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## **Ice cream and entertainment go together**

**By Amanda Llewellyn, special to the Tribune**

At 8 p.m. it's 12 degrees outside and still there is a line out the door for ice cream at the Cold Stone Creamery.

Kirk Gillaspey, a customer who has frequented the parlor in South Lake Tahoe since it opened two weeks ago, raised his voice over the noise of singing in the background.

The staff sings whenever someone tips, but it's the customer who's swirling with a decadent mix of flavors like cheesecake ice cream with graham cracker crust, strawberries and whipped topping.

Owners Steve and Angel Charpentier plan a grand opening of Cold Stone Creamery for March 16.

The Charpentiers have been Lake Tahoe residents for 29 years, owning and operating realty companies over the years.

She has also worked as an escrow officer; her father was a teacher at South Tahoe High School.

When they aren't whipping up ice cream concoctions, they spend their time at Network Realty, their other business.

Angel Charpentier's first experience with Cold Stone was in Southern California -- and it had a serious affect on her. She enjoyed what the company calls the 10-minute vacation.

"You don't mind waiting (for ice cream) when there's entertainment," she said.

They made a point of visiting other Cold Stone Creameries to get a feel for how the business runs. When they saw how popular and successful every franchise location is, they knew they had found a business venture worth pursuing.

Attending ice cream school involved a dozen days of making ice cream, learning recipes and taking tests.

The Charpentiers' hope is to cater to local residents, possibly becoming the newest hangout for students.

They plan to add more parlors in Carson City and Reno.

For now, their focus is on the huge job in front of them. The ice cream takes a minimum of 10 hours to make.

Come summer busy time, they may have someone working the graveyard shift so they'll be making ice cream 24 hours a day.

Waffle cones and brownies are made fresh daily. There are tons of flavors of ice cream, like cake batter and mocha, with mixings that sound like a child's birthday party.

The ice cream is mixed on a giant marble stone while the customer waits. The staff supplies the entertainment.

Potential employees must audition for jobs, singing some of the Cold Stone Creamery songs. During the interviews, the Charpentiers have seen the hokey pokey dance and heard poetry. Cold Stone Creamery may be the one place where being outgoing and silly is a job duty.

Located in the Heavenly Village at Park Avenue and Highway 50, Cold Stone Creamery is open every day from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Parking is available directly behind Raley's. The Charpentiers can be reached at (530) 544-3000.