Predicting who the Oscar will go to

By Howie Nave

At last! The Super Bowl of movies has finally arrived and is taking place this Sunday on ABC. It's the 85th annual Academy Awards show (which ironically is also the average age of those who are members of the Academy). Maybe that's why for the first time the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has decided to rebrand their product calling it just "The Oscars" because co-producer of the show, Neil Meron, said "85th Academy Awards" sounded too "musty."

I wonder if rebranding the Oscars (which is what most of us referred to it as anyway) will help their ratings? We'll see.



I've already rolled out the red carpet for the dogs as Nancy and I prepare the popcorn waiting with baited breath as to who will bring home the coveted statue? It's going to be interesting to see how first time host Seth McFarlane does. His past exposure hosting shows at the national level has been those roasts on Comedy Central, and if you've seen any of those it's a sound editor's nightmare. I imagine the Academy will try to temper Seth, but c'mon, this is the same guy who gave us "Ted" last year, which isn't exactly a picture for the faint of heart. (I laughed my butt off though watching that flick). Will Seth McFarlane be a Ricky Gervais reincarnated? Who knows, but that's always the fun part: unplanned improvisational humor (and hiccups) that keep the censors on edge.

To be fair, though, McFarlane has a song nominated in the Best Original Song category ("Everybody Needs a Best Friend" from the aforementioned, "Ted") so yeah, he has some Oscar creds going for him. However, it's safe to say that the creator of "Family Guy" will definitely be topical, which might lead to a few embarrassing moments and gaffs. Let's just hope he doesn't upset too many Hollywood insiders attending the event. OK, I'm hoping he does.

Let's get right to it though as we have a lot of ground to cover starting with **Best Picture** category. The nominees are: "Amour," "Argo," "Beasts of the Southern Wild," "Django Unchained," "Les Miserables," "Life of Pi," "Lincoln," "Silver Linings Playbook" and "Zero Dark Thirty." Who will win?

I'm going with "Argo" in part because its director, Ben Affleck, was snubbed in the directing category (why does Oscar do that?) which seems odd because he's won that category at just about every other award show leading up to this one. Oh sure, Steven Spielberg's "Lincoln" has 12 nominations going for it and Oscar will give Spielberg the statue in that category because they're feeling guilty now that Affleck was snubbed and will reward him here giving it to "Argo." The surprise might be "Zero Dark Thirty", but going I'm with "Argo" for Best Picture.

For **Best Director** the nominees include Michael Haneke for "Amour," Benh Zeitlin for "Beasts of the Southern Wild," Ang Lee for "Life of Pi," Steven Spielberg for "Lincoln" and David O. Russell for "Silver Linings Playbook." Who will win?

Steven Spielberg hands down. Oscar loves epic pictures and has a history of rewarding those at the helm of such epics like Warren Beatty for "Reds" (1981), Sydney Pollack for "Out of Africa" (1985), Kevin Costner for "Dances With Wolves" (1990), James Cameron for "Titanic" (1997) and even Mel Gibson for "Braveheart" (1995) before he started publicly hating Jews. Spielberg won in 1998 for what I believe to be one of the

definitive movies about WWII, “Saving Private Ryan.” So, proving that history does indeed repeat itself in the epic department, I’m going with Steven Spielberg to win for Best Director.

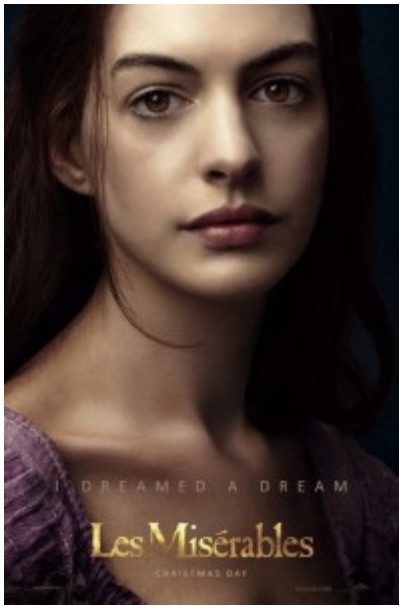
In the **Best Actor** category the nominees are Bradley Cooper for “Silver Linings Playbook,” “Daniel Day-Lewis for “Lincoln,” Hugh Jackman for “Les Miserables,” Joaquin Phoenix for “The Master” and Denzel Washington for “Flight.” When you carry the name of the movie as the character odds are you’re a shoe-in especially when the movie was spectacularly good. I mean, I’ve seen really good actors carry so-so movies (such as what Joaquin Phoenix and Philip Seymour Hoffman did for “The Master”) but when the acting is superb as well as the movie then you have to go with Day-Lewis here. Wolverine, I mean Hugh Jackman pulls out a few emotional stops in “Les Mis” and Cooper as a dramatic actor was impressive and Denzel makes any movie worth watching but this time around going with Daniel Day-Lewis in the Best Actor category.



In the **Best Actress** category the nominees are Jessica Chastain for “Zero Dark Thirty,” Jennifer Lawrence for “Silver Linings Playbook,” Emmanuelle Riva for “Amour,” Quvenzhane Wallis for “Beasts of the Southern Wild” and Naomi Watts for “The Impossible.” Man, this is a tough one. Probably one of the more tougher and least predicable categories in some time. The buzz seemed to be going to Sacramento’s Jessica Chastain and deservedly so as she was complete heat in that docudrama of a movie (that matched her sizzling red hair) and she literally lights up the screen. I wouldn’t count out 9-year-old Houma native Quvenzhane Wallis as a long shot which would make her the youngest winner ever to snag the statue in this category. But Jennifer Lawrence (who won both an Oscar and Golden Globe

nomination back in 2010 for “Winter’s Bone”) is a tough candidate to beat. Her star has been rising faster than that asteroid that came close to hitting our planet a week or so ago. Then again Chastain was also nominated last year in the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role for “The Help” so it’s between her and Lawrence, both who turned in excellent performances. I’m a little biased though and going with Jessica Chastain for Best Actress.

In the **Best Supporting Actor** category the nominees are Alan Arkin for “Argo,” Robert de Niro for “Silver Linings Playbook,” Philip Seymour Hoffman for “The Master,” Tommy Lee Jones for “Lincoln” and Christoph Waltz for “Django Unchained.” As I mentioned earlier, Hoffman carried “The Master” and sure, Oscar might take that into consideration (playing a character as a cult leader loosely based on the teachings of Scientology) but taking the whole movie into account I had narrowed my picks down to the legendary Robert de Niro and Tommy Lee Jones, both who’ve taken home the statue before. Jones is the favored, but when you have a movie as serious as “Silver Linings Playbook” that got pretty heavy at times who was it that brought levity and humor just at the right moments when needed? Robert de Niro that’s who so I’m going with for Best Supporting Actor.



In the **Best Supporting Actress** category the nominees are Amy Adams for “The Master,” Sally Field for “Lincoln,” Anne Hathaway for “Les Miserables,” Helen Hunt for “The Sessions” and Jacki Weaver for “Silver Linings Playbook.” Kudos to Amy Adams and Anne Hathaway for expanding their range coming from usually sweet roles and taking on something with a little more meat to it being more dramatic. I’m going to just jump to the front of the line here and say that Anne

Hathaway will win in this category because in addition to her fine acting, Oscar loves to award those that literally re-boot and transform themselves to play a character that is so outside their realm. Hathaway changed her voice pattern (and sings like an angel), cut her hair and without giving anything away (in case you haven't seen "Les Mis") will cause you to cry a little when you see what happens to her character. OK, you'll cry a lot, so I'm going with Anne Hathaway for Best Supporting Actress.

In the **Best Animated Feature** category we have "Brave," "Frankenweenie," "ParaNorman," "The Pirates! Band of Misfits" and "Wreck-It Ralph." You know for a while there this was an easy category because it seemed like anything that had Pixar attached to it was the clear choice as to who would win. This year it's kind of up in the air. It's interesting to note that Disney (parent company to Pixar) has both "Frankenweenie" and "Wreck-It Ralph" in the running. I am a huge fan of director Tim Burton who, back in 1984 did a short version of "Frankenweenie" for Disney that was way ahead of its time and freaked the studio out (I think) a little Disney basically being too weird by their corporate standards. Of course years later when Burton became a huge hit as a director (almost singlehandedly becoming Johnny Depp's go-to director) Disney dusted off their "prize" and offered it up in limited release. Fast-forward to last year where the green light was given for Burton to re-boot his short and turn it into a feature length movie with his brand of animation making a movie that was actually quite moving. As much as I want my "Frankenweenie" to win I think Oscar is going to go give it to "Wreck-It-Ralph" for Best Animated Feature so I'm going with that one. And yes, it was also a very good piece of filmmaking too.

At this part in the game things start to get interesting as we enter the category that nobody ever seems to make the time to check out. Granted here in Tahoe we don't get too many of these films so you have to sometimes travel off the mountain

and seek them out for yourself. I'm referring to the **Best Foreign-Language Film** category whose nominees include "Amour," "Kon-Tiki," "No," "A Royal Affair" and "War Witch." I'm guessing that this category belongs exclusively to "Amour" because that movie is also nominated in the Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actress categories (yes!) so I'm going to with "Amour" to cinch the Best Foreign-Language Film category because the only other foreign-language film I caught was "Kon-Tiki" making "Amour" an easy choice to win.

In the category for **Best Original Song** the nominees are "Before My Time" from the movie "Chasing Ice," "Everybody Needs a Best Friend" from the movie "Ted" (which was co-written by Oscar's host this year, Seth McFarlane), "Pi's Lullaby" from "Life of Pi," "Suddenly" from "Les Miserables" and "Skyfall" from the movie of the same name. OK, since I'm a huge James Bond fan (plus I understand there will be a tribute honoring the 50th anniversary of that franchise at Oscar) what better way to acknowledge the Bond franchise than having Adele herself singing "Skyfall" huh? It's a no-brainer here folks: "Skyfall" wins for Best Original Song.

With regards to the rest of the categories my picks to win will be "Lincoln" for **Best Original Score and Adapted Screenplay**, "Les Miserables" for **Best Makeup & Hair Styling** and for **Best Sound Mixing** as well. **Best Film Editing** will go to "Argo" and "Zero Dark Thirty" will get the **Best Sound Editing** award.

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.

Comped meals pits casinos against Nevada

By David McGrath Schwartz, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – For decades, Nevada casinos paid a tax on the meals they "comped" patrons and employees – the iconic Las Vegas tradition of pit bosses doling out steak dinners to blackjack players, or more recently, slot jockeys cashing in their reward points.

But gaming, Nevada's largest and most influential industry, is pushing for an agreement with Gov. Brian Sandoval and lawmakers to exempt complimentary casino meals from taxes in future years, according to gaming lobbyists, state officials and lawmakers.



The stakes of the negotiations are big, representing a potential budget-busting hole of as much as $350 million in the state's spending plan.

A lawsuit on the matter, Boyd Gaming Corp. v. the State of Nevada, is pending before the Nevada Supreme Court. If the court rules for casinos, the state could be forced to pay back to casinos an estimated $230 million to $350 million for taxes it collected on the meals in the 2000s.

To settle that lawsuit before the court issues an opinion, the industry is offering to forgive the potential $350 million rebate in back taxes in exchange for the state agreeing not to tax future meals. Not taxing future meals would mean forgoing

millions of dollars that otherwise could go to education, public safety and social services.

Agreeing to the settlement is a huge gamble for the state. If the court decides against the state, Nevada would be out the $350 million as well as any future revenue. If the court decides against the casinos, Nevada would be off the hook for the rebate and could continue collecting tax revenue.

So far, though, Sandoval and his administration have remained firm that the meals are subject to taxes.

Sources said there was a tense meeting at the governor's office last summer in an effort to settle the issue.

"Both sides think they have strong legal cases," said one source with knowledge of the case, not authorized to speak on the record because it's part of ongoing litigation. "It comes down to whether the state and industry want to do a $350 million coin flip."

Currently, no casino is paying the tax on comped meals, a state tax official said this month in a legislative committee meeting. The casinos point to a 2008 Nevada Supreme Court ruling that the state owed a rebate to the Sparks Nugget, which spurred the rest of the state's casinos, big and small, to seek tax rebates.

The gaming industry wants the situation to be resolved soon.

"We're hopeful we can find a solution that is amenable to both the state and the industry," said Pete Ernaut, president of R&R Partners, whose clients include the Nevada Resort Association.

One lobbyist for gaming, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said there is likely to be a bill before the 2013 Legislature.

Meanwhile, the Sandoval administration is pressing forward on

rules that would allow the state to once again collect the tax.

Sandoval’s chief of staff, Gerald Gardner, declined to comment for this story, citing ongoing litigation. So did Christopher Nielsen, director of the state Department of Taxation.

Advocates for education and state services say Nevada can’t afford to exempt those meals from taxation.

“That would dig a deeper hole,” said Lynn Warne, president of the Nevada State Education Association. “It leaves Nevada that much further behind being able to support kids and schools.”

The dispute and potential hole have been hanging over the state since 2008.

That’s when the Nevada Supreme Court first ruled in the industry’s favor, saying the “use tax” the state had been charging casinos since at least the 1960s for comped meals didn’t apply. Although the case dealt only with the relatively small Sparks Nugget, it set off a feeding frenzy of claims for tax rebates.

But the Supreme Court decision, in a footnote, said the state could argue that it could impose the alternative “sales tax” on comped meals when it could prove “consideration” was given for the meals. Consideration means the state could prove casinos received something of value in return for the meals.

The sales tax would be higher because it would be calculated on the retail price of the meal instead of on the cost of ingredients to prepare the food, as it had been calculated previously.

Clarifying what that footnote meant is at the heart of the pending Nevada Supreme Court case.

Representatives for the Nevada Resort Association first approached former Gov. Jim Gibbons, Sandoval’s predecessor, to

reach a settlement, according to former administration officials and lawmakers. But his administration, which had an often frosty relationship with the political establishment, resisted overtures from the industry.

In a 2008 special session, soon after the Nevada Supreme Court decision in favor of the casinos, Gibbons tried to clarify the law in the state's favor.

The Assembly passed the bill unanimously, but lobbyists with the Nevada Resort Association helped to quietly kill it in the Senate, where it never received a vote.

Since Sandoval came into office in 2011, industry lobbyists, some with longtime relationships with the former federal judge, have tried again to reach a settlement.

And that's where the tax debate gets political.

Gaming companies are the most influential industry in Nevada.

Gambling and casinos in 2012 gave twice as much in political contributions to Nevada state candidates as the next highest group, lawyers and lobbyists, according to the National Institute on Money in State Politics, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that tracks state spending.

Gaming companies and executives donated $410,000 to Sandoval's political action committee last year, about half of the total he raised, largely to help Senate Republican candidates last year.

But gaming companies also gave prodigiously to Democratic candidates and organizations. MGM Resorts International, Boyd, Station Casinos and Caesars Entertainment all gave tens of thousands of dollars to the Nevada Democratic Party in 2012, according to campaign finance records.

On top of that, gaming companies have their left flank covered by the Culinary Union, a key constituency for Democratic

lawmakers.

In the case pending before the Nevada Supreme Court, in which Boyd is suing the state for its rebate, the Culinary Union filed an amicus brief in support of Boyd. When gaming companies and the Culinary Union are together, they present a mighty political front.

Any settlement on comped meals with the governor would also require legislation, gaming lobbyists said.

Sen. Tick Segerblom, D-Las Vegas and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the Legislature should have a say before any agreement is reached.

The gaming industry "is very powerful – and rightly so," he said, pointing to its tax contributions to the state and the fact that it's the state's biggest employer. "We should look upon them favorably. But we can't give them a free ride."

Assembly Speaker Marilyn Kirkpatrick, D-North Las Vegas, said that typically, the state has declined to weigh in on matters pending before the courts. But she added that lawmakers are aware it is a potential liability for the state's budget.

Placer County cracking down on drivers using cell phones

Placer County sheriff's deputies are beefing up enforcement of cell phone laws Feb. 25-March 8.

The enforcement is part of a grant from the California Office

of Traffic Safety, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to eliminate motorists' hand-held cell phone use and texting. The effort is a special federally funded pilot program using the region to test tactics that may be employed nationally in the future.



California's distracted driving law bans all drivers from using hand-held devices and texting while operating a motor vehicle. However, in 2011, the Department of Motor Vehicles reported 460,487 handheld cell phone convictions, up from 361,260 in 2010.

Distracted drivers in Placer County talking on a hand-held cell phone or texting will receive a first-time ticket costing a minimum of $159, with a second offense costing $279. But the goal of the special enforcement operation is not to issue tickets, but to raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.

• Turn off your phone and/or put it out of reach. Include in your outgoing message that you can't answer while you are driving.

• Don't call or text anyone at a time when you think they may be driving.

Fast food chains turning

their attention to coffee

By Justin Bachman, Bloomberg Businessweek

Guess what? Americans really like coffee. In a show of how true this is, Burger King has upgraded its standard, rather uninspired brew with a new line from Seattle's Best Coffee, part of the Starbucks empire.

This follows a similar effort by McDonald's in 2007 to serve a better cup of coffee. Two years later, the company went all-in with its McCafe line of premium coffee drinks, for which the company credited a 25 percent jump in its 2009 coffee sales. In 2011, Wendy's followed the coffee-upgrade trend with its Redhead Roasters brand.



Burger King is clearly playing catch-up in the espresso battles, but recent history shows there are plenty of coffee guzzlers to go around.

All of this new, purportedly improved coffee at the fast-food chains was spurred, in part, by Americans' highly public love affair with Starbucks, Peet's, Caribou, Tim Hortons, Tully's, Coffee Beanery, Stumptown and thousands of other shops big and small across the land. (Blue Bottle, anyone?)

If every corner once had a mailbox or pay phone, it now has a coffee retailer peddling caffeine.

And we love it. Each day, 65 percent of Americans drink at least one cup of coffee, a figure well ahead of soft drinks, the National Coffee Association reported last year. Consumption of gourmet coffee grew from 37 percent of all cups in 2011 to nearly half (46 percent) in 2012.

Much of this coffee is being drunk at home: 293.7 million cups per day, up from 280.5 million in 2009, according to Experian Marketing Service, a global marketing firm. (We're also more revved up – the amount of decaf has dropped in the past four years, Experian says.)

More to the point for Burger King: Eighteen percent of the chain's customers drink espresso or cappuccino, compared with 16 percent of all U.S. adults, Experian researchers have found.

Thus, Burger King has introduced 10 coffee drinks, including lattes, iced brew and a regular that starts at $1. The new blend is lighter than the old, designed to pair equally well with sweet and salty menu items, said Eric Hirschhorn, Burger King's vice president of global innovation.

"Over the past several years the American coffee drinker has become more and more sophisticated, and the demand for delicious coffee is growing," he said.

All of which raises the question: As we evolve into drinking better coffee that's sold everywhere, is there any limit on coffee demand?

Peruse the voluminous risk factors in Starbucks' 2012 annual report and nowhere will one find anything along the lines of, "Americans could decide one morning to just kick the coffee habit or to drink a whole lot less." Nope. Instead the Seattle behemoth warns investors about the price of arabica beans, the vagaries of consumer discretionary spending, and how the Affordable Care Act could boost its labor costs.

Those of us who jones for java? We aren't going anywhere – unless it's trading one primo brand for another, such as Caribou for the new Burger King.

Starbucks does flag that possibility: "In the U.S., the ongoing focus by large competitors in the quick-service

restaurant sector on selling high-quality specialty coffee beverages could adversely affect our sales and results of operations.”

LTWC returns cubs to the wild

By Lawrence Dechant, KGO-TV

When Cheryl and Tom Millham went to an AM/PM convenience store last summer, they ended up rescuing a couple of bear cubs.

The Millhams responded to a call to rescue the two baby bears from a man who was allegedly trying to poach them for money outside the store. They took the two black bears, which weighed 15 pounds each, to the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care animal rehabilitation facility, where she’s the executive director and he’s secretary-treasurer.

“The man claimed the mother bear came and started taking his groceries, so he shot her,” Cheryl Millham said. “He said he was going to save their lives by selling the cubs so since we are the only agency in California, we were called to come and rescue the bears before they were illegally sold.”

The two baby bears (a male and a female) were rescued more than seven months ago, and are now 90 and 55 pounds respectively. They have just been released back into the wild with a clean bill of health.

She said that the animals, if left to fend for themselves, could not thrive in the forest alone.

“If you were a baby black bear and you were alone, something definitely happened to your mom,” Cheryl Millham said. “Either

she died of old age or was hunted, and as a baby bear orphan you were killed or put in a zoo.”

The Millhams have owned Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care for 35 years and rehabilitate more than just bears. This past year, the Millhams have saved 10 bears, six bobcats, hawks, owls, falcons, bats, and river otters, just to name a few.

“It took us four to five years for them to allow us to raise and rehab bears, and we knew it could be done because it was done across the U.S.,” Cheryl Millham said. “In 2000, we finally received a permit for bears, and now we take the baby bears until they reach 50 pounds. ”

She said they usually get the bears during the summer and begin the rehabilitation phase immediately.

During the rehab phase, the bears are placed in fenced areas and are taught to find appropriate foods.

“The local fisherman are good to us and bring us fish all summer long. The fish are given to bears in water; they learn that if they want to fish they have to get their feet wet,” Cheryl Millham said. “We give them acorns as well if they go south, because that is what they’re exposed to in the south. A lot of it depends on where they came from and where they’re going to be released.”



Vet Kevin Willitts in 2012 examines a LTWC bear before

it is released. Photo/LTN
file

The cages are sectioned into three parts and have a camera in each section so they can monitor the bears. The bears never see humans, because the goal is to get them used to their natural habitat in a safe way.

The cages are cleaned daily. There is an open ceiling, so the bears get used to rain, sunshine and snow.

Cheryl Millham said they also prepare the bears for hibernation during the winter months.

The Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care facility partners with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to release the animals back into the wild. Fish and Wildlife makes the final determination, and will usually release the bears within 50 miles of where they were first found.

“They’re ear tagged and numbered by who they are,” Cheryl Millham said. “They will anesthetize them, draw blood and check their bodies for any illness, and if everything is perfect, they’re given another dose and put in a snow den just like they were sleeping, transported to their location and placed in a make shift den. It is sealed up and they sleep for the rest of the winter. When spring comes, they wake up and don’t seem to have any memory about being around people or being rehabbed. It’s like they have another life, another year.”

The man who is accused of illegally killing the cub’s mother and trying to poach the young bears is facing four misdemeanor charges.

“These animals are not supposed to be in a zoo, they should be able to move freely, frolic freely,” Cheryl Millham said. “Since 2000, we have released all 53 bears we’ve had successfully.”

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The Truckee Donner Land Trust has been accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. It is one of 201 land trusts from across the country to have this designation.

• Barton Memorial Hospital hoped to have its Level 3 trauma center designation the first quarter of 2013. Now fingers are crossed it will happen before 2014.

• Drug Store Project is all-day April 2 at Lake Tahoe Community College. For more information, email lhuard@ymail.com.

• Goldfish are becoming a problem in Lake Tahoe. Check out this report from KCRA-TV.

Ski report: Another layer of white stuff

The sun is out and there is fresh snow on the slopes.

Here is the Feb. 21 ski report.

– Curtis Fong

S. Tahoe taking applications for Citizens Academy

South Lake Tahoe is accepting applications for the Spring 2013 Citizens Academy. The academy will be on Wednesday's from 5:30-8pm from April 10-May 15.

The Citizens Academy is a free, six-session interactive course designed to provide residents with an in-depth look into municipal government, as well as, information about the services and programs of the city.

This course is open to all community members and provides an opportunity for residents to increase their knowledge about the workings of local government and have a desire to become more involved in the shaping and development of their community.

To enroll, complete the Citizens Academy application and return to city offices located at 1901 Airport Road, or fax to (530) 542.7411 or -mail to tfranklin@cityofslt.us by March 22 at 5pm.

Conservancy spending millions to improve Lake Tahoe Basin

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Even with millions of dollars being spent in the Lake Tahoe Basin each year, it's not always easy to identify a California Tahoe Conservancy backed project.

This state agency based in South Lake Tahoe is the major force behind Lakeview Commons, a major contributor to Explore Tahoe, and a constant funder of bike trails on the North and West shores.



Ray Lacey talks Feb. 20 about the California Tahoe Conservancy. Photos/LTN

But it also contributed nearly $20 million to the Heavenly Village project that went to environmental improvements.

It is a regular contributor to erosion control projects that reduce the sediment reaching Lake Tahoe.

Brokerage of coverage rights is another component of the agency.

In the nearly 30 years since the Conservancy was established,

it has acquired almost 5,000 parcels in the basin. Many are sensitive lands that will never be developed. Some are in neighborhoods. If they could ever be sold depends on the money used to buy them. Ones bought with state bond dollars are forever the state's property.

Ray Lacey, deputy director of the CTC, enlightened Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe on Wednesday at Harrah's Lake Tahoe about what his agency has been up to.

He was an integral player in making Lakeview Commons become a reality. It was $6 million from the Conservancy that paid for the overhaul of El Dorado Beach.

Now he wants to turn the attention to the other side of Highway 50 so the full 56-acre project is completed.

There is also phase 2 of the Lakeview Commons project to be done, too. That includes revamping the area to the Alta Mira Building. CTC has secured an option to buy that building.

The biggest project in the near future is the Upper Truckee Marsh. This swath of 600 acres in the middle of South Lake Tahoe crosses both sides of the Upper Truckee River at its mouth and then extends to Highway 50. It's bordered by the Tahoe Keys and Al Tahoe neighborhoods.



The 60-day comment period for the Upper Truckee Marsh project is open. The draft environmental documents are on the CTC's website. People have until April 8 to comment. There will be two workshops on Feb. 27 – 1:30pm and 6pm – at Inn by

The long-talked-about South Tahoe Greenway Bike Trail is still on the books. This is the 9.2 miles of former Caltrans right-of-way that one

day will become a multi-use path from Meyers to Stateline.

Connectivity is still the goal with bike trails. The North Shore has a better developed system in large part because Placer County has a dedicated allotment of hotel tax dollars going to projects like bike trails.

These days it's more attractive to help fund a project than be the sole financial provider.

"Their bike trail usage is up 15 percent every year," Lacey said, adding that the number of tourists is staying steady and full-time residents is on the decline.

He said feedback from riders is that they are riding bikes for errands that otherwise would have required a car. It's not all about leisure and recreation, but in part for transit reasons people are pedaling.

Today, funding is the major obstacle, Lacey said, for why projects are not going forward. What is in the Conservancy's bank account only covers a fraction of the projects on the table.

In the heyday, the CTC may have acquired 200 properties in a month. Now acquisitions are down to a handful a year.

the Lake in South Lake Tahoe, along with another March 28 at 6pm in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College. The Advisory Planning Commission of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is scheduled to discuss the project on March 13, with the Governing Board taking it up March 27.

Tahoe author to sign latest release

Saylor Storm will be signing books at Apres Wine Co. on Feb. 28 from 6–9pm.



Saylor Storm

The local resident is launching her third romantic suspense novel, “Double Down”. She has previous published “Dr. Selfish” and “With Malicious Intent”. All three novels are tied together by one common character, Arnie Darrow, a vulnerable yet capable detective turned FBI agent.

Five additional books in the series will be published over the next two years.

The series will be available for purchase and signed by the author.

Space is limited. Reservations are recommended – (530) 544.9463. Apres Wine Co. is at 3668 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.