

Timber Cove Best Western under new ownership

By Kathryn Reed

The Best Western at Timber Cove changed hands this week and a new restaurant on the pier is open.

Bob Maloff, who died a year ago, had left the South Lake Tahoe hotel, including the pier that juts far into Lake Tahoe, to his estate. Urbana Holdings based in Georgia is now the owner.

Hotel General Manager Peter Evenhuis told *Lake Tahoe News* no changes will be made to the hotel in the immediate future.



Pulled pork sliders at Bistro on the Pier in South Lake Tahoe are filling, but not the best. Photo/LTN

However, Urbana Holdings is likely to make some substantial changes to the property based on the company's description on its website: "Urbana's mission is to acquire, develop and operate investment caliber real estate projects and redevelop and renovate projects with the potential to become investment caliber. Targeted investments include office, multi-family, hotel and mixed-use projects. Urbana emphasizes the renovation and redevelopment of real estate properties that are not

typically the focus of institutional or local entrepreneurial buyers. Once Urbana has completed the development or redevelopment process, the projects are better suited for a more passive investor such as a pension fund, REIT or insurance company."

Evenhuis invited *Lake Tahoe News* to dine at Bistro on the Pier this week knowing this reporter is a vegetarian. (The dining was on *LTN's* expense.)

When the waitress was asked what the chef would fix for a vegetarian, she asked, "Do you eat chicken?"

The Caesar salad (\$8) was swimming in dressing; the pulled pork sliders (\$9) were drenched in barbecue sauce. The quantities of both, though, were ample – making the price reasonable.

Sue said, "That's the worst menu I've ever seen."

Three salads are on the menu and four entrees. The beer and wine choices are limited, though there is a full bar.

One couple came in, looked at the menu, saw that it in no way resembled Blue Water Bistro – the independent restaurant the estate shutdown to open this one – and left.

While no one could mess with the view of Lake Tahoe from this location, especially on a warm night with not a ripple on the water, it's not enough to get *Lake Tahoe News* to return to this bistro.

No sign on Highway 50 or the pier lets people know the bistro exists.

Evenhuis said the old Mama's Red Tomato restaurant that had been out front and that is now used to serve hotel guests breakfast is likely to become a café for the public. He didn't say when. However, a waiter on Wednesday night told other patrons a restaurant will open in that spot in two weeks.

Gays attracting attention of mainstream travel industry

By Kenneth Kiesnoski, Travel Weekly

The story of the growth of the lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender (LGBT) travel market in recent years is a tale of two seemingly contradictory – but, in reality, complementary – trends: occasional spurts in the launch of novel, LGBT-specific tourism products and promotions tailored for gay and lesbian consumers.

Those trends have been accompanied by a slow but steady mainstreaming of both LGBT travelers and travel products.

A once neglected, all but invisible and even persecuted market segment, LGBT leisure travelers now find themselves increasingly courted and cajoled by mainstream travel suppliers, destinations and, in some cases, travel agencies, as well as by a growing raft of travel firms and hotels owned and operated by gays and lesbians.

What's the appeal? First, by one estimate, the LGBT demographic spends some \$65 billion a year on vacations.

Gay couple in LondonMoreover, industry players note that LGBT consumers have gained a reputation, deserved or not, over the past two decades as "Teflon travelers," less prone to cancel

in the wake of geopolitical or natural disasters and more willing to part with a bigger portion of their disposable income on vacations than the general population is.

Jonathan Klein, owner of Now, Voyager World Wide Travel in San Francisco, said he heard the first such whispers as far back as 1990 and 1991. At the time, the first Persian Gulf War in Kuwait and Iraq was depressing mainstream international bookings, but LGBT travelers apparently kept on trekking. (For more from Klein, see “LGBT specialist talks market’s needs, nuances.”)

John Tanzella, president of the Fort Lauderdale-based International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA), said the havoc the 9/11 terror attacks wreaked a decade later on global travel only furthered this reputation for LGBT hardiness.

“We noted an interesting trend after 9/11 of mainstream companies – whether it was major corporations or smaller, mom-and-pop tour operators – courting LGBT travelers and trying to be more welcoming with their products,” he said. “There was just so much press about gay travelers being more resilient.”

Not even LGBT consumers, with their legendary largess, could maintain spending levels in the face of the Great Recession that began in 2008; according to San Francisco-based research firm Community Marketing, spending by gay and lesbian travelers dipped in both 2009 and 2010 for the first time in nearly 20 years. Even so, David Paisley, Community Marketing’s senior projects director, said the drop was less severe in LGBT circles than in the population at large, redeeming the segment’s reputation for resiliency.

“The question is, did [LGBT travel spending] go down as much as the mainstream numbers did? A lot of people would say that no, it didn’t,” he said. “We have seen a bounce-back finally, although we’re probably seeing one in mainstream spending,

too.”

To wit, in the 12 months leading up to the conclusion of Community Marketing’s 16th Annual LGBT Tourism Survey on Oct. 31, 2011, LGBT travel spending did indeed rebound, with growth of 1 percent to 3 percent reported by self-described “gay-friendly” destinations. In the same report, gay and bisexual men reported taking nearly four leisure trips, 2.4 business trips and 3.8 airline flights annually. Lesbians and bisexual women took 3.3 leisure trips, 1.6 business trips and 2.6 flights a year.

The appeal of LGBT travelers as a market segment has grown hand-in-hand over the last two decades with an increased societal acceptance, in the U.S. and other Western countries, of what used to be termed “alternative lifestyles.”

Read the whole story

Reflections of Angora Fire 5 years after the devastation

Life goes on, but that does not mean we can or should forget the past. To do so means the likelihood of forgetting what we have learned. Complacency can set in – which is never a good thing.

That is why with the five-year anniversary of the Angora Fire coming up later this month *Lake Tahoe News* is taking a look back and a look forward. This fire that started on June 24, 2007, wiped out 254 houses on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe. These were homes primarily filled with our friends and colleagues.

While no one has been brought to justice for not fully extinguishing the campfire near Seneca Pond that started the fire, the investigation continues.



Angora Fire -- 5 years later

The people living in the Angora burn at the time of the fire and today are resilient folks. They had to endure heartache and suffering, and still today all the wounds are not healed. Perhaps, they never can heal. But the people are moving forward.

We know it can be hard to do so when reminders of the fire can't be ignored. Charred trees still dot the landscape. Winds blow like they never did before. Lights from neighbors are visible when before the trees blocked that glare.

Vegetation and animal life have changed. It's not just the people who were affected by this inferno.

Plenty of lessons have been learned from this fire that burned about 3,100 acres – mostly on U.S. Forest Service land, caused more than \$150 million in damage and cost \$23 million to fight.

About 80 percent of the terrain burned in Angora was charred within eight hours.

What has happened to that land in the last five years and do we have the resources to fight another Angora?

Those questions and more will be answered during the course of the next four Sundays as *Lake Tahoe News* explores various aspects of this wildland fire.

We have not attempted to cover every angle of this fire and the aftermath. We are not here to point fingers.

What we hope the four-day series will do is provide a glimpse of what has gone on in the past five years. It's also an opportunity for people and agencies close to the fire to offer their perspectives.

Anyone who was here while the fire raged has a story to tell. We hope you will share yours during the question of the week that is posted on Wednesdays, through letters, or in comments. But, please, be respectful in your comments on stories.

We want to thank everyone who wrote a story for this endeavor, who shared his or her stories. Thank you to the U.S. Forest Service and Lake Valley Fire Protection District for providing many of the photos. Thank you to Tahoe Production House for compiling the video and slideshows.

Thank you to the firefighters, law enforcement and others who contributed to ensuring not a single life was lost and that the fire, while horrendous, was not any worse than it was.

Thank you to the people of the Angora burn area – those who stayed and those who moved elsewhere – for showing everyone what courage, tenacity and community are all about.

Facts:

- June 24, 2007, Angora Fire started
- July 2, 2007, fire fully contained

- 3,100 acres burned
 - 254 houses destroyed
 - July 5, 2007, bi-state commission formed
 - Aug. 9, 2007, Stan and Diana Freeman are the first to pour their foundation.
 - 56,317 tons of ash and rubble were removed and transported for disposal (2,823 truckloads); 6,134 tons of concrete (352 truckloads) and 2,001 tons of metal were recycled (90 truckloads); and 8,511 tons of trees were recycled for lumber (405 truckloads).
 - El Dorado County waived building fees for people not expanding their footprint. However, more than half went bigger.
 - May 27, 2008, governors declare state of emergency in Lake Tahoe Basin. Fire commission's 247-page report's six categories are: Environmental Protection, Issues of Governance, Community and Homeowner Fire Prevention, Forest and Fuels Management, Fire Suppression, and Funding.
 - June 2008, 63 percent of the homeowners had filed building plans with the county. Of those 161 permits, 153 applications were filed in 2007 so they could use California's old building regulations.
 - June 2012, of 499 affected parcels, seven vacant parcels have changed ownership, 77 single-family residences have changed ownership.
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Nice weekend on tap, but snow in the forecast

A few record high temperatures were set June 1 in the Tahoe area.

South Lake Tahoe reached 81 degrees – two degrees higher than the record set in 1992. Reno's 97 was three degrees higher than the 2007 record. Mammoth surpassed the 2002 record of 77 by three degrees.

Markleeville tied the 2001 record of 88 degrees.



The weather is going to change in Tahoe soon.
Photo/LTN

“No record high temperatures are expected on Saturday as a weak trough pushes into California and Nevada on Saturday,” the National Weather Service said.

Temps in the Lake Tahoe Basin are expected to be in the 70s this weekend before dramatically dropping on Monday. The high on June 4 in South Lake Tahoe is forecast to be 55 degrees with a 70 percent chance of showers, with the possibility of

snow that evening when the low drops to 28 degrees.

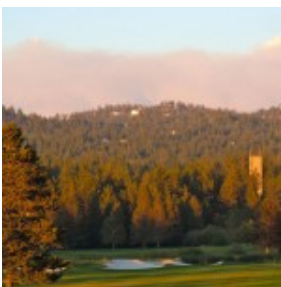
– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lightning caused fires burning in Northern Nevada

Several fires are burning out of control in Northern Nevada – all presumably caused by lightning strikes on June 1.

The largest is the Preacher Mine Fire at 500 acres as of Friday night. This is where most resources are being used.

“There are several homes in this remote rural area, however no structures have burned. Resident notifications continue,” Douglas County sheriff’s Sgt. Jim Halsey said.



Smoke from
fires in the
valley side of
Douglas Valley
are visible
from Edgewood
Tahoe on June
1. Photo/LTN

Air crews were on the scene dumping water on the first fire reported in Douglas County on Friday afternoon. The Pineview Estates Fire has grown to approximately 50 acres, and is burning in a southerly direction. This is also being called the Ray May 2 fire because it is in the location where a fire burned earlier this year.

There is a brush fire near Pyramid Lake burning toward Marble Bluff Mountain. The River Bend Fire (20 acres) is burning in brush/river bottom.

Units have responded to the Ranch Fire (one-quarter acre) in the Rosachi Ranch area in the Sweetwater Range, north of Bridgeport and to the Bald Fire (3 acres) northeast of Holbrook Junction.

Smoke from the fires has been visible in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

While the winds were calm and no lightning was reported in the basin Friday afternoon, winds picked up over the hill as the day went on, which helped fan the flames.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Free sports physicals for South Shore athletes

Tahoe Center for Orthopedics, Barton Health and Lake Tahoe Unified School District are offering free student sports physicals to South Tahoe and Whittell high school students and Pop Warner athletes playing fall, winter and spring sports.

The event is June 6 from 4-6pm at South Tahoe High School, 1735 Lake Tahoe Blvd. Available on a walk-in basis only and

this is the only date available for 2012.

For more information, call (530) 543.5615.

Workshop all about lavender

Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Institute offers a Lavender Production, Sales & Marketing Workshop on June 18, 9am-4pm at the Carson City campus.

It will include a lavender farm tour.

Cost is \$45. Lunch is included. Seating is limited, and registration is required.

The workshop will begin at Campie's Lavender Patch in Stagecoach where students will learn about harvesting, soils and site selection, the extraction process for essential oils, and best varieties for Nevada. Following the farm tour, a classroom lecture at the WNC Carson Campus will focus on sales and marketing, product development, and online strategies to expand markets.

Featured speakers include farmers Mike and Diane van Camp of Campie's Lavender Patch in Stagecoach and Susan Harrington of Labyrinth Hill Lavender in Washington. Harrington has been growing and selling lavender for almost a decade. With a background in business management, she teaches workshops across the Northwest and has developed online courses for

lavender production and sales.

Mike and Diane van Camp have grown lavender commercially for more than eight years. They produce more than 30 varieties, focusing on propagation and development of varieties favorable to Nevada's climate. Their nursery plants and retail lavender products are sold at farmers markets and online.

Information/registration, contact Ann Louhela at (775) 351.2551 or louhelaa@wnc.edu.

Non-competitive cycling event for all ages, abilities

As part of this year's "Alta Alpina Challenge – Riding the Wild Sierra" cycling event, the Alta Alpina Cycling Club is organizing non-competitive ride for people of all ages on June 30.

Designed to accommodate cyclists of all abilities, the course will allow riders to experience the scenic beauty of the Sierra foothills along the popular road riding area of Diamond Valley. Options for the ride range from 15 to 20 miles.

For information and registration, call 877.845.2453.

Tahoe Douglas fire gives back via insurance consultants

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District is giving nearly \$11,000 to local charities.

The donated money is a pass through of sorts from the department's health insurance consultant LBG Advisors. LBG Advisors is not keeping insurance carrier bonuses and instead donates them to local charities in the name of their clients. Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District has chosen the following nonprofits as beneficiaries:

- Tahoe Douglas Seniors Center – \$1,700.
- Whittell High School Boosters Club – \$1,700.
- Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation – \$5,000.
- DCSO Douglas County Sheriff Advisory Council – \$1,700. (Toward the purchase of the VIRTRA Ssimulator.)
- Young at Heart Senior Citizens Club – \$600.

Truckee chamber hosting 3 business workshops

Three business workshops are being offered in Truckee this month.

Business Basics (June 6 1-4pm, \$40) is a three-hour workshop

discussing the fundamentals of starting and building a successful business. Learn the realities of starting a business, licenses and permits needed, developing start-up costs, break-even analysis, cash flow projections, legal structure options, insurance requirements, importance of researching your market, why you need a business plan, typical loan requirements and much more.

SBA Financing Options (June 21, 10:30am-noon, free) is a

workshop discussing the various SBA loan programs, the fundamentals of borrowing, credit, financing options, owner's injection, collateral, loan restriction and limitations, loan application process, and standards lenders utilize to evaluate the application.

Social Media (June 26, 1-4pm, \$40) is about using social media tools to build relationships with customers and create top of mind awareness for your business. This three-hour workshop will cover basics of setting up a Facebook page and provide tips on how to grow your Facebook fan base as well as how to build relationships and drive traffic to events and products. Twitter, Linked-in and the power of email marketing will also be part of the discussion.

All workshops are at Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce, 10065 Donner Pass Road, Truckee. For more information, call (530) 587.8808.