‘Noah’ – enjoy the movie, forget the Bible



By Jeremy Miller

“Noah” is the latest from one of my all-time filmmakers, Darren Aronofsky (“Black Swan”, “The Fountain”, “The Wrestler”).

It stars Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly, Anthony Hopkins and Emma Watson. The premise is of course the classic biblical tale of Noah (Crowe) one of the last “good men of clean heart” type guys left on Earth, as Tubal-Cain (Winstone) has left mankind in a condition of aberration and chaos. Noah receives a message from The Creator that soon Earth and its inhabitants will be wiped out through a massive flood. He immediately uproots his family and migrates toward the mountain of residence of his grandfather, Methuselah. There he seeks advice and further clarification of his message and finds that he must build an arc to save all animals of earth from the upcoming flood that will ultimately end all life.

With the help of the big man upstairs, he plants a seed that spawns an entire forest from which he can build his arc. Along the way fallen angels assist in the construction of the arc and Noah finds much needed moral support from his wife, Naameh (Connelly), who most certainly could have bounced at the first sign of crazy, but stuck by him regardless.

Most everyone knows the story, so I’ll leave the rest of the

story for the film to tell. Now, here's the deal: I am not a religious person, nor do I claim to be or try to be. I went into this flick knowing the basics. I feel like so often films are criticized so heavily due to lack of accuracy or alignment with source (the Bible in this case) and it drives some people nuts. Me, not so much. I went to this expecting a movie from Hollywood and that's exactly what I got.

Russell Crowe played Russell Crowe like he does in every other movie, but I love it and he entertains the heck out of me when he does it. I felt like the way Aronofsky built the landscape of the film was perfect, a good balance of what seems to be non-fiction balanced well with fantasy. It had good movement from the build of the characters and plot to delivery of action and the inevitable flood. I thought the special effects were tiptop, minus the animals. Darren certainly earned brownie points with PETA for not using real animals, but it's obvious. The CGI at times was a bit disappointing.



The climax of the movie was intense and had me nervous for everyone involved. I've read a lot of critical reviews of this piece specifically of how Noah is portrayed. I guess I just don't get it because if God told me that he was going to destroy the world and I had to build a boat, sail in it with my wife, kids, and all the animals of the world, I would be a little more than upset. It's like an overly epic road trip across the country for 40 days with no escape. That's rough no matter how good you got it at home.

The only gripes I had with the picture are as follows. Typically, Jennifer Connelly can do me no wrong, however at times she really forced her character and her lines, which I am going to blame on the script. But, admittedly she did over-act for bits and pieces. The score was also very minimal,

especially for Clint Mansell who just happens to be amazing and he really didn’t give this one his all.

Overall, I can understand some criticism, but personally, I had fun, a lot of fun and thoroughly enjoyed the story telling and cinematography. If you’re expecting “Passion of the Christ”, you won’t find it here. If you’re looking for a Hollywood blockbuster with Russell Crowe kickin’ butt during the bible times, look no further.

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

Renowned guitarist coming to Carson City

World-renowned classical guitarist George Sakellariou will be at the Brewery Arts Center in Carson City on April 26 at 7:30pm.

The 69-year-old native of Athens has entertained audiences around the world. He began playing the guitar as a youngster, then trained at the Conservatory of Music in Athens, graduating with honors. By time he was 20, Sakellariou joined the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

He has shared his music with concertgoers from Singapore to Hong Kong, and from Toronto to Rio de Janeiro. He has also appeared at the Kennedy Center concert hall and privately performed for the late Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

Tickets are available at the Brewery Arts Center, 511 W. King St. in Carson City. General admission is $12; $8 for BAC

members, seniors and members of the military; and $5 for students. For more information, contact the BAC at 775.883.1976.

Storms great for skiers, only a drop in the bucket for California drought relief

By Kathryn Reed

While skiers flocked to enjoy the 16 inches of fresh snow that fell overnight at Sierra-at-Tahoe, state water officials could only shake their heads.

These late storms are good, but nowhere good enough to pull California out of what is now a three-year drought. What these storms are good for is salvaging a mediocre ski season, helping replenish the groundwater tables and warding off what is still bound to be an early fire season. The moisture also means this won't go down as the driest year in the state's history, but it could still be in the top five.

Statewide, the snowpack is 32 percent of normal. At the base of Sierra it's slightly worse at 29 percent. That reading April 1 near Echo Summit showed a snow depth of 33.7 inches and water content at 8.1 inches.



Caltrans was out March 31 laying down a solution on Highway 50 before the storm arrived. Photo/LTN

What is alarming is that Tuesday's measurement is considered the most significant of the year because the bulk of the snow for the season should have fallen. From here forward it should be more about melting than accumulating.

Gov. Jerry Brown called a state of emergency earlier this year. Many cities are rationing water. Reservoirs look like it's mid-summer or worse.

"We're already seeing farmland fallowed and cities scrambling for water supplies," Mark Cowin, director of the Department of Water Resources, said in a statement. "We can hope that conditions improve, but time is running out and conservation is the only tool we have against nature's whim."

It's the snowpack in the Sierra that feeds the reservoirs downstream. They in turn provide a significant portion of the states' drinking and irrigation water.

Lake Oroville in Butte County is at 49 percent capacity, when normally this time of year it is at 64 percent. Shasta Lake north of Redding is at 48 percent of capacity and should be at 60 percent.

Choral performance features Gershwin, Porter

The Tahoe Choir and Lake Tahoe Community College Chorus present the music of George Gershwin and Cole Porter on May 2-4.

‘S Wonderful features a guest performance by South Tahoe High School Jazz Band.

The first two performance are at 7:30pm, the Sunday show at 2pm. Performances are at Duke Theater at LTCC.

Tickets are $10 general admission, $8 seniors and students, free for children under 5. Tickets are available from choir members or at the Duke Theater Box Office, which opens one hour before the performance.

Growing number of Calif. kids not vaccinated

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

More than 16,000 California children entered kindergarten this school year without vaccinations because of their parents’ personal beliefs, up 15 percent from the prior year and more than double the number from six years ago, according to figures from the California Department of Public Health.

The numbers were released as California battles an outbreak of measles – a disease mostly eradicated in California following decades of mass vaccination – involving almost 50 people. Medical experts say waning vaccination rates are one cause of the outbreak.

Many of those personally opposed to vaccinations contend they do more harm than good. The Canary Party, a prominent group that advocates letting parents choose whether to vaccinate their children, states on its website that "dozens of published research papers show that YES, vaccines and autism are linked."

Read the whole story

Horizon to be resurrected as Park Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

The Horizon is officially gone. The doors were shuttered Monday. Signs were taken down last week.

Now begins more than $40 million in renovations that is expected to transform the Stateline property into a viable business.

Brothers Jon and David Park hope their renamed Park Tahoe Casino Resort will reopen in the summer.

This isn't the first time there has been a Park Tahoe on the South Shore. What is now MontBleu was Park Tahoe when it first opened in the late 1970s. Within a month Tahoe Douglas firefighters closed it down. It wasn't long before it reopened

as Caesars Tahoe.

The new Park Tahoe is across the street, but still involves the same Park family. In a family split of assets last year the brothers now have control of the dilapidated former Horizon.

Rooms will be remodeled, restaurants and bars upgraded and added, and the gaming area revamped.

Outside improvements include changes to the façade and making a more friendly area for pedestrians.

Food and drinks will be available outside near fire pits. The pool will be redesigned to have a resort feel, along with cabanas.

Warner Hospitality out of Las Vegas will be managing the property. It is going to be recreated in a Hard Rock theme.

There is a Hard Rock Café at Harveys, however the cafes and casinos are separate companies. The rewards programs for each are not compatible and they do not work together. The café is a concessionaire of the casino.

South Shore fireworks shows to continue

By Kathryn Reed

It’s settled – there will be fireworks on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe this summer.

After a daylong session of hashing out their differences

Monday, both sides agreed to a variety of concessions that will allow for the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority to remain in the fireworks business and for the Truxlers, who brought the lawsuit, to possibly not have to deal with debris on their beach in the future.

“We are thrilled. We never wanted the fireworks show to go away,” Joan Truxler told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I feel that we have gotten a wonderful amount of awareness to what Joe and I ever wanted, which was to keep the health of Lake Tahoe.”

The Truxlers last year brought a lawsuit against LTVA and Pyro Spectacular after debris kept washing up on Pinewild Beach in Marla Bay. The suit sought penalties through the Clean Water Act that could have topped $70 million.

Last week at an emergency meeting the LTVA board voted that if a resolution could not be found this week, it would cancel the fireworks shows as well as get out the events business altogether.

Now that won’t happen.

The shows will go on.

“The parties are pleased that a settlement to dismiss the lawsuit was reached that will allow the Fourth of July and Labor Day shows to continue with increased local agency oversight of the post-show cleanup of fireworks debris and a hot line for residents to contact if they see fireworks debris from the shows that needs to be cleaned up,” Carol Chaplin, head of LTVA, said in a statement.

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District will be the lead permitting agency. This also means the barge where the fireworks are shot off from will be moved into Nevada. It has been inching that way through the years.

“Something we have been working on since the last Fourth of

July with [Tahoe Regional Planning Agency] and LTVA is to develop a best management for fireworks," Eric Guevin, Tahoe Douglas fire marshal, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We have come up with a plan and will include that as part of the permit process and we can enforce it under fire safety laws. A component of it is cleanup."

Tahoe Douglas will use its personal watercraft to assist with cleanup. Without a propeller on the devices, they can get closer to rocks to get any material that escaped the immediate discharge area.

The fire agency has long been involved in fireworks permitting, including shows at Edgewood Tahoe, Glenbrook and private parties.

Brush with Kindness looking for homes, volunteers

Are you a homeowner or do you know a homeowner who needs a little help with the exterior of he home? Are you unable to do it yourself or pay someone else to do it for you? Do you need exterior paint, minor exterior repairs, or basic landscaping or yard clean up? If so, A Brush with Kindness may be the solution for you.

A Brush with Kindness is a program of El Dorado County Habitat for Humanity that helps low-income homeowners by offering exterior home improvements. Volunteer teams work to improve the condition of homes by painting, landscaping, and performing minor exterior repairs at minimal cost to homeowners who are unable to complete these repairs. Able-bodied homeowners are encouraged to work alongside the

volunteers in a cooperative effort.

Applications need to be completed as soon possible in order to be considered for this year. Applications may be obtained by contacting Carolyn at 530.541.4654 or Bonnie at 530.577-7762 or email SLTahoehabitat@gmail.com.

To volunteer to help on a project, contact Pam at 530.545.3388 or zippygirl1@att.net.

A meeting for volunteers will be May 20 at 7pm at the Hope Lutheran Church, 930 Julie Lane in South Lake Tahoe to learn more about the program.

Piper: 'Attract businesses that have higher paying jobs'



Teresa Piper

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News asked the six El Dorado County supervisor candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. The responses are being run in the order they were received by LTN. One candidate chose not to answer the questions.***

Name: Teresa Piper

Age: 51

Occupation: Customer service and accounting

Education: Majored in business and accounting, Los Rios Community College campuses

What elected, civic, nonprofit boards or groups are or have you been affiliated with and in what capacity?: President/recreation director for Gold Ridge Forest Homeowners Association; treasurer for El Dorado Nordic Ski Patrol; president of the El Dorado County Republican Woman Federated; and member of Golden State United Food and Commercial Workers 8.

Traffic is horrible on Fridays and Sundays throughout the county. Will you commit to not voting for any big subdivisions unless there is a plan to widen Highway 50? Why or why not?: U.S. Highway 50 is maintained by Caltrans. This is not in the El Dorado County supervisors' control to commit to widening Highway 50 or any modification for that matter. Since the community of Placerville supported the current configuration of Highway 50's realignment versus a cut and cover option, the bottlenecks at the three traffic signals are unavoidable. The 20-year plan to correct the seasonal bottleneck in the Camino area needs to be implemented not just for traffic flow but to save lives. The special interests that have been in the way need to be exposed and let this plan progress. I believe we are still the only county that provides a fee per unit at development for traffic mitigation. As a county supervisor, I would vote on any development and project that has been approved by the Planning and Development Department, passed by the Planning Commission, and has met all requirements and complies with the General Plan.

What is your opinion on a proposed November initiative to control growth?: I am personally in favor of the petitions

that are designed to keep our zoning in alignment with the land use designations of the county's General Plan and protect the county's resources, fix community regional lines.

What are your thoughts of making Lake Tahoe its own county?: Lake Tahoe struggles to maintain itself as a city let alone trying to take on the unincorporated areas and eliminate the support services from the county.

What entities would you not take money from?: I would not accept money from any entity or individual that expects something in return.

What would you do to boost the economy?: Attract businesses to relocate here that have higher paying jobs. We don't need fast food or any more minimum wage. We need more businesses like an Internet based business or a Blue Shield Campus. There are companies looking to relocate out of the Bay Area and Silicon Valley due to extremely high overhead and housing costs.

What is the No. 1 issue facing District 5 and how do you propose to resolve it?: The biggest issue for the whole county is the economy, with it being most evident in District 5 since this district relies so heavily on the tourist dollar. When the economy shrinks, the entertainment dollar becomes the least significant in the family budget. We need District 5 to begin supporting itself on the local economy, (as I stated in answer 10) with better paying jobs. Then there would be more residents to build the tax base, and our tourism dollars can become a bonus in good times.

Supervisors meet only once a year in Lake Tahoe. Do you believe this is fair representation? Why or why not?: I would work hard to have the BOS meet in Lake Tahoe two or three times during the good weather months. Right now, most Tahoe residents have no way to participate in BOS meetings, planning meetings, etc. Lake Tahoe has become marginalized.

Would you have voted for Red Hawk to be built and to divert

Caltrans funds for interchanges? Those decisions are still negatively affecting the South Shore. Is there anything you would do to change the status quo?: Lake Tahoe casino traffic was failing badly at Lake Tahoe before Red Hawk was built. Online gambling has to be a big part of that. People don't even have to leave home to gamble. Las Vegas has managed fairly well with a bad economy by strongly emphasizing family activities and resorts. Look at the big Embassy Suites complex right below Harrah's. They are packed all the time due to family-friendly food and activities.

Would you support having more tax dollars from the county coming to the South Shore? Currently, more dollars leave the basin than come back.: As long as there is a gambling area, you will have a lot of transient and low wage workers who take more from the infrastructure than they contribute. Sports of various kinds could be pushed really hard, especially in the Meyers area – cross country skiing, X-Treme sports, ice skating, indoor training facilities and things like Squaw Valley only on a smaller scale. Attract families and sportsmen who have money to spend on more pricey sports. How about more charity golf tournaments and sports challenges? Initially, more dollars would have to come from other parts of the county, but I think with proper marketing the return on investment would be reasonably quick.

The county and city of South Lake Tahoe have a long history of not getting along. How would you propose to improve the relationship?: Communication is always the key to any relationships success.

What is your vision for Meyers and how will you make it a reality?: Make Meyers the center of very varied sporting opportunities. Push it as a destination in itself. It doesn't seem to have much of an identity outside the area and needs some good marketing as a "getaway" that isn't too expensive for the sports-minded family. Meyers could also be the center of small manufacturing businesses that are related to sports.

Craftsmen employees would be at a wage level where they could afford nice housing and not be an even bigger draw on services. What Meyers doesn't need is to pay $20,000 in consulting fees.

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: I am the candidate with a plan and passion to implement the plan. I will not just be the third vote. I have a home in Tahoe as well as Pollock Pines and I am deeply invested in both communities.

How do you expect to work with the current board, in particular with Supervisor Ray Nutting since you have accused him of threatening you?: I will work with the whole board in a respectful and professional manner.

What do you do for fun?: I participate and enjoy all of the outdoor activities that my district offers.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know: In 2008, I worked with the local committee in Pollock Pines where residents and business owners defeated the proposed homeless shelter. We didn't defeat the shelter just because it was going to be in our backyard. The grant proposal, which I read, benefited the landowner and did nothing to solve the county's homeless problem. After five years, the landowner could evict the shelter and benefit from the millions of dollars in improvements with no pay back. This is one example of getting involved and working to better my community. I am committed to making District 5 be all that it can be.

Opinion: LTCC should be a 4-year college

By Kindred Murillo

This year, Lake Tahoe Community College is celebrating its 40th year of serving the Lake Tahoe Basin and surrounding communities.

In my three years working at LTCC, it is clear to me that the college is here in this beautiful location because a group of dedicated people had a vision of higher education in Tahoe, and the determination to make sure it happened. We are now at a crossroads due to changes in funding, community college priorities, and statutes. In order to respond to these challenges, the leadership of LTCC conducted a visioning of what higher education and specifically LTCC should look like by the year 2020 and beyond.



Kindred Murillo

As we get closer to unveiling this vision, we continue to develop LTCC's vital role in the sustainability of the entire Tahoe community.

The faculty, staff, and leadership of the college has been working diligently to not only meet the state mandates, but to focus on the needs and interests of our community. We have opened the college to organizations that provide our community

with recreational, cultural, and educational events, as well as serve our community needs. We have developed partnerships and coalitions to leverage the limited funding of public agencies to provide better services to our students and community. State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, and his team have been working with the leadership of LTCC to reinstate the Good Neighbor Policy, which recognizes the entire South Lake Tahoe area as one community, regardless of state borders. The college leadership has been rightsizing the organization to reflect our change in student enrollments, funding, programs, and learning modalities.

Based on the hard work of many at the state level, we now have an opportunity to consider offering baccalaureate degrees at LTCC, thanks to Senate Bill 850. SB850 is moving through the state legislature and will come up for a hearing on April 23. I firmly believe this is one of the most important pieces of legislation in recent years to help students access and attain quality four-year degrees at an affordable price. Those of us at LTCC hope our community will support the efforts of this bill, which would provide affordable higher education in rural communities.

If you are interested in supporting state Sen. Marty Block’s, D-San Diego, efforts to ensure student access to affordable and quality baccalaureate degrees, please contact my office at 530.544.4660, ext. 210 for further information.

Kindred Murillo is superintendent-president of Lake Tahoe Community College.