‘The Last Exorcism’ leaves room for improvement



The Last Exorcism

Rated PG-13

2.5 bagels out of 5

By Howie Nave

As a fan of horror movies, I have to give credit upfront to director Daniel Stamm (“A Necessary Death”) for delivering a movie in this genre with a PG-13 rating. Forget about language usually a horror flick with a gore factor of 7 (out of 10) easily warrants a bump up to an R rating.

With that said, any movie title having the word, “Last” in it means the studio is going to be giving us more depending on the box office receipts of the first one. There is no “last” in Hollywood, remember? Cher, Barbra Streisand and The Eagles have had several farewell tours only to pop back up on the radar screen again when they ran out of money or needed to remind the public they were still living. OK, back to the exorcism at hand.



"The Last Exorcism" is full of plenty of cliches.

I've always liked the concept of a movie within a movie. In this case a documentary being filmed by a preacher showing he can rid the devil from a girl (it's always a young lady that gets possessed have you noticed?). We're introduced to the Rev. Cotton Marcus (played by Patrick Fabian) who is your typical showman of a preacher who is so good even he can't seem to believe it. He has his congregation believing him so thoroughly (and blindly) that Marcus actually wants to prove that he isn't as sincere as they believe he is. Maybe he was trying to redeem himself to God on Earth so he could be allowed access into heaven?

So he gets his to prove how fabricated he is when a request comes his way involving an exorcism. This, by the way is where the title of the movie gets mentioned because this is going to be … "The Last Exorcism" he ever does. Marcus wants to remove the wool from the people he had been pulling over their eyes for so long that he gets a golden opportunity with this request.

OK here is where the clichés start to kick in. First, the exorcism is to take place in the back woods of Louisiana (where else?) with his documentary film crew in tow. Second, we're introduced to a teenage girl named Nell Sweetzer (Ashley Bell) who hasn't recovered fully from the death of her mother. Her father, (Louis Herthum) has been home schooling her and summons the reverend because he believes his daughter has been

killing the animals on the farm so obviously it must be the work of the devil.

I'm actually on the same page as Reverend Marcus thinking that folks who live out in the swamplands have a little bit too much time on their hands.

The final cliché kicks in when Nell starts going into complete, "creep mode" (but fortunately we're spared any pea soup spewing out of her). The camera work will obviously remind you of another movie within a movie concept: "The Blair Witch Project." As I recalled I almost vomited in the theater as that film crew was running through the forest with very limited lighting. Here at least the crew vomits in one place without having to do the exercise part (OK make that exorcise) but the lighting is just as limited. What helps the film is the use of no "name actors" because had there been some huge bankable star in the leading role it would have been more fun to critique. I was hoping that Jennifer Aniston would have had the lead here and that the preacher involved would not have been trying to drive the devil out of her but try in vain to exorcise the bad decision-making as to why she chooses the scripts for the movies she makes.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6to10am on on KRLT FM-93.9.

Abundance of invasive clams at Stateline beach

By Janine Green

This picture was taken at Nevada Beach on July 19, 2010. The

kids were out swimming and began to collect these clams out of the lake. It is apparent to me by the number and size of the clams that the huge push they are making to check boats and prevent the clam population is too late.

These were gathered by children by just scooping them up in their hands. They said there were hundreds of them and they



Clams at Nevada Beach in Stateline. Photo/Janine Green

just wanted to show us.

Janine Green is a resident of Carson City

LT Golf Course, river's futures wrapped in EIR/EIS

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – With $6.1 million pumped into the greater South Shore economy each year from the Lake Tahoe Golf Course, officials are doing what they can to make sure those 18 holes exist when it comes time to restore the 1.5 miles of the Upper Truckee

River that meanders through the greens.

“The revenues vary annually. In the economic study completed in 2008, the average was $981,000 per year, $139,000 of which was reinvested as capital improvements,” according to the website.

State parks generally lose money. This is the only one in the Sierra District to make money, and it is in the top five for the entire state.

American Golf is the concessionaire. It’s a month-to-month lease until a decision is made about what will happen on the South Shore course along Highway 50.



Lake Tahoe Golf Course and the eroding Upper Truckee River in Meyers. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Although California State Parks, which owns the land the course and river are on, did not select a preferred alternative in the EIR/EIS that came out Aug. 26, much of the discussion Thursday during the media tour was on Alternative 2.

This would move seven full holes and three half holes from what is now known as Lake Valley Recreation Area to Washoe

Meadow State Park. About 37 acres of stream environmental zone would be restored.

Groups like Washoe Meadows Community have long been against moving holes into the 700-plus acre state park. These people and others believe it will take-away from the biking, hiking and cross country ski experience.

Though this undeveloped state park is unknown to many longtime locals, it’s popular every season with those who do use it.

Park officials say there would be a trade-off with acres taken from the state park for the golf course being exchanged for accessible terrain along the river. As it stands now, the river through the golf course is essentially off-limits except to golfers and youth who wander in in search of errant golf balls to later sell.

The five short bridges crossing the Truckee are considered in areas of play. In more than one proposal they would be replaced by one bridge, 120- to 150-feet long that would be accessible to everyone.

South Shore media reps were given a tour of part of the property on Aug. 26. Like previous tours, the decaying banks were pointed out, a short walk taken to the old sand and gravel quarry pit. But what is hard to envision is just how close the golf course might come to the old Celio barn or the popular trails accessed from various sides of the park.

If the course were moved, then the lines of the recreation area and state park would be redrawn to reflect the golf course being in the former.

The environmental documents study 520 acres of the park. The federal document was required because the Bureau of Reclamation has contributed money to the process.

As with most reaches of the Upper Truckee River, which is the

largest tributary to Lake Tahoe and biggest conveyor of fine sediment, the channel was straightened out years ago to accommodate the uses at the time. The problem is at the time no one was paying attention to erosion.

“What straightening the river means is it eats at the banks. As it ate its banks, it got larger so it had more power to erode,” explained Cyndie Walck, the state parks lone hydrologist.

She started monitoring erosion at the site in 1994.

The riverbank is obviously eroding. It is also evident stopgap measures to shore-up the banks have been unsuccessful.

The dispute rests in what may happen next.

The alternatives are:

1. Do nothing.

2. Restore the river and reconfigure the golf course to keep it an 18-hole facility.

3. Restore the river and reduce the course to nine holes

4. Leave everything intact, but stabilize the banks.

5. Restore the river and remove the golf course.

With 30,000 rounds of golf played at the course each year, officials looked at moving the golf course somewhere else on the South Shore, but no suitable land was found.

If the course is reconfigured, it will not affect winter snowmobiling.

Comments on the EIR/EIS will be taken until Nov. 4. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board is expected to discuss the documents in October. The documents are expected to be certified by state parks officials in the spring. At

that time a more formal cost estimate will be available, though now $5 million is the amount talked about that is needed for river restoration. The soonest work would begin in 2012.

Walck says a project like this would likely rise to the top as her agency goes after grant money to fund it.

If golf course holes are moved, that will be part of a bid package for the next long-term concessionaire. In other words, it won’t be taxpayer dollars building the course.

More information:

• Restore the Upper Truckee River

• Washoe Meadow State Park

• EIR/EIS executive summary

• Washoe Meadows Community

Future meetings:

• Public Site Tour

Sept. 8, 2-4pm

Lake Tahoe Golf Course

• Public Site Tour

Sept. 22, 4:30-6:30pm

Lake Tahoe Golf Course

• Public Open House

Sept. 29, 6-8pm

Lake Tahoe Golf Course

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Kindertown day care wins case against state

By Kathryn Reed

Kindertown is staying open.



The Kindertown bus will keep rolling.

It was Sept. 23, 2009, that Maria Barrows-Crist told the parents of her South Lake Tahoe day care the state would be shutting the facility down the next month.

It didn't happen then and it's not going to happen now. Judge Stephen Bailey ruled Aug. 26 the state Department of Social Services had no basis to close the center that has been operating for more than 30 years.

"This court holds this bias against the licensee constitutes an abuse of discretion and constitutes cause to set aside the decision," the 26-page ruling says.

Through tears on Thursday night, Barrows-Crist felt vindicated – but not 100 percent relieved.

"They almost forced me to bankruptcy," she said. "Look what

they have done to my family. Since October 2007 they started harassing me. I really feel like I have been harassed. How about the people who don't fight for their rights."

Crist v. the state of California cost the plaintiff $85,000 in attorney fees. Mike McLaughlin replaced her first attorney last fall and went the distance for Barrows-Crist. Another $300,000 in income was lost in the last nine months, she said.

It's come down to needing to have a yard sale on Aug. 27-28 at 2241 Idaho St., South Tahoe to help raise the money needed to pay the bills.

Through it all, 35 families remained with her – never taking their children out of the center. She has 100 children now. The general childcare is full, and people are calling to get in.

If the state would pass a budget, cash for the state preschool would roll in.

The ruling backs what McLaughlin presented in court and discounted what the state's attorney had to say. The decision says there is no proof Barrows-Crist's daughter was using drugs at the work place or under the influence while there. It backs other decisions by the center that the state took issue with.

Barrows-Crist wants to celebrate, to throw a party, but the dollars aren't in her bank account to do so right now. For now, she sends thanks through *Lake Tahoe News* to the city, lawmakers, friends, families and people she doesn't know who supported her through the ordeal.

‘The Storming’ snowboard movie

The West Coast premiere of Standard Films’ “The Storming” presented by Monster Energy comes to the Resort at Squaw Creek on Sept. 18.

An institution in action sports, Standard Films has been capturing the essence of snowboarding since 1991, beginning with the iconic “TB” series that defined a genre of filmmaking. Standard Films’ legacy of portraying the progression of snowboarding through acclaimed film continues with “The Storming.”

The newest HD film by Mike Hatchett and Travis Robb, this marks the 19th annual release from Standard Films. Following its Global Premiere at Red Rocks, Colo., the Standard crew comes home to Lake Tahoe for the West Coast Premiere.

Special guests attending the West Coast Premiere are Mike Hatchett and Travis Rob, with riders Torstein Horgmo, Lonnie Kauk, Sammy Luebke and more.

Doors open at 7:45pm and the show starts at 9pm. Tickets are on sale now at all Porter’s locations (Tahoe City, Truckee, Incline Village). Tickets are $8 in advance and $10 at the door.

Following the showing special guest performers take the ballroom stage for the after-party. All premiere-goers who want to access the cash bar during the film and after-party must be 21 with valid I.D.

The teaser can be viewed here.

‘180 Degrees South: Conquerors of the Useless’

“180 Degrees South: Conquerors of the Useless”, a true story of exploration and adventure directed by former pro surfer Chris Malloy, follows nomadic wanderer Jeff Johnson and a few of his friends as they attempt to duplicate the 1968 journey undertaken by his heroes Yvon Chouinard and Doug Tompkins from California to Chile’s Patagonia region.

The film, whose thesis might best be summed up by “It’s the journey that matters,” is being screened in Incline Village on Sept. 14th at Sierra Nevada College in the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences 139/141 at 6:30pm.

The film was chosen in part for the parallel themes it shares with the book “The Alchemist”, which was selected for SNC’s fall 2010 One Book, One Campus program. This free event is open to the public and will include door prizes donated by the Reno Patagonia store.

According to a review on Gear Junkie, Johnson “catches boat rides, surfs, mingles with locals and attempts to learn about the struggles of the area. … 180 Degrees South is not really a surf film, or a climbing film, or even an environmental film, yet it functions as all of these somehow. In a melancholy, yet beautiful and thoughful way, the film tells a story of true exploration and adventure.”

“The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho is described as the magical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure as extravagant as any ever found. From his home in Spain he journeys to the markets of Tangiers and across the Egyptian desert to a fateful

encounter with the alchemist. The story of the treasures Santiago finds along the way is a lesson about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, above all, following our dreams.

Sierra Nevada College continues the One Book, One Campus program begun in fall 2009, with all incoming fall 2010 students being asked to read "The Alchemist". Inspired by the popularity of book clubs, a growing number of college campuses are adopting common reading programs. The idea of a common reading selection rests on a simple idea: that reading the same book brings people together as a community by creating a common ground for discussion.

For more information on the film screening or on the Common Reading Program, contact Betts Markle at (775) 881.7511 or emarkle@sierranevada.edu.

CTC's 25-year celebration

The California Tahoe Conservancy will celebrate its 25th anniversary Sept. 16 with a party on the shores of the very lake it works to preserve, protect and enhance.

This casual celebration will take place at Commons Beach in Tahoe City and is free. The event will run from noon–2pm, and will feature live music, food, speakers and commemorative gifts.

Since its inception, the Conservancy has authorized more than $450 million. During its first 25 years, the Conservancy acquired more than 4,700 properties and facilitated hundreds of resource enhancement and public access projects throughout

the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Commons Beach, the event venue, is one of the agency's signature projects.

Reservations are not required for the celebration, but RSVPs are appreciated. RSVP to shelly@switchbackpr.com or call (530) 582.3617.

In conjunction with the anniversary celebration, the Conservancy will roll out its newly designed license plate. California drivers have a unique opportunity to be part of the continued efforts to protect this special place by purchasing a Lake Tahoe environmental license plate.

For more information on the California Tahoe Conservancy's anniversary event or how to purchase a license plate, visit www.tahoefund.org.

The California Tahoe Conservancy's mission is to preserve, protect, restore, enhance and sustain the unique and significant natural resources and recreational opportunities of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Document shredding day in South Tahoe

Have you been looking for a way to safely dispose of those boxes of personal information stored in your garage or closet? Want a quick and secure way to prevent identity theft by shredding mail and documents?

The Teen Enterprise program at Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe is hosting a Community Shred Day on Oct. 15, from am to 5pm at 1100 Lyons Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

Shred old tax returns, bank statements, credit card statements, old checks and anything else a thief can use to steal your identity. A secure and mobile truck will be at the club that shreds everything on site. Teen Enterprise will also come to your home or office and pick up boxes at no extra charge.

Prices start at $10 per box with discounts for large quantities. Businesses are welcome.

All requests and payments for shredding must be made before the day of the event in order to best plan the shredding truck size.

To reserve your spot now, visit www.bgclt.org and get the request form under “News and Events.”

For more information, contact Paula Peterson at (530) 542.0838 or email ppeterson@bgclt.org.

Firefighters pounce on Meyers brush fire

Firefighters this afternoon put out a small vegetation fire near Pioneer Trail and Highway 50 in Meyers.

“The quick response by firefighters from all three agencies (Lake Valley, CalFire, USFS) prevented it from getting larger and potentially putting the community at risk,” Lake Valley spokeswoman Leona Allen said of the 1:3pm blaze.

Lake Valley Fire Protection District is asking citizens to be cautious with cigarettes, campfires, barbecue grills and anything that could cause a fire.



Beth Brady with the Forest Service and CalFire Battalion Chief Mike Webb investigate the cause of the Aug. 26 fire. Photo/Leona Allen

High winds on Thursday and Friday are making them red flag warning days – meaning an increased threat of fire in the dry conditions.

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123 acres at Daggett Pass returns to public ownership

The deal was signed this week to protect a historic 123 acres at Daggett Pass, a portion of it containing the Pony Express trail, has been protected by being added to the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

The property was sold by Patricia G. Baker of Carmichael, the

widow of John M. Baker, a native of Gardnerville, whose family acquired the parcel in the late 1930s.

On a relatively flat area halfway up the grade, there was an area known as “Peters Station.” It was the site in the 1860s of a booming three-story hotel owned by Elizabeth and Richard Peters. The teamsters, and their heavy horse-drawn rigs, would spend the night, rest the horses, and enjoy dinner and a night’s sleep before the next day’s arduous climb.

The $750,000 to buy the property came from the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act. The law lets money from lands sold by the BLM which were identified for disposal in approved land use plan) be used to acquire private in-holdings in National Parks, National Forests, and BLM conservation areas.

The property will be managed by the Forest Service in coordination with Douglas County, which is turning part of the Old Kingsbury Grade into a segment of the Pony Express National Historic Trail. When that is complete, it will provide hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists with a route between the Lake Tahoe Basin trail system and destinations in Carson Valley.

The Trust for Public land, a national nonprofit land conservation organization dedicated to preserving land for people to enjoy as parks, open spaces, and gardens, facilitated the purchase.