

On-site medics integral to SnowGlobe's survival

By Kathryn Reed

"We would not be able to have SnowGlobe if Rock Med was not here."

Those are the words of South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston. For a department his size, when there are four patients it is considered a multi-casualty incident.

If everyone who was treated at the three-day music festival went via ambulance to Barton Memorial Hospital, it would overload that facility and cripple the ambulance service.

These are reasons why the volunteer medical team is so important to South Lake Tahoe's annual music festival, which returns next week.

"There are more medical calls at SnowGlobe than we would have in several days in the city," Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They have had 30 people OD or some emergency situation at any time."

Alcohol and harder drugs are the primary reasons people seek medical care.



Rock Medicine has been at every SnowGlobe concert in South Lake Tahoe. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Even though the medical facility is onsite, every year concert-goers end up in the emergency room at Barton.

“For the last several years, the Barton Emergency Department has seen between five and 15 patients from SnowGlobe per day. Most patients seen in the Emergency Department come for adverse effects from alcohol intoxication and use of illegal substances. Approximately half of the intoxicated patients seen were under the age of 21,” Lance Orr, medical director for Barton’s ER, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Patients under the influence require more monitoring and attention from emergency

staff and physicians. Occasionally we see patients originating from SnowGlobe who have sustained a minor traumatic injury. Such injuries are more common when the conditions are icy.”

The concept of Rock Medicine was started in 1972 by legendary music promoter Bill Graham. Upon his request the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic in San Francisco provided medical care in a tent to Grateful Dead and Led Zeppelin concert-goers.

George “Skip” Gay was a doctor at the clinic at the time. In 1973, he founded Rock Medicine. The organization now provides medical care at concerts throughout Northern California, as well as being the primary caregivers for Levi Stadium – home of the San Francisco 49er football team.

Rock Med declined to be interviewed for this story.

Chad Donnelly, the promoter for SnowGlobe, said of Rock Med, “They do an incredible job of looking after attendees.”

Even so, sometimes concert-goers need to be taken to the hospital.

“If someone using Rock Med services needs additional medical attention, Rock Med’s medical staff sends patients by ambulance to the Barton Emergency Department. When Rock Med closes their medical facility for the day, patients not ready for discharge from medical care are directed to the Barton Emergency Department,” Orr said.

Rock Med brings a small army of doctors, nurses and other support staff who are able to perform an array of medical procedures.

“They have more people on duty at SnowGlobe than we have firefighters and police officers in the city,” Meston said.

Letter: Tahoe needs to wake up and engage

To the community,

Two contentious mega projects – Martis Valley West and Squaw Valley – just got approved by the Placer County supervisors despite raucous public outcry, objections by all area conservation groups and the California attorney general.

In the case of Martis Valley West, even objections by the county Planning Commission couldn't stop the money train. Any kindergartner would know that the Squaw developer's claims of reducing traffic by 10 percent makes no sense.

Projects of this complexity are the devil's playground and even with huge groups of local citizens objecting, the governance structure in place for Tahoe doesn't represent local interest.

What's really insulting is the California attorney general got bought off for the mere price of \$440,000. Kamala Harris backed off her criticism on impacts to Lake Tahoe if TRPA got the money. What a joke. Is this the new version of pay to play? Crystal Bay added two fire hydrants and replaced a short run of water lines on a short block for \$470,000 plus. The \$440,000 probably doesn't pay for the time spent by the public at these meetings.

How does this pittance mitigate any of the valid concerns regarding traffic, wildfires, and environmental stewardship? There is no specificity about what exactly the monies are supposed to pay for and all we know is that the money will be sucked into the TRPA black hole. Sadly, it will probably fund

more TRPA public relations personnel.

All of this is a pathetic reminder of how out of control our train wreck local government has become. No one is willing to make the tough decisions and the decision-makers don't even live in the basin. Aspen, Colo., has awoken and instituted a moratorium on building in areas of town until a master plan can be brought forth. The public can't trust anyone except for ourselves. We must build a local framework. North Lake Tahoe must incorporate. Contact preserve@ntpac.com if you want to help.

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance

Nestle finds method to cut sugar in chocolate by 40%

By Thomas Mulier, Bloomberg

Nestle SA says it found a way to reduce the amount of sugar in chocolate by as much as 40 percent, a discovery that may give the KitKat maker an edge as food producers face increasing pressure from governments, health advocates and shoppers to make products healthier.

The world's largest food company has developed a process to alter the structure of sugar that makes it taste sweeter in smaller amounts, according to Chief Technology Officer Stefan Catsicas, who declined to specify what that involves.

Nestle will start selling confectionery products made that way in 2018 and will gradually reduce their sugar content, he said in an interview.

Read the whole story

See where wealth is concentrated in California

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

Like much of America, California's wealth is concentrated among a small group of high-income earners. The state has 16 million households, and just 61,000 of them – 0.4 percent – together account for one-fifth of the state's income, according to the latest tax return figures from the Franchise Tax Board.

About 9 of every 10,000 households in Sacramento County reported earnings of at least \$1 million on 2014 returns, roughly one-fourth the statewide rate.

Placer, El Dorado and Yolo counties had rates two to three times as high, but still fell short of the statewide average.

Read the whole story

'Rogue One' a must-see for

Star Wars fans



"Rogue One"

4 out of 5
bagels

Rated PG-13

By

Howie Nave

After seeing the latest "Star Wars" epic one has to ask: Was it even necessary for George Lucas to make the prequel trilogy leading up to his original "Star Wars" movie back in 1977 with "A New Hope"?

Did we really have to see a young Anakin Skywalker from the planet Tatooine in the first of those three prequels, "Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace" and subjecting us to a Jar Jar Binks in the process? Well, with "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" this latest outing in the continuing franchise I feel is the perfect alternative to a prequel leading up to episode four. But then I imagine there would have to be another two prequels to complete the thread.

For you fellow diehard "Star Wars" fans you can't help but think where does this one fit in exactly? In "Star Wars:

Episode III – Revenge of the Sith” (the best of the prequel trilogy) we see the Death Star still under construction yet with “Rogue One” the Battlestar is already complete (not giving anything away here as it’s in the trailers and posters).

That said, the latest Star Wars story could be a standalone all by itself, which sounds weird because of course one can’t dismiss all of the other seven films while viewing this chapter in one of the most incredible and successful franchises in movie making history. Director Gareth Edwards (“Godzilla”) still takes us to a world set “long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away” but, unlike all the other films we don’t get that long scrawling text that opens all of the other Star Wars stories. Also missing is the familiar John Williams score, but new composer Michael Giacchino definitely borrows some riffs from the original putting his own spin on it musically to as not sample too much from the original.

Our main heroine is Jyn Erso (played by Felicity Jones who was nominated for an Oscar in “The Theory of Everything”) who learns the evil ways of the Empire at a very young age because it was her father, Galen (Mads Mikkelsen) who was responsible for the planning and construction of the Death Star.

Here’s where it gets interesting and, yes, even though he’s responsible for building the ultimate weapon of mass destruction he himself is a rebel and it’ll be 15 years later when we see why Jyn has inherited that side of her father and her purpose for being: to steal the plans of her father’s creation. Right then you get the feeling that this movie so perfectly leads into what will be Lucas’ groundbreaking original, “Star Wars: Episode 4 – A New Hope.”



Of course Jyn can't do this alone and she gets assistance (starting when she was very young) from Saw Gerrera (Forest Whitaker), a friend of her father's. Later on as a young woman Jyn is introduced to the dashing Capt. Cassian Andor (Diego Luna) and, yes, in a parallel Star Wars world you do see hints of a Princess Leia and a Han Solo, but I digress.

As with any really good action flick you need a solid supporting cast that kicks some serious butt ... literally! Huge kudos for casting Donnie Yen as Chirrut Imwe, a blind warrior monk whose mantra is reciting "I'm with the force and the force is with me" branding the franchise and Riz Ahmed as Bodhi Rook, an Imperial pilot now working with the Rebellion. But it's Alan Tudyk who steals every scene he is in as the voice of K-2S0 (Kaytoo to his masters), a security droid with a very sarcastic attitude. To him (I'm assuming it's a him in the robotic world) it's all about numbers and the percentage of winning or losing battles which, like Han Solo, Cassian Andor likes to defy the odds and just go for it.

But it's the new and familiar faces (and voices) of the evil Empire that kept this filmgoer on the edge of his seat in anticipation of what was to come. Darth Vader, although not the centerpiece of the movie, is obviously a force to be reckoned with and thankfully the great James Earl Jones, the original voice remains. His voice never ages. What is amazing to me is how masterfully some actors were brought back to life after they've long since left this planet. Case in point: rather than recast the role of the Empire's Grand Moff

Tarkin (originally played by the late Peter Cushing) director Gareth Edwards and the wizards from Industrial Light and Magic digitally re-created the actor. The effect will blow your mind.

However, the final scene of the movie (and I won't reveal who it is) you'll see a very familiar face who in fact is a real actress and not a digital recreation.

When you do see "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" ask yourself if you feel this would have been a more perfect prequel to "Star Wars: Episode 4 – A New Hope." I do have to snicker some because there is a major continuity problem having this as a prequel to the original 1977 classic. Times have changed in Hollywood and "Rogue" offers up one of the most ethnically diverse casts ever, making this movie very appealing and universal. Then as it leads into the 1977 Lucas debut of "Star Wars" the cast (as with most of Hollywood back then) is very white and you find yourself asking, "What happened to all of those people of color from the movie I just saw leading up to this one, huh?" Just an observation folks, not a political statement.

Howie Nave is the host/emcee of the Improv inside Harveys Casino and has his own radio show, "Howie's Morning Rush" on KRLT 93-9 The Lake Monday through Friday. You can also follow him on Twitter @ Howie Nave Comedian and has a podcast with different comics on every week, Howie's High Sierra Comedy Vault Podcast @ Howienave.com

Stormier times likely for

Calif. water users

By Ellen Knickmeyer, AP

The first winter storm of 2017 to drop welcome rain over the rivers, pumps, pipes and canals that move California's water north to south likely will open a new era of tension over how much water goes to fish or farms under a new U.S. law.

Legislation signed Friday by President Obama dictates that the federal portion of California's heavily engineered water systems gives agricultural districts and other human users the biggest possible share of the most fought-over resource in a state with a six-year drought.

Water experts and conservationists expect that new mandate to conflict with state and federal laws and court orders meant to ensure enough water stays in Northern California's Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and delta for endangered native fish.

Dueling interpretations over what the new law means for water deliveries could foster tensions between the state and the incoming Trump administration and worsen the water wars among farmers, fishing industries and conservation interests.

"There's going to be fighting, and it is going to commence almost immediately," said Peter Moyle, a professor emeritus of biology at UC Davis.

Moyle has spent much of his career tracing the decline of the minute fish called the Delta smelt and dozens of other native species since operations at California's giant state and federal water projects started more than a half-century ago.

Paul Wenger, president of the California Farm Bureau Federation, is one of many, including farming groups and agricultural water districts with considerable political strength, that welcome the water bill.

As heavy winter rains ease the drought, “this bill is going to help us catch some of this water and move it down south,” Wenger said.

And if the state’s fishing groups and conservationists try to stop that, “shame on the environmentalists,” he said. “Lawsuits haven’t helped the fish.”

Law bringing some changes

The law includes new directions on how hard to run giant water pumps during the winter storms that bring much of California’s rain for the year.

Typically, the storms trigger recommendations from wildlife officials to ease up on pumping. That is meant to help keep the nearly extinct Delta smelt and waning native salmon on course as the fish take advantage of the storms to move up or downstream.

When Donald Trump visited California’s Central Valley during the presidential campaign, he cited complaints from water districts and farmers that easing pumping after heavy rains wastes storm water that could be captured for the heavily agricultural region.

Environmental groups say allowing winter rains to flow to the Pacific Ocean is essential to the health of the West Coast’s largest estuary, the San Francisco Bay.

Among other changes, the new law is expected to require biologists to show more hard data on endangered fish in real time when they ask for a reduction in pumping. Moyle, the Delta smelt expert, believes that’s possible because of “smelt cams” and other monitoring systems already in place.

Jay Lund, longtime water policy expert at the UC Davis, expects the law to provide up to an additional half-million acre-feet of water for human users.

That's roughly equal to enough water to supply a half-million homes for a year and would be worth several hundreds of millions of dollars to agricultural interests in drought years. Both fish and farms received less water during the worst of California's drought.

Fish advocates were expected to go to court if the law takes away water from native species under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts and related court orders, said Doug Obegi with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Groups fighting restrictions

Some agricultural interests hope to challenge the U.S. Endangered Species Act itself, loosening or doing away with its restrictions on pumping in California.

More pumping for farms and less water in the two rivers would be bad news not just for smelt but for other California fish listed as endangered, from salmon to sturgeon to steelhead, Moyle said.

All of that could bring the Trump administration and its supporters in Congress into conflict with California over the state's protections for threatened wildlife.

"Dueling legislation between Congress and the state Legislature, and parallel legal battles in state and federal courts, and everyone's paying attention to that instead of paying attention to making the system run better – that's my worry," Lund said.

Don't bet on a white Christmas at Tahoe

By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Forecasters are having difficulty in predicting whether the Reno-Tahoe area will have a white Christmas this year.

A system that currently is headed toward the Sierra has a 25 to 35 percent chance of bringing precipitation to the Tahoe basin and northward as early as Thursday and possibly through the weekend, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Marvin Boyd.

Read the whole story

Millions of dollars in unclaimed money in Nev.

By Mike Higdon, Reno Gazette-Journal

"You may have extra cash this holiday season and not even know it," according to the Nevada State Treasurer.

Nevada's Unclaimed Property Division has nearly \$900 million in property waiting to be claimed by its owners or their descendants.

Read the whole story

Risk of deadly avalanche grows in Sierra

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

The death of a 64-year-old Aptos man at Mount Rose Ski Resort this month punctuates the fact that the Sierra snow season, for the second year in a row, is starting out with dangerous avalanche conditions.

After four years of drought, last season featured similar conditions, with several avalanches reported by U.S. Forest Service officials and the death of a 23-year-old ski instructor who apparently wandered off course at Sugar Bowl Resort.

“This year has been a little more dramatic,” said Steve Reynaud, a forecaster at the Sierra Avalanche Center, noting that four “atmospheric river” storms have dumped heavy snow in the higher elevations this season.

As of Friday afternoon, the center had placed the Lake Tahoe region under a warning of “considerable” avalanche risk. The level 3 warning, in a system with 5 as the most dangerous, was in effect until Saturday morning.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



Fritz Wenck

- The board room at Lake Tahoe Community College will be named after Fritz Wenck, who retired this month after being the longest serving board member. He was there from day one. There will be a celebration in late January.
- Here are the El-Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for the week.
- Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Garden Valley, presented the Congressional Silver Medal to Tiffany Wong, a student in El Dorado Union High School District. She was awarded for her extensive volunteer service, personal development, physical fitness, and exploration.
- Dec. 19 is expected to be the busiest day of the year for the U.S. Postal Service. More than 611 million pieces of mail are expected to be mailed that day. More than 5 million people nationwide are expected to visit a post office on Monday – which is twice the normal number.
- The Loft in South Lake Tahoe will see 2016 vanish and 2017 appear with two New Year's Eve celebrations. For details, go **online**.