, and have a delicious meal in a beautiful place,” Bishop said.

The next potluck will be held next Thursday, June 16, from the Soil Sisters – Marnie Gay and Willow Frey – and their farm hosts, The Riley’s, at this beautiful farm nestled off Lake Vera Purdon Road in Nevada City. Soil Sisters Farm is flower farm and farm in Nevada City. Providing arrangements for weddings and other special events. They sell bouquets and offer a unique flower CSA, a subscription program that brings you a fresh bouquet of flowers direct from farm each week of the summer.

Arrive at 5:30 for a farm tour with Marnie & Willow, followed by the potluck dinner at 6 p.m. Make sure to bring utensils, a plate and cup for yourself/selves, a bountiful dish to share (it’s nice to label key ingredients for those with allergies), a blanket to sit on, a healthy appetite, and a checklist or something for cash for farm direct purchases.

Upcoming farm potlucks include Riverhill Farm on July 7 and Early Bird Farm on July 21. Because these are popular, Bishop encourages those attending to consider carpooling since there is often limited parking at the farm sites.

Welcome summer with a fun cooking class with Jim E

By Melissa Hanson

Jim Eckardt’s amazing food is well known in this area, from Jim E’s Take Out and Catering, then his catering businesses, and finally, the Jim E’s Take Out and Catering. Known as Jim E to almost everyone, Eckardt even signs his emails with the nickname. As a boy I was Jimmy, my last name starts with E, so I came up with Jim E and it sure did stick!” he explained. “Some people call me Jim, some Jimmy, some Jim E, and I even get a Jaime (hi me in Spanish) now and then.” He first learned how to cook after moving out on his own, Eckardt would call his mother and quiz her on how she made some of his favorite foods. From there, his cooking abilities took off.

In 1983, he moved to Santa Cruz, working in a couple of different restaurants. During this time, however, he found himself in Nevada County and called it home for the next two decades. Leaving only for a short time to attend the California Culinary Academy, Eckardt now lives in Mexico but has returned this summer to share some of his vast food knowledge in Co-op Cooking classes. Tonight, he’ll be teaching a “Traditional Mexican Dinner,” developed from his experiences living in Mexico. After meeting a local chef, Eckardt learned to make dishes like Pastel Azteca, a layered, baked tortilla dish with a zucchini and yellow squash casserole on June 10 which will include a Jim E’s tapa, a cheese biscuit pot pie, and a zucchini and yellow squash casserole.

Getting to take classes while he’s summering in Nevada County is a real treat, and the diverse selection should appeal to many. Eckardt is really looking forward to those upcoming courses. “I love to share my knowledge, and this is why I’m teaching the classes. Cooking puts me in a happy place,” he said. Bradbury’s Co-op Cooking Classes are held at 648 Zion Street in Nevada City. More information is available at (530) 275-2344, 275-2319 or www.briarpatch.com, community-cooking-classes.