Happy hour in Tahoe not what it was in the 1980s

By Kathryn Reed

Poor college students talk about the abundance of ramen noodles consumed. Poor recent college grads talk about the happy hour deals that make for a meal.

In a quest to relieve my 20s in Tahoe when happy hours were where I often found dinner, I thought I would see what things were like 20 years later. Disappointing would be the primary word of choice.

So many bars and restaurants no longer offer deals, and if they do, most are not substantial. And some only have winter bargains. In other words, it’s gouge the tourist and locals this time of year.



Happy hours in Lake Tahoe aren't what they were in the late 1980s -- but there are still fun drinks being made at some locations. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It seems like an odd business model. Don’t they realize if you

reel people in with a deal, the majority will end up spending more money after the discount hour is over and that people are more likely to frequent the place that has a deal?

While we couldn't hit every place, below is what we found this spring and early summer. Please share with *Lake Tahoe News* readers where you like to go for happy hour.

Drinking establishments

Thinking I would be nice and drive all the way to Meyers, I asked Kim to find out what Divided Sky had as a happy hour special. A buck off drinks, but wine is not included.

We thought we could do better.

Without checking on the deal, we headed to Steamers on this particular Friday. The deal – if you could call it that – was 75 cents off any drink. The deal ended at 6pm.

Those deals do beat the 50 cents off drinks at the Flight Deck at Lake Tahoe Airport.

MacDuff's in South Lake seemed a bit put off when Roni asked about happy hour deals. The waiter said it was a dollar off beer – that's it.

A different South Lake Tahoe restaurant – Fresh Ketch – has happy hour deals that are pretty substantive in that a regular glass of the house Cabernet is $9, but during happy hour the price drops to $4. The Ketch has happy hour Monday-Friday from 3-6pm. Another good deal is Sunday through Thursday there are special prices on one type of drink – which is different each of the five days.

Don't bother going to Sunnyside for happy hour – this Tahoe City restaurant says it does not need to discount drinks.

Brooks' Sports Bar in Stateline isn't the place to go either – at least not now. The golf course restaurant only has specials

in winter.

Another great lakeside setting is West Shore Café in Homewood, but when Sue and I were there they had yet to come up with a happy hour menu.

Drinking at lunch is the best deal at Las Panchitas in Kings Beach. As long as food is ordered, draft beers are $2.50 and Dos Equis are $3.

During what they call their early bird specials (4-6pm), margaritas are $3.50, a 16 ounce Dos Equis $3.50 and Bud $2.50. This compares to full price of $3.50 for domestic beer, $4.50 for Mexican beer and $6.50 for margaritas.

At Blue Angel Café in South Lake the daily happy hours are from 11am-noon and 3-6pm where the house wine is $3 – regularly it's $5. Draft beers are $1 off the regular price that ranges from $4 to $6.

Traveling on to Stateline, at Sul Lago the draught beer, house wine and well drinks are two-for-one Sunday-Thursday from 4-5:30pm, and 4-5pm Friday and Saturdays. This deal is only in the bar area – not if you are sitting at one of the dining tables.

A few hours on a hot farm have me and Kim in search of liquid refreshments in Truckee. Sue meets us at Moody's where the beer, wine and well drinks are $2 off. Regular prices for beer run $3.50 for Bud to $6 for Stella. Wines are normally $5 to $13 a glass.

Two days later and Sue and I need to cool off after mountain biking at Northstar. We stop by the Cabana Bar next to the roller skating rink. Max the bartender has created the Downhill Cruiser. It's the perfect complement to downhill cycling – rum, tequila, citrus flavors, Sierra Mist and a lime wedge for $8.75.

PBR and Coors Light are always $3.75.

This bar has various specialty drinks throughout the summer, but unfortunately was not open the next Monday afternoon when I stopped by again.

Thinking Friday Station had a happy hour, Brenda and I went to the top of Harrah's. No luck. Good views, pricy drinks, no deals.

It's a Thursday at Après Wine on Ski Run in South Tahoe – this means happy hour all night for the women in the room. Featured whites, reds and roses are $4, featured Chardonnay $5, featured Pinot Noir $5 and beers are $3 and $4.

Hours for regular happy hour during the week are from 4-6pm and 9-10pm.

Food to absorb the drinks

A meal can be had at Blue Angel Café in South Tahoe during the daily 11am-noon and 3-6pm happy hours. House salads go from $6 to $3 and a cup of soup from $4 to $3. To add to those, a plate of fries is $3 during happy hour (regularly $5) and garlic bread is $3 (regularly $8).

Plus, this Ski Run Boulevard restaurant has specials throughout the week, like $4 tater tots on Mondays from 3-6pm and $2 tacos on Tuesdays during the same hours.

In Kings Beach, Las Panchitas has deals between 4-6pm. Small nachos are $3.50, small quesadilla $3.50 and they take 25 percent off Mexican combo dinners.

Back on the South Shore, at Sul Lago in Stateline the Italian bangers, appetizers and small pizzas are half price in the bar during happy hour. Those hours are Sunday-Thursday from 4-5:30 and Friday-Saturday from 4-5pm.

Fried zucchini at the Fresh Ketch is one of my favorite

appetizers. I wink and call it health food. The portion has decreased substantially over the years, but the batter and size of the individual sticks have improved tremendously.

It’s best to go during the Monday-Friday 3-6pm happy hour because that’s when a plateful costs $5. Otherwise you will be paying twice that amount any other time.

Happy hour at Moody’s in Truckee starts at 3pm. The two food specials are the Pub Burger and Mozzarella, Basil, Tomato Pizza – each for $10. Regularly they are $14 and $13, respectively.

Nothing was left on the plates after Sue, Brenda and I tackled the strawberry bruschetta and Greek cucumbers at Après Wine. The former is a unique dish that we all recommend. Happy hour price is $4, regular $7.95. Cucs are good, but discount isn’t great – a savings of 95 cents.

Beach Boys back on tour as gray-haired men

Publisher's note: *The Beach Boys play at 7 tonight as Harveys in Stateline.*

By Andrew Romano, Newsweek

Brian Wilson, the lumbering savant who wrote, produced and sang an outlandish number of immortal pop songs back in the 1960s with his band, the Beach Boys, is swiveling in a chair, belly out, arms dangling, next to his faux-grand piano at the cavernous Burbank, Calif. studio where he and the rest of the group's surviving members are rehearsing for their much-ballyhooed 50th Anniversary reunion tour, which is set to start in three days. At 24, Wilson shelved what would have been his most avant-garde album, Smile, and retreated for decades into a dusky haze of drug abuse and mental illness; now, 45 years later, he has reemerged, stable but still somewhat screwy, to give the whole sun-and-surf thing a final go.

Before that can happen, though, the reconstituted Beach Boys must learn how to sing "That's Why God Made the Radio," the first new A-side that Wilson has written for the band since 1980. They are not entirely happy about this. Earlier, I heard keyboardist Bruce Johnston, who replaced Wilson on the road in 1965, talking to the group's tour manager about an upcoming satellite-radio gig. "Just so you know," the manager said, "Sirius wants you to perform 'That's Why God Made the Radio' tomorrow night."

"Oh really?" Johnston responded. "And how are we going to do that when we don't know it?"

And so the band has gathered, once again, around Wilson's piano. I'd like to imagine that this is how it was when they

first accustomed their vocal cords to, say, “California Girls.” Except it’s not, exactly: back then, in 1965, Wilson was the maestro, conducting each singer as his falsetto floated skyward and his fingers pecked out the accompaniment. Now he stares at a teleprompter and sings when he’s told to sing, ceding his bench to one member of the 10-man backing band that will buffer the Beach Boys in concert and looking on while another orchestrates the harmonies and handles the loftier notes. At first, the blend is rough: Wilson strains to hit the high point of the hook; frontman Mike Love and guitarist Al Jardine miss their cues. But after eight or nine passes the stray voices begin to mesh. They begin to sound like the Beach Boys. Close your eyes, shutting out Wilson’s swoosh of silver hair and Love’s four golden rings, and 1965 isn’t such a stretch.

Or it isn’t until someone’s iPhone rings. Jardine’s. He turns away from the piano and presses the device to his ear. “I’m going to have to call you back, because—wait, what?” He hangs up, shaking his head. “Dick Clark just passed away,” he says. The room begins to murmur; the makeup lady covers her mouth with her hand.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Mountain Faire features food and music

Tahoe Mountain Faire is coming Aug. 11-12 at the Tahoe Valley Campground, 175 Melba Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

The festival, put on by Danny Freeman of Pine Cone Acre Motel and the campground, features food and music.

For more info or to purchase booth space, call Danny at (530) 318.8835, JoAnn at (530) 544.7412, George at (530) 541.6681 or Gia at (530) 543.0590.

Celebs ready to waltz their way down Edgewood's greens

By Kathryn Reed

Agility, athleticism, funny clothes. Those are just some of the things dancing and golf have in common.

Jack Wagner, Donald Driver, Emmit Smith, Jerry Rice, John O'Hurley, and Jason Taylor are six other things the two activities have in common.

These six men will be at Edgewood Tahoe this week for the 23rd annual American Century Celebrity Championship Tournament in Stateline July 17-22. These six also have all participated in "Dancing with the Stars".



The American Century Championship is July 17-22 at Edgewood Tahoe. Photos/LTN file

Think about how graceful a running back can be as he runs down the sidelines, flitting seemingly effortlessly between defenders. All that incredible foot movement proved beneficial for Driver, a Pro Bowl running back with the Green Bay Packers, who won the dancing event this season. Hall of Fame running back Smith was the top dancer the year he participated.

While Lawrence Taylor won't be at this year's celebrity golf tournament, the Hall of Fame linebacker has been a dancer and a golfer since retiring from the New York Giants.

A 2011 "Dancing with the Stars" contestant on the Australia version – Jan Stephenson – will be playing in Thursday's celebrity-am event. Stephenson was one of the top golfers in the 1970s and 1980s, having won the LPGA championship in 1982 and the U.S. Women's Open a year later.

Brandi Chastain, former soccer player, is returning as the lone female player of the 80-plus field of golfers.

Another noteworthy woman will be on the greens this year, but behind a microphone. Annika Sörenstam, who has a second home in Incline Village, is a guest analyst each Thursday on the Golf Channel. This week she will do commentary for the network during the tournament.

Sörenstam retired four years ago from professional golf as the best golfer of her generation, if not all time.



Tony Romo is the favored to win the tournament, not just the hearts of young women.

It’s possible she will have a driver in her hand Thursday and not the mic.

Considering Sörenstam has her signature wine label with Wente, she may not be on the 17th hole with the guys when they participate in the Korbel sponsored ace contest on Friday. Participants will vie for $250,000 from 155 yards out. If they sink it on one shot, they split the winnings with the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation.

Quarterbacks are often a crowd favorite. Tony Romo of the Cowboys is the favored to win, according to the bookies.

First-time QBs this year include Christian Ponder with the Vikings, Ryan Fitzpatrick with the Bills and Alex Smith with the Niners.

The 49er quarterbacks are a mainstay at this event. In the past John Brodie, Steve Spurrier, Steve Young, Trent Dilfer, and Steve Bono have all participated in the ACC.

A QB with local appeal, Aaron Rodgers of Green Bay by way of Chico and Cal, will be returning.

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Facts:

• Practice rounds are Tuesday and Wednesday.

• Pro-am is Thursday.

• Actual tournament is Friday-Sunday.

• Tickets vary depending on the day and package. They may be bought online, at the gate or at Raley’s for a discount.

• NBC will cover it live Friday-Sunday.

• Parking is at the casinos.

Nevada contractors turn to NDOT to secure funds

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – About $87 million in state taxes that could be parlayed into 10 times as much to pay for critical road improvements are ready to flow to the state Department of Transportation next year, but there are concerns the money could be diverted to other needs.

The Nevada Chapter of the Associated General Contractors has asked the Nevada Department of Transportation’s Board of Directors to work with the Legislature to ensure the revenue

remains dedicated to the State Highway Fund.

An estimated 25,000 jobs could be created with the funding if the money was used to sell bonds, said John Madole, executive director of the Nevada AGC. About $870 million could be generated for road projects in the next two-year budget under this option, he said.

“We think it’s important as the fiscal 2014-2015 budget building process begins, that policymakers are mindful of continuing the commitment made several years ago to improve funding for Nevada’s highways,” Madole said. “This funding infusion comes at a crucial time for Nevada, since the current ending fund balance in the State Highway Fund is now depleted to record low levels not seen in more than two decades.”

The additional tax money is set to flow to NDOT as the result of two separate measures already approved by the Legislature.

Senate Bill 429 of the 2009 session raised money for the cash-strapped general fund in part by slowing the depreciation on vehicles when motorists pay their registration fees. The measure required, however, that the additional revenue from the governmental services tax go to the State Highway Fund instead of the general fund starting on July 1, 2013. About $61 million a year would be made available for road projects.

Senate Bill 429 became the package of taxes proposed to sunset on June 30, 2011, but extended in the current budget as part of a deal between Gov. Brian Sandoval and a majority of state lawmakers.

The other measure is contained within Senate Bill 503 of the 2011 session, which temporarily increased the amount of money the Department of Motor Vehicles could spend on administrative costs for two years. The expiration of this provision will provide an additional $26 million a year to the Highway Fund beginning in July 2013.

DMV spokesman Kevin Malone said today the agency will be seeking the lower level of administrative costs in the next budget.

But Nevada's general fund demands, from funding for public education to an expanding Medicaid population, could potentially put these funding streams for road projects at risk.

Sandoval said in March he will extend the "temporary" tax package into the next two-year budget to avoid cuts to education, including a 0.35 percent sales tax increase and a higher tax rate for large businesses under the payroll tax. Whether this means the vehicle registration money will also be retained to support the general fund is not yet clear.

The process of preparing the next two-year spending plan is now under way and Sandoval spokeswoman Mary-Sarah Kinner said today the budget issues must be analyzed first before decisions are made on all of the elements of the sunsetting tax package, such as the motor vehicle registration revenue.

Madole said the job creation potential from the increased highway funding would help Sandoval meet his goal of creating 50,000 new jobs in Nevada by the end of 2014.

A draft resolution of support for ensuring the revenues go to the State Highway Fund as planned was submitted to the NDOT Board of Directors by Madole last month with a request that it be considered at its July 23 meeting. Sandoval is chairman of the board.

"I think it's very important because since 1992 . . . there have been no increased revenues for state highway funding," Madole said. "We believe that that money, because it is an identifiable source that's a pretty stable source of revenue, I'm not a bonding expert, but we've had others look at it and say that money could support bonds."

The gas tax has not been increased since that time while inflation has probably risen by 35 percent to 45 percent during the same period, he said.

Gas tax revenues are declining in part because of increased fuel efficiency, causing the NDOT to consider alternative ways of raising revenue for roads. NDOT is in the midst of a multi-year study of the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) tax, which would replace the existing fuel tax and be levied based on the number of miles a car travels rather than the amount of gas it consumes.

Protect your medicines from the summer heat

By Jessica Stoller-Conrad, NPR

As record-breaking temperatures sweep the nation, it’s hard to keep anything cool, especially if the power goes out.

And, try as you might, it’s hard to find health products — from prescription drugs to over-the-counter pain relievers — that don’t caution against storage in high temperatures.

The labels on many products specify storage at room temperature. What does that mean? Well, the Food and Drug Administration has told its inspectors that 75 to 77 degrees is the sweet spot.

Though the future may bring medicines that are resistant to

heat, we wondered: What happens if you can’t keep medicines at the recommended temperature?

Read the whole story

Strapped Folsom to charge for emergency medical services

By CBS News

The fire department in Folsom will start charging $225 for emergency medical services, reflecting a trend of financially strapped cities taking unusual steps to close burgeoning budget gaps.

The Sacramento County city begins implementing the new policy Monday, according to CBS Sacramento.

“The real issue is how do we provide the essential services the community is seeking from us?” Folsom Fire Chief Ron Phillips said.

Currently Folsom residents are treated by paramedics for free because it is covered by the Fire Department. The fee is an additional cost on top of taxes residents already pay and applies whether or not the patient is actually transported to the hospital.

The new revenue – expected to bring in $250,000 in the next fiscal year – will go toward gas, supplies and paramedic personnel, according to the report.

Read the whole story

Bicyclist dies in Truckee road crash

Truckee Police Department report that a 47-year-old male on a group bicycle ride crashed on Old Highway 40 near South Shore Drive on July 13 at about 9:35am and later was pronounced dead at an area hospital.

The bicyclist was wearing a helmet but suffered massive head injuries. His identity is being withheld pending appropriate notifications.

The police said it appears the crash only involved the bicyclist and no other motorists, but anyone who may have witnessed this incident is asked to contact Sgt. Robert Womack at (530) 550.2323.

Pints for Paws benefit El Dorado County Canines

Pints for Paws is a beer tasting featuring beers from Lagunitas Brewing Company with proceeds benefiting the El Dorado County Canine Association.

The event is July 19 from 7-9pm at Cork and More, 1032 Al Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Cost is $15. Tickets are limited and may be purchased before that night at the store.

For more information, call (530) 544.5253.

Robbers Fire burns more than 1,400 acres in Placer County

By KCRA-TV

A fire burning in a steep canyon between the towns of Colfax and Foresthill in Placer County grew overnight, but firefighters were also able to get some additional containment.

Cal Fire officials said Saturday morning that the Robbers Fire has burned 1,427 acres since igniting Wednesday afternoon, and was 20 percent contained.

More than 1,900 firefighters are currently fighting the fire, which is burning in a steep, heavily wooded area.

Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday called in more firefighters and the California National Guard to help battle a Placer County wildfire that has forced the evacuation of 300 people.

Read the whole story