‘Spider-Man 2’ weaves a great story



By Jeremy Miller

“The Amazing Spider-Man 2” is Marc Webb’s sequel to the much-needed reboot of the Spider Man franchise. Returning to the screen we have Andrew Garfield and Emma Stone as the leads, and welcome Jamie Foxx and Dane DeHaan.

Peter Parker (Garfield) continues his heroic day-to-day as Spider Man, swinging around through the city making criminals wish they’d stayed in school. Fighting crime is only half his battle, as he’s more in love with his girl, Gwen Stacy (Stone), than ever before.

The first film concluded with Peter promising Gwen’s father that he would break it off to spare Gwen from potential danger should his identity become known. When has that promise ever been kept? The guilt catches up from time to time, causing Peter to eventually decide to respect the promise despite Gwen’s desire to stay together. As if that wasn’t enough going against them, Gwen is accepted to Oxford and will be leaving for England.

As Peter works through the “coming of age” on and off again relationship with Gwen, evil starts brewing at Oscorp, the

company his father worked for prior to his disappearance. Spider Man saves a lonely pipsqueak Oscorp employee named Max (Foxx) who's desperate for someone's attention. Spider Man casually tells Max that he needs Max and that Max is his "eyes and ears out there" giving Max a false sense of friendship.



On Max's birthday he's kicked around by his co-workers and forced to work after hours leading to a careless accident involving Oscorp's experiments with electricity. As a result Max realizes he's able to channel electricity and manipulate it like a Sith Lord. He stumbles out to Times Square and makes one helluva scene that catches Spider Man's attention. Spider Man shows up to make it all better and Max quickly realizes that to Spider Man, he's just like any other dude. Slowly and haphazardly Max transforms from victim to villain and bam! Electro is born.

Meanwhile, Peter's old friend Harry (DeHaan) is back in town after being shipped off to boarding school by his father Norman Oscorp (CEO of Oscorp). At his father's passing, Harry finds out he's got an "incurable" illness passed down to him from dad and he becomes desperate for a solution. As if that wasn't enough on the kid, the board at Oscorp set him up and took control of the company just left to him.

Poisoned by the idea that Spider Man's blood was the only cure and a polite refusal by Spidey to give it to him leads Harry to share a common reality with Electro, Spider Man must die.

Director Marc Webb really killed it on this one. The cinematography was absolutely perfect. So often action flicks get all excitable and you can't even tell what's what in a fight because it all moves to fast. The utilization of slow motion allows us to really get up close and personal with the

fight scenes, and it was refreshing. The love between Peter and Gwen was equally frustrating, as it was dear. It brought me back to those days and it frustrated the hell out of me, mostly because deep down as cheesy as it got (hence the not perfect rating) I was really pullin' for these kids. The villains were absolutely perfect and turned out just the way I wanted them. When Electro embraces who he was as a villain, I was pumped beyond belief. I also thought that the reimagining of the Green Goblin was a huge success, as DeHaan is a super creepy kid perfectly fit to play a goblin.

The fight scenes were epic and extremely entertaining and flowed well, packing punch yet making sense too. The last 15 minutes of the movie had my jaw dropping and overall I had a blast. Cheesy? Sure, at times. Still, it's my favorite of the Marvel sequels as I thought it was much more mature of a film than "The Amazing Spider Man". As I left the theater I touched the railing and felt the shock of some static electricity. I'm not going to lie, for a minute I felt like I was about to become way cooler than I already am.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• There will be a water wise landscaping event at South Tahoe PUD's office (1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe) on June 11 at 6pm. This free workshop will include interactive activities on efficient irrigation, landscape design, landscape styles, and more.

• The 64-foot Tahoe Gal paddle-wheeler based in Tahoe City

turns 10 this year.

• On June 7 from 10am-3:30pm is the 5th annual Lake Tahoe Bird Festival at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center off Highway 89 on the South Shore.

• In its fourth year of hosting the Charity Golf Tournament at the Golf Club at Gray's Crossing, the High Fives Foundation raised nearly $30,000 to benefit athletes recovering from life-altering injury in the winter action sports community.

• Traci Des Jardins, former executive chef at Manzanita at the Ritz-Carlton at Northstar, has opened the Commissary at the Presidio on San Francisco. Reylon Agustin, previously the opening chef de cuisine for Des Jardins at Manzanita, is the executive chef.

Study: Community college students do poorly in online classes

By Danya Perez-Hernandez, Chronicle of Higher Education

While the use of online courses is increasingly widespread in California's community colleges, the success rate of students in the courses lags behind that of their peers taking in-person courses, according to a report released last week by the Public Policy Institute of California, a nonprofit and nonpartisan think tank that focuses on the state's public programs.

The report, "Online Learning and Student Outcomes in California's Community Colleges," says online-course

enrollment reached close to one million in the 2010-11 academic year, up from 114,000 in 2002-3. Almost 530,000 California community-college students enrolled in online courses during 2011-12, nearly 20 percent of all students taking credit courses, the report says.

The institute's researchers found that students were less likely to complete online courses than traditional courses, and were less likely to complete online courses with passing grades. But when it comes to long-term impact, measured by the likelihood of students' earning degrees or transferring to four-year-colleges, those who combined traditional and online courses were more successful than those who took face-to-face courses alone.

According to the report, in 2011-12, 79.4 percent of students completed online courses they started, compared with 85.9 percent of students completing traditional courses. The findings are based on student and course data collected from the 112 community colleges in California.

Read the whole story

Friends of Hope Valley putting on benefit concert

Friends of Hope Valley benefit concert is June 8.

The annual Back Forty Bluegrass concert and barbecue starts at 1pm. Also playing will be "local folkies" Larry Nair and Beth Oliverto – The Ten Dollar Pony.

The event is at Sorensen's Resort on Highway 88.

Cost is $10.

For more info, email info@hopevalleyca.com.

Craft beermakers prefer more expensive hops

By Venessa Wong, Bloomberg

The most popular style of craft beer in the U.S. right now is India Pale Ale. Not only do Americans want hopped-up craft beer in pale and brown ales, they prefer more fragrant, costlier hops.

The average price for all hops was $3.59 per pound in 2013, nearly twice as much as in 2004, according to data from the Hop Growers of America.

Craft beers make up about 8 percent of U.S. sales by volume and tend to use more aroma hops (which give beers their citrus, pine, and other notes) than alpha hops (which lend a bitter flavor). Aroma varieties cost more because of lower yields, says Ann George, executive director of the Hop Growers of America, and the higher demand is luring some growers to remove alpha varieties to grow the aromas. Aroma hops can cost two to as much as seven times more per pound than alpha hop varieties, according to Chris Swersey, technical brewing projects manager at the Brewers Association.

Cost has not stopped craft brewers from using higher-priced hops in high concentrations. While the average beer is made with about 0.2 pound of hops per 31 gallons, craft brewers use 1.25 pounds, according to George.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Black bean dip

By Kathryn Reed

There is such a thing as too much garlic. I learned this the hard way.

Usually I’m of the belief garlic is a food group. Not so with this recipe. The first time I made it I put *way* too much garlic in it. I kept eating it, but it really wasn’t that great.

So, the trick to any dish is to season, taste and season until it tastes just right. Do the same with the garlic. Because cloves come in varying sizes and taste buds are different it is better to add more garlic as needed because it’s impossible to take it out.

We had plenty leftover since it was not the best the first time. Sue used some with scrambled eggs and said it was wonderful. I used the mix as a base for nachos.

This could be served warm or cold. If serving it heated, adding about a quarter cup of cheese would work and make it a little thicker.

It’s not the most attractive looking appetizer. A sprig of cilantro or even some chopped up and put on top would make it a little more appetizing to those who don’t know what they are about to eat.

Black Bean Dip

1 15 ounce can black beans, drained

¼ C medium onion, rough chop

4-6 cloves garlic

¼ C roasted red peppers

¼ C vegetable broth

2 T balsamic vinegar

Put all ingredients into a blender. Serve with chips

Brown wants Calif. to be in front of climate change

By Jennifer Medinamay, New York Times

LOS ANGELES – Portraying California as the front line of climate change, Gov. Jerry Brown said Monday that the effects of man-made global warming were devastating the state, drawing a direct link between climate change and both the record-setting drought that has left the state parched and the early-season wildfires that broke out across California last week. He declared that people must find a way "to live with nature, not collide with it."

Saying that California was at the "epicenter" of the impact of climate change, Brown said that states and nations in general were "not on a sustainable path" when it came to global warming and the harsh weather patterns and other problems it brings.

"We have to adapt because the climate is changing," Brown said

in a speech to scientists gathered in Sacramento for a conference on the drought's impact on state agriculture. "Now there's no doubt that the evidence has been strong for quite a while, and it is getting even stronger."

Brown has made battling climate change one of the centerpieces of his tenure, traveling as far as China to marshal support for efforts to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. He has pressed for continued enforcement of the state's cap-and-trade program – which places limits on emissions from major polluters – despite some critics' calls to scale back amid the weak economy. And he has repeatedly criticized Congress for not doing enough to take action.

Read the whole story

Summer camps focus on science in Tahoe

Tahoe Institute for Natural Science is offering nature day camps for children aged 6-12 in South Lake Tahoe. Campers will spend time playing games, searching for wildlife, and reflecting on the day's adventure, as well as bonding with fellow campers.

Junior Entomologists is for ages 6-8. The July 21-24 camp cost $120.

Tahoe Explorers is for ages 9-12. The July 7-11 camp costs $265.

For more information, contact Amy at Amy@TINSweb.org or 775.298.0064.

Ultrarunner to lead trek at Squaw, give talk

Squaw Valley will host North Face ultrarunner and Tahoe local Rory Bosio for an afternoon that includes a trail run and motivational lecture on June 6.

Bosio, who has competed in ultramarathons for the past four years, will lead participants of all ages on a trail run up Squaw Valley's Shirley Canyon. The trail run begins at the North Face store in the village at at 3pm.

Following the run, Bosio will speak about her experiences as a competitor in ultramarathons and discuss what inspires her during a lecture in the village events plaza at 6pm.

The trail run and lecture are free to the public and open to participants of all ages and ability levels.

For more information on the trail run and lecture, go online.

Lake Powell loses Quagga mussel fight

By Emiley Morgan, Deseret News

PROVO, Utah – For 14 years, officials at Glen Canyon National

Recreation Area focused on keeping Quagga mussels out of Lake Powell.

It was an undertaking, as National Park Service rangers tried to police about 2 million annual visitors and an estimated 400,000 boat launches at eight developed boat access points, and at least a half-dozen other access points along 2,000 miles of shoreline, said Todd Brindle, recreation area superintendent.

Last year, rangers learned they lost the battle against the invasive species in the vast lake.

“We did all we could,” Brindle said.

On Monday, Brindle announced at a meeting of local, state and federal representatives from various agencies at the U.S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation office in Provo that the National Park Service is shifting its efforts from prevention to containment. The emphasis now will be on educating boaters and screening boats not as they enter the lake, as was done before, but as they exit.

Read the whole story