Veteran actors score with substantive performances in ‘RED’



RED

Rated PG-13

3.5 bagels out of 5

By Howie Nave

I can’t tell you how fun it is to see a bunch of well-seasoned actors in a movie where it genuinely looks like they’re having the time of their lives. This movie will not get any Oscar nods even though the actors here have won a few.

But just like Clint Eastwood’s “Space Cowboys” (and “Gran Torino”), Michael Caine’s “Harry Brown” or Stallone’s “The “Expendables” this movie, if anything, shows that Baby Boomers and the Greatest Generation can still kick some geriatric butt and not have to be relegated to “On Golden Pond” or wait for Ron Howard to do another “Cocoon” flick. I don’t know, maybe Hollywood took notice after “The Expendables” became an unlikely hit at the box office and thought there might be an audience out there that was cool with wrinkles on its stars. I know, quite a shock, huh?



Helen Mirren

The plot to “RED” (which btw stands for Retired, Extremely Dangerous) is predictable. But what movie isn’t sometimes? At least the cast here pokes fun (and have fun) at themselves just showing you how real they are and not hiding behind any Botox or boob job to try and look pathetically young for Hollywood’s taste. And in this case experience trumps youth.

I think director Robert Schwentke gave his geriatric actors quite a bit of leeway in their roles especially with Bruce Willis’ character. He’s at the center of this story playing Frank Moses, a former agent who essentially knows too much for his own good. His own people (namely the CIA) want to eliminate any potential threat from Frank sharing his secrets so they decide to take him out. Oh, let me inject here that Frank has been having a long distance romance with a lady who handles his pension checks, Sarah (played hilariously by Mary-Louise Parker) and ultimately she gets caught up in the madness. Frank doesn’t want to take any chances and kidnaps Sarah knowing she too is at risk as a target from these high tech assassins out to kill him.

This is when it gets to be a kick as Frank assembles his old (and I do mean old) team back to assist him in a counter offensive. Helen Mirren must have had so much fun being the cougar (no, make that a saber-toothed tiger) playing Victoria, the classy and well-dressed dame if knocking off the baddies and rarely flinching at all because she just has to. Speaking of which in yet another role that makes shim a standout (like his character in “Secretariat” as the horse trainer) John Malkovich is hands-down the funniest in this movie. He plays

the over-the-top Marvin who could have easily been modeled after him. Again, I think Robert Schwentke (as mentioned earlier) gave him liberty to create his character how he saw it which is part whack-job, part “Lethal Weapon” and all confidant.

Some of his best work is low tech, too. Who would have thought you could take out a team using just a baseball bat anyway? Go, Giants!

Morgan Freeman is another joy to watch and makes you think that living in a retirement home is the surest way to shorten one’s life. And like Tommy Lee Jones’ character in “Space Cowboys” doesn’t really have many options left in his old age, so life really begins once he comes out of retirement.

With some added support from Brian Cox, Richard Dreyfuss and Ernest Borgnine (still alive yes!) “RED” is fun to watch and it’ll be interesting to see if the younger generation out there checks this out. Hey kids, it is based on the DC Comics miniseries so maybe that’ll get your interest up. I know there are no vampires or brooding relationship issues, but that alone is worth giving this a look-see.

“RED” is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of action violence and brief strong language with a running time of 1 hour and 52 minutes.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9.

Buddy Guy at MontBleu

Buddy Guy, Chicago’s blues king today, is a musician with unrelenting onstage energy and high energy musicality coupled with a tortured vocal style that’s as distinctive as his incendiary rapid-fire fretwork.

The show starts at 9pm at MontBleu with doors open at 8pm. Tickets start at $30 through MontBleu’s ticket office (775) 588.3515 or www.TicketMaster.com.

Cake Boss – Buddy Valastro in Stateline

Buddy Valastro, star of the hit TLC reality show Cake Boss, brings his Jersey attitude west for an evening of cake, shake and bake.

An accomplished master baker and cake decorator, Valastro has been featured in a variety of publications and TV programs including the New York Times, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, Modern Bride, Oprah Winfrey Show and The Today Show.

The show starts at 8pm at MontBleu in Stateline. Tickets start at $25.50 through MontBleu’s ticket office (775) 588.3515 or www.TicketMaster.com.

Freaker’s Ball

The freaks will be out in full force for the 32nd annual Freaker’s Ball, Tahoe’s longest running Halloween party, Oct. 30, at MontBleu in Stateline.

Party-goers in all costume shapes and sizes will celebrate with three parties all in one casino: blu nightclub, Opal Ultra Lounge and the MontBleu Convention Center. Festivities include body painting, go-go dancers, drink specials and a costume contest with more than $10,000 in cash and prizes. Pop Fiction will be on hand with live music.

Doors open at 8pm. Tickets are $25 at the door or $20 in advance through MontBleu’s ticket office (775) 588.3515 or www.TicketMaster.com.

Placer County resident wins claim against MV Transportation, Roseville

By Kim Minugh, Sacramento Bee

For the first 18 years Thomas Avery was a quadriplegic, he did his best to live a normal life.

He returned to college and held jobs. He volunteered with at-risk kids. He relied on help for some basic tasks, like eating and dressing, but maintained a significant amount of self-sufficiency in and out of his home.

That was before he rolled backward off a platform lifting him

into a Roseville paratransit bus two and a half years ago, dropping him six feet onto his head and causing severe brain injury.

Now, the 40-year-old rarely leaves his Del Paso Heights home. When he does, he often forgets where he's going and why. His father sometimes follows to make sure his son doesn't get lost.

"This accident totally took away a lot of my independence," Avery said.

Twelve Placer County jurors apparently sympathized, awarding $6.4 million in economic and non-economic damages to Avery last week. The jury found that the city of Roseville and Fairfield-based MV Transportation, which operates the city's paratransit system under contract, were liable for a faulty lift that caused the fall.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Proof in TRPA Charter change is possible

Dear Publisher,

I see there are several of your readers who allege the TRPA is "the law" and that we have no choice but to do as we are told. These comments also allege that I am wrong and don't know the law. However, any eighth-grade student can read the TRPA Charter and determine that the TRPA does not have the authority it currently claims. Take a look at Article VI of the TRPA Charter and you'll see that its powers are supposed

to be “general and regional in application,” leaving the writing and enforcement of specific and local ordinances to local jurisdictions like the city of South Lake Tahoe:



Steve Kubby

“Whenever possible without diminishing the effectiveness of the regional plan, the ordinances, rules, regulations and policies shall be **confined** to matters which are **general** and **regional** in application, **leaving to the jurisdiction** of the respective States, counties and **cities** the **enactment** of **specific and local ordinances**, and rules, regulations and policies which **conform to the regional plan**.” (Emphasis added)

What part of “whenever possible,” or “confined to matters which are general and regional,” or “leaving to the jurisdiction of … cities,” does the TRPA, or my critics, not understand?

The elected officials of South Lake Tahoe have the legal authority to override the TRPA enforcement codes, to ignore its BMP requirements, and to tear up TRPA red tags, so long as the City Council is prepared to uphold the Constitution and protect its residents from such overregulation and illegal abuse.

Steve Kubby, South Lake Tahoe

College mountain bike championships at Northstar

The 2010 Collegiate Mountain Bike National Championships are at the Northstar-at-Tahoe Oct. 15-17.

The best collegiate mountain bike athletes will descend upon the largest bike park in Northern California for three intense days of racing. Come on out and cheer for your favorite college or university team as they race hard all weekend.

For more information, go online.

Literary journal reading at LTCC

The “Kokanee Literary Journal” reading is Oct. 19 in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.

The reception starts at 6:30pm, reading at 7pm.

The journal will be available for purchase for $10. Refreshments will be served.

The “Kokanee” features poetry, short stories and essays by LTCC students, alumni, and faculty, as well as the work of nationally and internationally-known writers such as Brain Turner, Patricia Smith, Denise Duhamel, Sholeh Wolpe, and Todd James Pierce, who have participated in the LTCC Writers’ Series. The cover art was done by LTCC student artist and winner of the 2010 Kokanee Cover Art Award, Calee Allen.

For more information, contact Suzanne Roberts at (530) 541.4660, ext. 708 or robertss@ltcc.edu.

Heavenly – always about the views; plus, a lodge this year

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News is providing a glimpse into what skiers and boarders can expect at Lake Tahoe area resorts for the 2010-11 season.***

Heavenly Mountain Resort: A higher power must have created the view

• Projected opening date: Nov. 19

• Daily adult lift ticket: TBA; last season's was $82



Heavenly's on-mountain lodge near Tamarack chair will open in 2011. Photo/Kathryn Reed

• What’s new?: Heavenly answered a call from riders in a big way when it broke ground in August on its 14,980-square-foot on-mountain restaurant to open at the top of the gondola in February. The restaurant will offer 500 indoor and 250 outdoor patio seats as the flagship to the South Shore ski resort’s major revitalization.

And, social media meets the ski industry. Heavenly also launches the winter season with the latest in a high-technology ski experience called EpicMix, an online digital application that can be downloaded on a smart phone through the ski resort’s radio frequency scanners.

• What’s special about Heavenly?: No other resort at Lake Tahoe provides the kind of wide scale picture-perfect view like Heavenly, which brought bluebird days to a new level with its top-of-the-face seamless view of blue sky and blue lake. Terrain variety matches the customer service – from the gentle slopes and blue cruiser runs to the hidden powder stashes of the Glades and Milky Way Bowl.

• Last year’s snow total: 367 inches

• Lift hours of operation: 9am to 4pm weekdays; 8:30am to 4pm weekends and holidays

• Skiable terrain: 4,800 acres

• Number of lifts: 29

• Vertical feet: 3,500

• Directions: In the heart of South Lake Tahoe, take Ski Run Boulevard and follow the signs to the resort. Or walk to the gondola at Heavenly Village from a nearby hotel.

• Website

– Compiled by Susan Wood

EDC supes resist spending millions on lake clarity

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County supervisors practically mocked the idea of spending $11 million a year for the next 15 years to improve the clarity of Lake Tahoe.

Supervisor Ron Briggs said if the county even had that kind of money, “lake clarity would not be on the list.”



Jack Sweeney

Supervisor Jack Sweeney said it would be on his nice to do budget list, but not need to do budget list.

Supervisor Ray Nutting questions why the Lake Tahoe watershed has higher standards than others in the state and doesn’t believe the area is entitled to the federal funding it has received over other jurisdictions.

Supervisor John Knight said overregulation in the basin is responsible for the area missing out on economic growth and equated it to being like Eastern Europe.

Supervisor Norma Santiago tried to provide some depth and understanding to the Lake Tahoe-specific issues that some of

her colleagues clearly were not well versed in.

The five-member board came to South Lake Tahoe this week for the annual meeting in Tahoe. The other 51 weeks of the year the board meets in Placerville.

Lahontan Water Board Executive Director Harold Singer got an earful from some of the supervisors in regards to his agency's desire, and probable future mandate, that the county come up with $11 million a year to stem the flow of fine sediment into the lake.

Ironically, it's an $11 million shortfall the supes are trying to contend with when it comes to the 2011-12 county budget.

The county currently spends about $6 million a year on stormwater projects in the basin.

What wasn't brought up until Joanne Marchetta, executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, gave her spiel was that working with private landowners the county might be able to attain the total maximum daily load thresholds Lahontan expects to adopt at its Nov. 6 meeting.

After the morning started with Wendy David of Lake Tahoe Collaborative giving a presentation about the woes of social agencies in the basin, the supervisors pointed to her statistics as more pressing issues than the transparency of Lake Tahoe.

David spoke of the 32-member Collaborative's start in 1992 and its evolution through the years into an advocacy group for those less fortunate. The agencies in the collaborative are dealing with 25 percent of the children in South Lake Tahoe being at the national poverty level, while 80 percent of the Latino population is poor.

Mental health issues will be the Collaborative's focus this coming year.

“We do not have adequate transition care for patients coming out of jail or Barton Hospital,” David told the supervisors. “We don’t have a 23-hour hold facility here.”

The situation for emotionally disturbed children is precarious with the recently passed state budget that eliminated money for counties to provide aid for this population. Now it could fall onto school districts to pay for these children to receive services.

Chief Administrative Officer Gayle Erbe-Hamlin said, “The school districts don’t have the systems in place to take it on.”

That evening at the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board meeting CFO Deb Yates mentioned the issue to her board.

Both women believe more needs to come out of Sacramento before either body can begin to figure out how to financially meet the mandate to care for these youngsters.

Back at the Board of Supes meeting, Sweeney said he wished he would have known Singer was going to be at the Oct. 12 meeting before he received his packet Oct. 7. Had he been reading *Lake Tahoe News*, he would have known based on an Oct. 4 story.

In the end, it was agreed a workshop will be scheduled in Tahoe between the supervisors, county staff and Lahontan officials to hash out the lake clarity mandates.

In other action:

• TRPA’s Joanne Marchetta spoke of her agency’s new philosophy of not being the “just say no” agency and instead creating a culture to work more collaboratively with others.

• The supervisors during a lunch stop at Lake Tahoe Golf Course were given an overview of the Upper Truckee River project at that site. The TRPA Governing Board will discuss the matter Oct. 27.