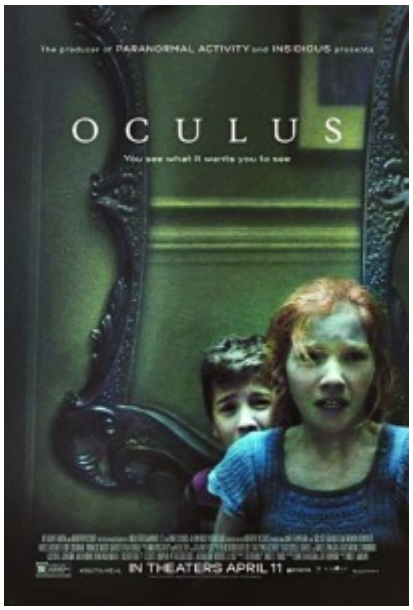
‘Oculus’ – more suspense than horror



By Jeremy Miller

I felt I was due for a nice horror flick and caught 20 seconds of the trailer for “Oculus” and said why not?

Come to find out, Mike Flanagan (writer/director) remade his own flick of similar name with a bigger budget and this was the result. That alone generates my affinity for a film just because I love when filmmakers revamp their own projects.



Starring Karen Gillan, Brenton Thwaites, Katee Sackhoff, and Rory Cochrane the film focuses on the once function Russell family. Kaylie (Gillan) and Tim (Thwaites) are the seemingly perfect children of an even more seemingly perfect marriage between Marie (Sackhoff) and Alan (Cochrane). Along with Alan’s new job came a new house, new beginnings and new furniture. Included in their remodel came a creepy old mirror that most obviously doesn’t belong anywhere near your home.

Did we learn nothing from Alexandre Aja?

Anyways, the film bounces between the present time and the

kids’ upbringing 10-plus years ago. In present time Kaylie is an auctioneer and has a discomforting crush on this creepy mirror. The mirror sells, but she pulls a move to keep it in her possession during a short transitional period. Her brother, Tim, is newly released from a psychiatric hospital simultaneously and the two siblings reunite. Kaylie almost immediately dives in to her meticulously calculated plot to not only destroy the mirror, but prove its supernatural capabilities.

Flashback to the past and we discover that at some point along the way Tim killed his father who earlier killed his wife and their mother. Tim has been convinced and convinced himself that there were psychological explanations for all supernatural occurrences leading up to the blood bath, but Kaylie begs to differ. She’s adamant that the mirror has powers and sets out to clear the family name and show the world that the mirror was in fact responsible. She sets up a nice little rack of gear composed of computers and cameras to document the whole thing. She preps the room for all the “tricks” she anticipates the mirror to play on them. She then goes ahead and gives the audience a nice little breakdown of all the people the mirror has driven to insanity.

The thing mostly causes hallucinations mostly. It gets people to brutally murder themselves and those around them, and it’s capable of planting all kinds of thoughts in your head.

So once we know what the thing is capable of, the flick bounces back and forth from present time to the past, giving us little bits of each keeping tension high. Well, here’s the thing. Was this a horror movie? Nah, I don’t think so. Psychological thriller sure, but not horror.

There was some gore, creepy ghost stuff, suspense and what not, but it was scary in a traditional sense. This one gets to your head, not your stomach.

I thought they nailed the suspense and it wasn’t 100 percent predictable. They could have done a better job with some of the special effects, as sometimes I felt they were way underplayed and not in a hipster kind of way, more of a “this is borderline Lifetime worthy” kind of way.

I did really dig the story; it’s unique and kept me guessing and I thought it was pretty inventive with the mind tricks and hallucinations bits. It definitely forced discomfort, which was perfect. The jump factor was present, but not overbearing or tacky like the more recent developments of the “paranormal” franchise. Overall, pretty good little flick.

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

Michael Brooks Seeliger – 1968-2014

Michael Brooks Seeliger of Reno died April 13 while enjoying one of his many passions in life – flying. He was 46.

Mike is the grandson of Brooks Park, the late patriarch of the Carson Valley cattle ranch family that also owns acreage in Stateline, including Edgewood Tahoe, the former Horizon hotel and MontBleu.

He died April 7 a Reno Stead Airport when his single-seat, home-built aircraft known as a helicycle crashed.



Michael Brooks Seeliger

The sixth generation Nevadan was born in Reno on Jan. 20, 1968, to Tom and Kay (Park) Seeliger. He graduated from Bishop Manogue High School in 1986, and attended UNR where he was a member of the ATO fraternity, and Chico State University. He married the love of his life, Traci, in 2005 and welcomed their cherished daughter, Ella Brooks, in 2007.

Along with many successful business ventures, Mike was senior vice president at Morgan Stanley for 17 years. He constantly strove to continue educating himself and his clients. Mike always believed his clients came first. In addition, he served on the board of directors for Edgewood Companies for more than 10 years. He had a great love for Edgewood and was very proud to be part of the Edgewood family.

Mike gave 110 percent in all that he did, but none more than to his family, who came first above all else. He was a devoted husband and father, with weekends finding him enjoying quality time with his wife, or taking his treasured Ella to shoot bow and arrows, race go carts and ride ATVs.

He was an avid wine connoisseur and enjoyed many special days in Napa Valley with family and friends. Mike had numerous hobbies in his life, and pursued all that he loved with great passion. Summers found him riding motorcycles, camping, jet skiing, and boating on Lake Tahoe; in winter months, he could be found snow skiing and snowmobiling in Lake Tahoe and Graeagle. He had a love for exotic cars, and enjoyed taking

trips with Traci and Ella to car events. Building and flying R/C model planes was another of Mike’s interests.

He lived life to the fullest and made sure every single moment was accounted for. He had a generous and giving heart, willing to lend a hand to many in need. Mike was a friend to all and cherished his blessed life surrounded by his precious family and many friends.

Mike is survived by his wife and best friend Traci (Henson) Seeliger and daughter Ella Seeliger (7), of Reno; parents Tom and Kay Seeliger of Reno; brother Tom (Kris) Seeliger of Reno; sister Sally Seeliger, of Reno; and brother Dan (Silvina) of Lago Puelo, Argentina. He is also survived by his nephews and nieces Abbie Seeliger, Nathan Seeliger, Sarah Seeliger, Zen Seeliger, and Soren Seeliger; and in- laws Dave and Jenny Giusti and Lance (Tammy) Henson and nephews Aaron and Chaz Henson.

Grandparents Albert and Frances Seeliger and Brooks and Jeanne Park, as well as his Uncle John Seeliger preceded Mike in death.

A service will be at Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church, 1138 Wright St., Reno, at 11am April 22. A celebration of life will immediately follow at the Grove, 95 Foothill Road, Reno.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that all donations be made to Our Lady of the Snows School, the Mike Seeliger Scholarship Fund, 1125 Lander St., Reno, NV 89509.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The Yardbirds will be at Harrah’s South Shore Room on June 20 at 8pm. Tickets are $44.

• The next Republican Women meeting is April 22 at 5:30pm at 3330 Sandy Way, South Lake Tahoe. The speaker will be El Dorado County supervisor candidate Gerri Grego. There will also be a presentation on the different land use initiatives circulating in the county. Call 530.545.2839 for more info.

• UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center seeks volunteers to lead tours at its education centers. There is a three-session training on June 17 from 2-6pm, June 19 from 2-5pm, and June 21 from 9am-2pm. To register, contact Kristen Reichardt at 775.881.7560 or kereichardt@ucdavis.edu.

• Hyatt Regency in Incline Village is hosting the Nevada Tribal Tourism conference April 22-24. The theme is Tourism: Empowering Native Voices.

Golf courses use gimmicks to lure younger players



Korbel has a cork popping competition at the celebrity golf tournament in Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

By Bill Pennington, New York Times

GREENSBORO, Ga. – Golf holes the size of pizzas. Soccer balls on the back nine. A mulligan on every hole.

These are some of the measures – some would say gimmicks – that golf courses across the country have experimented with to stop people from quitting the game.

Golf has always reveled in its standards and rich tradition. But increasingly a victim of its own image and hidebound ways, golf has lost five million players in the last decade, according to the National Golf Foundation, with 20 percent of the existing 25 million golfers apt to quit in the next few years.

People under 35 have especially spurned the game, saying it takes too long to play, is too difficult to learn and has too many tiresome rules.

Read the whole story

Bill would allow LTCC to offer 4-year degree

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College needs to find ways to make money. Offering four-year degrees is one way to do so.

The University of California and California State University systems need to find ways to accommodate more students. Allowing community colleges to offer four-year degrees would do that.

Today the state is not in a position to educate all of the people who are seeking bachelor's degrees because programs and schools are impacted. And more jobs are requiring a bachelor's. The Public Policy Institute of California earlier this year reported that by 2025, 41 percent of jobs will require at least a bachelor's degree, but only 35 percent of working-age adults will meet that qualification.

A bill circulating in the Legislature could solve the problem for the three public education institutions. Senate Bill 850 would allow each of the 112 community colleges to offer one applied baccalaureate degree in an eight-year pilot program. The Senate Education Committee on April 24 will discuss the item.

It's a bill Kindred Murillo, president of LTCC, is completely behind. One of her goals when she was hired nearly three years ago was to offer baccalaureate degrees at the South Lake Tahoe institution.

What the degree or degrees would be in remain to be seen. There have been discussions on campus of having an accelerated teaching credential program where students would earn their bachelor's and credential in four years. There could also be a

special bilingual component to it.

Public safety, environmental studies and fire are other possibilities.

Part of the thinking at the state level is not to allow community colleges to duplicate what the UC and CSU offers.

Already the California Community College system with its 2.4 million students is the largest postsecondary education system in the United States.

This is hardly groundbreaking legislation. Twenty-one states currently allow community colleges to offer four-year degrees.

The price structure would still need to be worked out. CSUs cost $5,970 a year in tuition, while community colleges charge $1,300 a year.

The last major change to higher education in California was in 2005 when CSUs were granted the right to offer doctorate degrees.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Buddley

Buddley is a chocolate Lab mix, really a puppy at 14 months old.

He’s had good training that just needs to be reinforced. Je knows sit, down, stay, and he’ll give you each of his paws. He takes treats very gently. He has lived with children, cats, and other dogs, and ended up at the shelter because his family didn’t have enough time for him.

He is a smart athlete who need lots of exercise – both mental and physical, and in the right household Buddley will make a great pet.

Buddley is neutered, microchipped, tested for heartworm, and vaccinated.

He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go online or the Tahoe animal shelter’s Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Letter: State creates Kings Beach parking debacle

To the community,

Did you know Placer County cut a deal in December 2013 with State Parks and their partner California Tahoe Conservancy to utilize 40 percent of the Kings Beach State Recreation Area Parking for more than two years to house/stage construction equipment for Kings Beach Core Improvement Plan project? Most of us didn't either, until this past week. Now that we know, we have some questions.

How much was State Parks paid for the utilization of the parking area? What is State Parks doing with that money? Building the community center ADA facilities? If not, why not?

Who's considering the impacts to the loss of revenue this summer/fall to the NTPUD for maintenance due to the parking area being downsized? I believe State Parks takes over in November.

Who's considering the impacts of this deal on other areas nearby Kings Beach on the North Shore? That said, I strongly urge State Parks to provide additional staff to police Moon Dune Beach and Speed Boat Beach (due to the lack of parking at KBSRA) as there will certainly be increased usage that will exacerbate the weekend crowds that visit those locations and are already parking along residential streets.

This is just one example of our agencies making decisions that will impact our communities without telling us. Last month approximately 200 community members passionately and definitively voiced objection to State Parks taking over the maintenance of the KBSRA parking at a public hearing hosted by state Sen. Ted Gaines and Assemblyman Brian Dahle, yet this new agreement was never mentioned.

Why wasn’t the public made aware? What an opportunity the agencies passed up to truly engage the community with over 200 of us there. It makes us wonder if they really wanted us involved. Where is the local jurisdiction transparency on this contentious issue? Why such secrecy?

The KBSRA parking is equally essential for public and local access to the beach, the lake, and parking for the community center operations.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista

Take time to find the ripe strawberry

By Russ Parsons, Los Angeles Times

Strawberries used to be a springtime treat, available for only a few months and treasured. But because we love strawberries so much, growers have turned them into a year-round staple, the parsley of the breakfast plate. Still, at this time of year there is a calling, and if you know what you’re doing, you can find strawberries that will remind you of the old days, when they were special.

The trick is to follow the farmer. Growing great strawberries is a tricky business, dependent not only on all of the normal agricultural attentions, but also on the specific variety (most commercial berries are bland and firm), and weather (strawberries are tremendously sensitive to climate).

But even when those factors all line up, the berries can be less than ideal as strawberry plants cycle between putting

their energy into growing fruit and growing foliage. If you get them when they're pushing leaves, the flavor will not be what you're hoping for.

Read the whole story

El Dorado supervisor candidates to square off

The El Dorado County District 5 supervisor candidates will face off May 6 from 5:30-7:30pm.

The forum is sponsored by Tahoe Regional Young Professionals and Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

The event is at the CCC office in Meyers, 1949 Apache Ave.

Economic stability a new challenge for Brown

By Chris Megerian, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO — Soon after Jerry Brown was elected governor in 2010, he invited the state's top budget official, Ana Matosantos, to lunch at his office. He had just two months to prepare his first plan for tackling California's $26 billion deficit.

He asked his assistant to fetch the budget director a

sandwich. Then, Matosantos said, the incoming governor of one of the world’s largest economies ate a single hard-boiled egg, sprinkled with salt.

Brown’s dietary discipline was a hint of the regimented approach he would take to California’s staggering financial problems, which he had promised to fix by pushing the state back into the black.

“I don’t go to the theater. I don’t golf. This is what I do,” Brown told Matosantos.

For previous governors, California’s budget was quicksand. Gray Davis, a fellow Democrat, was recalled by voters as state finances imploded following an energy crisis. Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger limped out of office with rock-bottom poll numbers, leaving a pile of debt.

But on Brown’s watch, deficits have become surpluses, helped along by tax hikes the governor persuaded voters to approve. More money is being pumped into schools.

Read the whole story