Storms improve water content by 32 percentage points



Maddie Bowman is just as comfortable in powder at Sierra-at-Tahoe as she is in a halfpipe. Photo/Brian Walker

By Kathryn Reed

What a difference a week can make.

On Feb. 28 the snow water equivalent near Echo Summit was 1.7 inches, or 7 percent of average, while on March 5 it was 9.4 inches, for 39 percent of normal.

Frank Gehrke took the manual readings at Phillips Station for the Department of Water Resources. It’s unusual to do back-to-back surveys, but officials wanted to record the impact of the storm and note what it would have been like without it.

While the storms in the last week that dropped several feet of snow at lake level and as much as 7 feet higher up were good news for a lot of reasons, the reality is the snowpack is still pretty dismal.

These surveys are taken throughout the Sierra from December-April, when the bulk of the snow falls. They give water regulators an idea of what the runoff will be like in the spring/summer so they can then predict what reservoir storage will be like. That water is then used by various municipalities and farmers in the state.

While skiers prefer the light, powdery snow, it's the wet, heavy snow that is best for water content.

Skiers flocked to Tahoe resorts last weekend for the deepest snow all winter. With temps staying relatively cool, the fresh snow should provide the needed boost to get through the season. That is assuming future storms are dumping snow on the slopes and not rain.

More snow is on its way to the Tahoe area. A storm is expected to arrive Wednesday night and provide moisture intermittently throughout the weekend.

Unraveling the S. Lake Tahoe city manager debacle

By Kathryn Reed

Rumors are rampant, while facts are few when it comes to why South Lake Tahoe's city manager is not at work.

On the March 6 agenda is a closed session item stating: Public

employee discipline/dismissal/release. This is the third meeting with this same agenda item.

An attorney other than Nira Doherty with Burke, Williams & Sorensen, the law firm that does most of the city's legal work, has been negotiating with City Manager Nancy Kerry's attorney for a resolution.

However, what isn't known is how the council has been able to give direction when a meeting has not taken place in the last two weeks.

If an email is sent out by the attorney to the council, it can be classified as confidential under client-attorney privilege. However, if the mayor or another council member were to issue an update to the rest of the council, that would be a serial meeting. That is illegal and violates state open meeting laws.

It would just add to the list of illegal maneuvers this council has been engaged in behind closed doors and out of public view since at least last fall. It would be up the district attorney to go after the council for Brown Act violations.

Lake Tahoe News asked Mayor Wendy David and acting City Manager Jeff Meston:

- *Who on the council is/are the point person/people in discussing a resolution with Nancy Kerry?*
- *Who is the attorney at the law firm representing the city?*
- *What is the time line to get this resolved?*
- *Apparently she didn't do anything so egregious since she's still getting paid and has the title, so how can the city justify this expense? It seems like a waste of taxpayer dollars – can you defend how it isn't?*

- *Does the new pending litigation on the next agenda have to do with Nancy Kerry? If not, what is it about?*

Neither David nor Meston responded to the email.

“Separation between a city manager and city council is a normal part of the municipal government world. The city and Ms. Kerry have been diligently working toward an amicable resolution to the current situation, and we are hopeful for a resolution soon,” Jacqueline Mittelstadt, Kerry’s attorney, told *Lake Tahoe News*. Mittelstadt was once city attorney for South Lake Tahoe and is well versed in dealing with the machinations of this city.

No one is officially saying why Kerry is leaving or whose idea it was, though her relationship with Councilman Austin Sass has been precarious at best. Per her contract, she is owed nine month’s severance if she were to be let go without cause. Normally when a city manager leaves on her own volition at least one month’s notice is given.

The settlement is likely to be a compromise based on clearly nothing criminal having occurred because that would have been handled differently, the fact that Kerry didn’t initiate the departure, and that what *Lake Tahoe News* has been told by sources inside the city is that Kerry’s biggest no-no’s were being emotional (which appears to be more gender bashing than anything else), yelling (which every city manager has been known to do) and talking about someone being in rehab (even this reporter knew about this person and her drinking issue was well known in the community for years).

Still, not a single employee ever filed a complaint against Kerry, so some speculate the negativity now being voiced is political in nature. This is an election year with the council seats of David, Sass and Tom Davis being up.

People inside and outside the city are saying they don’t understand what is so egregious to have seemed to wipe out the

good that Kerry has done for the city in her more than five years as city manager. That includes among other things saving the city more than $40 million, bringing development to town and helping the city look better.

Internally, Kerry changed the culture in a way many say was a positive. People were given flexible schedules and she started an awards program for employees.

That good vibe has since been eroded with the back stabbing and distrust that now permeates the walls of city hall since the City Council chose to go down this path. Even department heads are jockeying for position. Not one of the five electeds has come forward to say what changed.

There has been zero leadership from the council – just silence. After all, Kerry was given a glowing review in June 2017 and a 5 percent raise. Now these electeds are ready to show her the door.

Once Kerry is officially relieved of her duties, the city is likely to hire a firm to find the next city manager. A request for proposal for a consultant to do that work would be the first step. That can cost upward of $30,000. If the city opts to find a city attorney as well, it’s possible for some expenses to be lessened if the consultant were to handle both positions.

The future of the city attorney could be decided March 20 based on interim City Attorney Doherty asking to have a discussion in open session.

It could be the end of the year before a permanent city manager is on board, same with city attorney.

It’s possible the city would bring in an interim city manager to be a bridge. Retired city managers do this on a regular basis.

For now, Fire Chief Meston is the acting city manager. He was given the title after the closed session on the **Feb. 6 meeting**.

Vail Resorts a contender in any U.S. 2030 Olympic bid

By Jay Hamburger, Park Record

Vail Resorts could medal in any U.S. bid for a Winter Olympics.

The Colorado-based ski behemoth has properties in three of the places that are seen as contenders to become the bid city once the United States Olympic Committee mounts an effort to secure another Winter Olympics, perhaps as early as the event in 2030.

Reno-Lake Tahoe, Salt Lake City and Denver are three of the places that are considering a bid. Vail Resorts has properties in each of the three locations.

A Vail Resorts representative said the firm would be “proud to be a part of hosting a Winter Olympic Games in any one of the three regions of Colorado, Utah or Tahoe.” Kelly Ladyga, the vice president of corporate communications, said Vail Resorts will work with Olympic efforts in any of the areas.

Read the whole story

Nevada women will be key in 2018 elections

By Ramona Giwargis, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Growing up in a religious Southern California household, Jazzmyne Lizarraga-Valle couldn't even talk about sex.

But three months ago, the aspiring teacher proudly held a sign that read "Reproductive Freedom For All" as she marched among thousands of people in Nevada's Women's March. The event marked the height of a movement that put women in the spotlight and reinforced their role as a force to be reckoned with – particularly at the polls.

The 2018 midterm elections will be a defining moment for women in Nevada. State voters could elect their first female governor. They could choose a second female senator to represent them in Washington. And they might choose a woman to be the next lieutenant governor.

Read the whole story

Ski industry gurus share decades of experience

By Kathryn Reed

For those who are schussing down the slopes, it's all about having fun. And while it can be fun for those responsible for the operation of the ski resort, the bottom line is it's a business – and with that reality comes some not so fun aspects

of the job.

In a wide-ranging conversation last week, two ski industry titans shared what their experience during past 40 or so years has been like.

Locally, Tim Cohee is known for having run Kirkwood Mountain Resort for years. He is director of the ski business and management program at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. He also owns China Peak Ski Resort near Fresno.

John Rice is at the helm of Sierra-at-Tahoe.

Both are well regarded in the industry and are fixtures in the Tahoe community.

Their professional lives have been intertwined for decades, starting when they both worked for a Southern California ski resort. While they were competitors in Tahoe, the respect they have for one another was evident during the Feb. 28 talk.

Outdoor photographer Corey Rich, whose business is in the Ski Run area, was the moderator for the evening. The event at Blue Angel Café was part of the Ski Run Presents series, which is designed to bring the community together over relevant topics.

Cohee and Rice acknowledged the industry isn’t the same as when they started out. It’s more serious. Employees aren’t as apt to want to work long hours.



Corey Rich, left, moderates a talk Feb. 28 between ski industry mavericks Tim Cohee and John Rice. Photo/LTN

The terrain park as we know it might not have ever been born under today's workplace constraints.

Rice is credited with taking snowcats for "joy rides" when he worked at Sierra Summit, which is now known as China Peak. He was bending frames and breaking tillers to build jumps on the side of the mountain.

He moved to Bear Mountain and continued to build features through trial and error. It was in 1993 that he moved to Tahoe.

"Today it's way more complicated. There are so many regulatory things," Rice said. "The competition is more fierce and cutthroat."

Now 70 percent of the ski resorts in the United States are owned by two companies – Vail Resorts and Alterra. Both have a presence in the Tahoe area – Heavenly, Kirkwood, Northstar (Vail), Squaw and Alpine (Alterra).

Rice is one of those industry leaders who believes in giving athletes what they need.

“They need a playground to do their thing. It takes a lot of resources. The mountain has to commit to that,” Rice said. Sierra-at-Tahoe has a long history of Olympians, with two (Jamie Anderson and Maddie Bowman) competing in South Korea last month and two others (Hannah Teter and Kyle Smaine) each missing the team by one spot.

Cohee and Rice know it’s an expensive sport, admitting it can cost a family of four $1,000 a day.

“At the end of the day, they will only do it if the value is there,” Cohee said.

Demographics are changing. Rice said five years ago 78 percent of Sierra’s guests were Caucasian, today that percentage is 53 percent.

“There is an opportunity with the ethnic market to bring in new skiers,” Rice said.

It’s millennials who have been a disappointment. They aren’t skiing. That’s why resorts are now focused on the younger generation.

Cohee believes skiing is affordable for those who do it regularly – they buy passes and seldom eat at the resort.

Rice admits Tahoe needs to raise its game when it comes to service as well as food and beverage.

Resorts make about 40 percent of their revenue from day tickets, 20 percent from season passes, 13 percent food and beverage, 13 percent ski school, 13 percent retail, and 1 percent miscellaneous.

And while millions of dollars may be collected each season, it’s not a highly profitable business because of the expense

and need to reinvest in the product. China Peak recently installed a new lift. It has sat idle most of this winter because of the lack of snow. The resort reopened this weekend.

Climate change is something very real to these men. They see the swing in snow years, which isn't what it was say, 20 years ago.

They recognize it's expensive for young people to get started in the industry, especially with housing an issue in most every ski town. Sierra is working on ways to improve that situation.

As Rice said, "It's more than a job, it's a lifestyle."

Drones, wireless sensors take water research to new level



Researchers in Merced a site owned by the University of California. Photo/University of California

By Matt Weiser, Water Deeply

California is about to learn a whole lot more about how water moves through its many diverse landscapes.

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation has awarded a $2.2 million grant to the University of California to use remote sensors and drones to monitor hydrology across various landscapes. The subject areas will be the U.C.’s Natural Reserve System, a network of protected lands covering more than 750,000 acres and representing many habitat types in the state.

Called the California Heartbeat Initiative-Freshwater, the project will equip reserves with wireless sensor nodes to track weather, soil moisture, transpiration and a host of other criteria. Each node, about the size of a thermos, is outfitted with a battery and solar panel. They communicate wirelessly with each other and a central computer. Drones will fly programmed routes with special cameras attached to monitor how vegetation changes with the climate.

Guide to Nevada’s primary election

By James DeHaven, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevadans who haven’t kept up with the state’s upcoming elections, take heart – the rest of the country is paying plenty of attention for you.

Three months before party primary voters decide which candidates will appear on November’s general election ballot,

money and media attention has poured into races for the Silver State's top political spots, among them an open governor's seat and one of the nation's most closely watched U.S. Senate contests.

Washoe County – narrowly won by Hillary Clinton in 2016 – figures to play a decisive role in both of those races, as Democrats seek to close a slim 6,000-person countywide voter registration edge held by Republicans armed with a pricey new data-driven voter turnout initiative.

Read the whole story

Little fanfare with TRPA approval of Meyers plan

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – One more vote and the Meyers Area Plan will be the law of the land, replacing the planning document from 1993.

The process to develop this plan started in February 2012. In these six years there have been a multitude of meetings, angry words levied between residents, at El Dorado County staff and electeds, misunderstandings, and finally compromise and resolution.

The fact that only one member of the public spoke at the Feb. 28 Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board meeting speaks volumes for how far things have come. It used to be the topic of this area plan would bring out the masses, with opinions all over the board.

It took four drafts to come to the plan that the bi-state

regulatory agency approved unanimously. (Sue Novasel, who represents El Dorado County on the Governing Board had to recuse herself because she owns property in the plan area. CAO Don Ashton filled in for her.) Later this month the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors will review it one last time.

This most southwestern entrance to the Lake Tahoe Basin has more traffic and visitors than any other gateway. This is why transportation and traffic were critical elements of the plan.

“One key challenge to Meyers is that it has to operate as a ‘Main Street’ and as a highway,” Brendan Ferry, planner with the county, told the Governing Board. Highway 50 is 280 feet wide at most places, making it a challenge to cross.

The county has been working with Caltrans to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists. The intersection at Apache Avenue is one of the most critical points, especially for people trying to reach the elementary school and park on the north side of the highway. It’s possible a yellow light to slow traffic could be installed there.

The lack of transit is another issue for Meyers. There was some discussion about this at the board level. Funding is the problem. Still, the county is pursuing state and federal grants to improve the physical corridor, and is working with the Tahoe Transportation District for bus service.

One item in the plan is to work to move the agricultural inspection station to Highway 89 or find a way to deem its existence irrelevant. This will not be an easy endeavor, as the state has the final say. The reason to get rid of it is that it’s an eyesore and with it only being staffed at random times its viability is questioned.

Austin Sass, who represents South Lake Tahoe on the TRPA board, asked if there would be anyplace for workforce housing in Meyers based on this plan.

Ferry spoke more in general development parameters instead of specific uses when he said there is vacant land available. Some of it is owned by the California Tahoe Conservancy and would be available through the state agency's asset lands program.

During the last six years of public meetings, the residents of Meyers were more interested in development that would generate tax dollars and add to the local flair, such as a boutique lodging establishment, an outdoor oriented commercial entity and the like.

Forecasting tool may be able to predict mountain snowpack

By Matt Weiser, Water Deeply

A skier threads his way through patches of dry ground at California's Squaw Valley Ski Resort on March 21, 2015, when the state experienced one of its driest winters ever. A new forecasting tool could one day be able to predict such poor mountain snowpack conditions as much as eight months in advance.Max Whittaker/Getty Images
If we had known a year ago that this winter would be so dry, would we have conserved water more aggressively last summer? Would ski resorts have installed more snowmaking equipment? Would farmers buy different seeds to plant this spring?

These are among the tantalizing questions raised by a team of government and university scientists, who believe they have developed a tool to predict mountain snowpack in the West up to eight months in advance – long before the first winter

snowflake has fallen.

The tool, a powerful computer model, is described in a new study recently published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. It is still experimental, but it seems capable at this stage of giving a thumbs-up or -down signal about whether March 1 snowpack will be heavy. And it can do so at the scale of a particular mountain range, offering some indication about potential spring runoff for individual watersheds.

Read the whole story

Nave: It may be year of the women for Oscars

By Howie Nave

On the surface the timing couldn’t be more perfect. When you look at the change, or movement if you will, that’s been happening in the country on attitudes toward sexual harassment, more women being empowered and the treatment of minorities in the bigger cities it just seems more than just a coincidence that many of the major motion pictures in Oscar contention this year mirror what’s been going on. However, when you factor in the time it takes to make a movie it’s almost like the trends caught up just about the time the movies were having their premiere in theaters across the country (and the world). Add to that the beating Oscar took for it’s “whiteout” with the bulk of most of the nominations eliminating movies of color in 2016 well, this year’s 90th Academy Awards ceremony is trying to correct itself.

And Oscar isn’t just nominating actors just because of color, but actors that really shined this past year. Some movies were made close to home such as Sacramento’s Greta Gerwig who directed “Lady Bird” and actor turned director Jordan Peele climbed to the top in the dark comedy/horror flick “Get Out,” which to me is the best, overt movie on the whole black/white debate where Peele not only sneaks in a covert (albeit satirical) message but turns out a very entertaining piece of work that stands on its own.

And, yes, I’m miffed that “Wonder Woman” wasn’t recognized at this year’s Academy Awards. Gee, what a shock. The movie was the No. 1 summer film of 2017, grossing $412.5 million in the States and making over $822 million worldwide making its director, Patty Jenkins, the biggest opening ever for a female director. Oh, and who played the dynamic lead character in this flick? Israeli actress Gal Gadot!.Add to that the critics overall loved the movie, but an Oscar? I guess the members of the Academy were predominately Palestinian this past year. OK, no whining let’s get to it.



"Three Billboards" may take home Best Picture on Sunday.

In the category for Best Picture the nominees are:
"The Shape of Water"
"Dunkirk"
"Darkest Hour"
"Get Out"
"Lady Bird"
"Phantom Thread"
"Call Me By Your Name"
"The Post"
"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

I believe this is a two way battle between the beautiful fantasy flick "The Shape of Water" and the powerful drama, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri." Sorry "Lady Bird" and "Dunkirk" (not to mention the gay romance, "Call Me by

Your Name”) not this time. Progressive and very original movies, sure and no way “Get Out” could get in on this running. I’m a huge fan of history and loved “Darkest Hour” but again, not to be. While “The Shape of Water” received an impressive 13 nominations, my money is on “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” just on the strength of the amazing Frances McDormand playing determined mother seeking justice for her murdered child.

•Winner for Best Picture: “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”

Let’s move on now to the category of Best Actor where the nominees are:

Daniel Day-Lewis, “Phantom Thread”
Timothée Chalamet, “Call Me By Your Name”
Gary Oldman, “Darkest Hour”
Daniel Kaluuya, “Get Out”
Denzel Washington, “Roman J. Israel, Esq.”

OK, sorry Denzel. As good an actor as you are nobody saw your movie, so that’s out. Coming in second for movies not seen: “Call Me By Your Name” (but gotta say this young man Chalamet was very moving). I think Daniel Day-Lewis is a brilliant actor but his announcement late last year that he was going to retire from acting was a nice way of planning in advance that “Phantom Thread” would win an Oscar for its leading man but nah, not gonna happen. Daniel Kaluuya was OK, but not outstanding. However, the movie he was in, “Get Out” was great. All of this leaves veteran actor Gary Oldman the guy to get the prize. He was not only amazing as British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill in “Darkest Hour” but his entire being was miraculously transformed into the man. Yes, I understand he’s had some controversy in his past regarding an ex-spouse, but I’m going with Oldman the actor in the now and his performance was undeniably brilliant.

•Winner for Best Actor: Gary Oldman

Let’s move on now to the category of Best Actress or where the nominees are:

Sally Hawkins, “The Shape of Water”

Margot Robbie, “I, Tonya”

Meryl Streep, “The Post”

Frances McDormand, “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”

Saoirse Ronan, “Lady Bird”

This is one of the toughest categories to choose from. Streep has been nominated an amazing 21 times and has taken home three Oscars, so don’t rule her out. She gave a stellar performance as Katharine Graham, the publisher of the *Washington Post* during the 1971 publication of the Pentagon Papers. Sally Hawkins, who it seemed virtually came out of nowhere and gave an incredible performance playing a mute janitor in “The Shape of Water” could be the spoiler, but my money’s on one of the best: Frances McDormand who played a determined, fiercely angry mom (and rightfully so) with pure, unbridled emotion who’s had it with the bumbling small town cops doing nothing regarding the unsolved brutal death of her daughter who takes matters into her own hands. I’m getting chills just remembering her performance.

•Winner for Best Actress: Frances McDormand.



"The Shape of Water" has the opportunity to win multiple awards.

The nominees for Best Supporting Actor are:

Willem Dafoe, "The Florida Project"

Sam Rockwell, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

Woody Harrelson, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

Richard Jenkins, "The Shape of Water"

Christopher Plummer, "All the Money in the World"

Plummer should win just for coming in during the eleventh-hour to reshoot all the scenes that were originally shot with disgraced and fallen actor Kevin Spacey in the role that Plummer took over for. And the mere fact that two guys, Woody Harrelson and Sam Rockwell, were nominated from the movie, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" speaks volumes how good that film was. Many expect Sam Rockwell to take home the statue but man, if you haven't seen "The Florida Project" well all I can say is Willem Dafoe brought everything out in his soul for this movie and honestly, had Dafoe not been nominated (the only one for this movie) I don't think this movie would have remained on the screens for as long as it did. The movie stars a relatively bunch of unknowns with Dafoe playing the manager of a cheap Florida occupied mainly by homeless

families struggling to make ends meet. It’s an over simplification, but trust me, well worth a looksy. So, my pick?

•Winner for Best Supporting Actor: Willem Dafoe

The nominees for Best Supporting Actress are:

Mary J. Blige, “Mudbound”

Lesley Manville, “Phantom Thread”

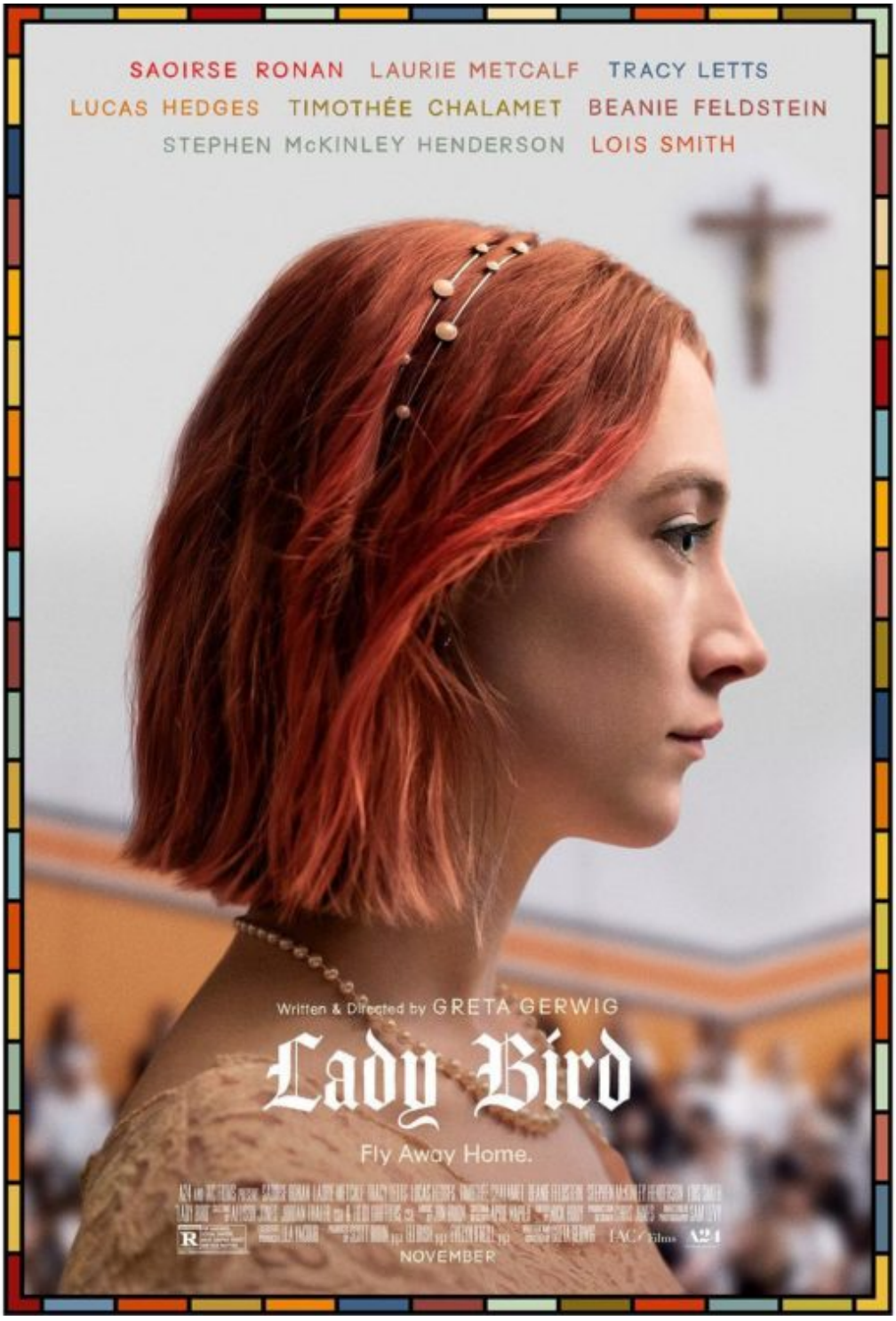
Laurie Metcalf, “Lady Bird”

Allison Janney, “I, Tonya”

Octavia Spencer, “The Shape of Water”

Wow, this category definitely belongs to the moms with an edge. I was literally blown away with not just singer Mary J. Blige’s first dramatic role in “Mudbound,” but she was unrecognizable playing it plain. I hope there are more movies in her talented future. In a movie shot close to home just down the mountain in Sacramento, Laurie Metcalf nails it in the very timely movie given today’s environment, “Lady Bird” and she could bring it home but man, to see Allison Janney, who won a Golden Globe in the same category as disgraced ice skater Tonya Harding’s mom is a game changer for Janney. And dare I say, whatever you felt (or didn’t) about Tonya this flick could very well challenge your thought process on the topic. And don’t rule out Octavia Spencer from “The Shape of Water.” But my decision is final.

•The winner for Best Supporting Actress goes to Allison Janney.



The director of “Lady Bird” could join a handful of women to be named the best in her field.

The nominees for Best Director are:

Jordan Peele, “Get Out”

Paul Thomas Anderson, “Phantom Thread”

Guillermo del Toro, “The Shape of Water”

Greta Gerwig, “Lady Bird”

Christopher Nolan, “Dunkirk”

Although the consensus seems to be that both Guillermo del Toro and Christopher Nolan are long overdue this being the year of powerful women you have to go with Sacramento’s Greta Gerwig for her magnificent “Lady Bird.” Gerwig is just the fifth woman nominated in this category in the 90 years the Oscars have been in existence. She’s also on the cover of the latest edition of *Time* magazine showcasing women’s new emergence in Hollywood in a very male dominated field so c’mon Academy members, don’t be a bunch of tools and give it to Gerwig. Oh, I do find it odd that considering that “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” garnered seven Oscar nominations (including Best Picture) there was nothing for its director, Martin McDonagh. Actor turned director Jordan Peele’s “Get Out” rocked it, but I’m still going with Gerwig. I’ll be voted out but I’m sticking to my guns.

•The winner for Best Director is Greta Gerwig.

The nominees for Best Original Screenplay are:

“Lady Bird”
“Get Out”
“The Shape of Water”
“Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”
“The Big Sick”

Because the average age of the Academy members is close to death and the majority are white guys it’s a long shot that Jordan Peele’s “Get Out” has a chance, but damn, that was one great satirical horror flick wasn’t it? “Lady Bird” has a great shot at it too and Paul Thomas Anderson’s screenplay for “Phantom Thread” is also good. But, I’m still going (with some trepidation not picking “Get Out”) with “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” even though “The Shape of Water” was something Hollywood needs to do more of.

•The Winner for Best Original Screenplay goes to “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”

The nominees for Best Adapted Screenplay are:

“Mudbound”

“Call Me By Your Name”

“The Disaster Artist”

“Molly’s Game”

“Logan”

OK, I’m still reeling from the shock of seeing an “X-Men” movie, “Logan” even being considered! Was that a typo? There’s hope! Seriously though this category is finally going to acknowledge “Call Me By Your Name” hands down. “Mudbound” maybe, but it’s on Netflix and some elitists at the Academy probably look down on their movies streaming online.

•The winner for Best Adapted Screenplay goes to “Call Me By Your Name”

The nominees for Best Cinematography are:

“Blade Runner 2049”

“Dunkirk”

“Darkest Hour”

“Mudbound”

“The Shape of Water”

Like “Logan” I was mildly surprised to see “Blade Runner 2049” make the cut. Being a student of history seeing “Darkest Hours” spend a lot of attention to detail I was also jazzed it too was nominated. Still, seeing a fantasy/fairytale movie that just took me to another place in the way of “The Shape of

Water” sealed it for me.

•The winner for Best Cinematography goes to “The Shape of Water”

The nominees for Best Animated Film are:
“Coco”
“The Boss Baby”
“The Breadwinner”
“Ferdinand”
“Loving Vincent”

If you knew the work that went into making “Loving Vincent” you’d probably want it to win. This animated feature bypasses the usual computer generated techniques instead going old school, painting it all by hand. In fact, it took 65,000 oil-painted frames to make the film! It’s a mind trip. However, at times the interest wanes some and when you watch an animated story that looks more familiar sure enough, your attention stays more focused. That said (and since I didn’t see the other three) I gotta go with Lee Unkrich and Darla K. Anderson’s “Coco” not just for this category but also for Best Original Song too.

•The winner for Best Animated Feature goes to “CoCo”

The nominees for Best Original Score are:

“Star Wars: The Last Jedi”

“Dunkirk”

“Phantom Thread”

“The Shape of Water”

“Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”

Finally! I’m glad the latest “Star Wars” flick got a nod. Unfortunately, the Academy will shy away from a sci-fi flick

yet will go with a fantasy world (hey, “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” could skate that category) feature film in the way of “The Shape of Water” instead. You know who should snag this category? Yes, “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” but sliding toward the water flick.

•The winner for Best Original Score goes to “The Shape of Water.”

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. He has been reviewing movies for years. They may be heard on four other stations each week where he does “A Jew Doing a Movie Review,” and he occasionally writes reviews for Lake Tahoe News.