

Talk to focus on ski touring Greenland

Brennan Lagasse, local writer, skier, and adventure guide is well-known for his global adventures on snow and the popular “State of the Backcountry” blog on Unofficial Networks.

Lagasse has been seeking out adventures on snow for more than 20 years. He is also a backcountry guide with Points North Heli in Cordova, Alaska as well as Doug Stoup’s famous ice ax expeditions.

The Home Brew Series, presented by Alpenglow Sports and Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema, is designed to showcase local athletes who live regular lives and accomplish extraordinary feats in the mountains. The series is designed to be mellow, free, and community-centric for all ages and abilities.

Lagasse’s show is the second installment in a three-part series that runs once per month from November through January. Lagasse will take attendees to Sisimiut, Greenland, an expedition designed to help map ski terrain for proposed future experiences led by local Greenlanders and Ice Axe Expeditions.

While the Dec. 3, 7pm show is free, attendees are encouraged to arrive early for good seating. Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema will serve refreshments and participants are encouraged to remain after the show for additional festivities.

Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema is at 475 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City.

For additional information, call Brendan Madigan at Alpenglow Sports – 530.583.6917.

'Birdman' – a near perfect movie

By Jeremy Miller

Ever wonder what has-been actors do when they've got one last shot to get back on the grid? Wonder no more. "Birdman" is the answer.

Riggan Thomas (Michael Keaton) was once the iconic super-hero Birdman however his choice to steer clear of the fourth installment of the franchise had bigger consequences than he had foreseen. He's under the impression that if he writes/directs/stars in a hit play on Broadway, people will remember who he is and possibly catapult him back to the top. Unfortunately for Riggan his main actor flaked out, his daughter Sam (Emma Stone) is fresh out of rehab, his manager/best friend Jake (Zach Galifianakis) is overworked and overly anxious and his marriage dissolved leaving him in a pretty awkward rebound with one of the play's actresses.

The play is ambitiously titled "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" and its dialogue is equally as ambitious. When the lead actor bails, Riggan calls upon the talent of renowned actor Mike (Edward Norton) who's as arrogant as he is naive. He's probably the best representation of a cliché Broadway actor I've seen in a movie.



The Miller Meter – 4.5 stars

out of 5.



Mike shows up and immediately restores Rigger's faith in his play, as Mike brings some serious talent to the screen. The film takes place over the course of a weekend, the first night being the preview during which everything that could have gone wrong did.

Rigger has moments of panic that unlike most include serious introversion and telekinetic powers.

Two days into the weekend Rigger runs into the most reputable theater critic in New York Tabitha who very overtly announces that she will do everything and anything in her power to destroy his play.

Throughout the weekend dealing with Mike's Prima Donna antics, his manager's haphazard organizational skills and his daughter lurking around making everything super weird, Rigger has to handle one problem after the next ,ultimately climaxing in one of the most beautiful endings in its genre.

Now I am a huge and very loyal fan to Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu. He's given me some of my all-time favorite films such as "Babel", "21 Grams", "Beautiful", and "Amores Perros". I was beyond excited to see him take a stab at comedy, especially being that it's a dark comedy. He set out to give his film the feel that it was filmed in one continuous shot, which is a daunting feat for any filmmaker and he absolutely nailed it.



Alejandro's strong suits are emotionally driven visuals and exploring realistic human emotion and response, sometimes painfully so. The script and story were loads of fun and full of suspense and sadness as well.

There's a scene in which Mike (Norton) takes hold of Riggen's script and transforms it into something watchable. Watching these actors play actors was absolute bliss. The entire cast brought incredible performances that left a lasting impression on me after I left the theater. Keaton gave one of the best performances I have seen all year and wouldn't be surprised if come Oscar season he starts getting a lot of buzz. It was a perfect blend of touching, vulnerable and desperate.

I loved the cinematography, a one-shot movie definitely aided in the story taking place over a weekend. I felt like we watched all of it go down, which was the whole point.

There are many suspicions about what exactly took place at the end, which I loved as well. I love when a movie leaves it up to you to decide what happens. I'll tell you one thing for sure, the movie was a perfect blend of darkly humorous, sad, and touching.

The only reason this thing didn't creep up to a 5 on the meter is because I felt that a few scenes were just a tad drawn out and though the score was good, I felt it could have been more emotionally in tune with the story.

Overall, a great movie, and definitely worth the watch.

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

Historic Nevada locomotive restored to life

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Glenbrook – perhaps the most viewed locomotive in Nevada history – roared to life for the first time in 88 years last week in Carson City.

“This is, indeed, an important day in the annals of railroad preservation, for Nevada and the nation,” said Peter Barton, administrator of the Nevada Division of Museums and History, just before white steam rose above the boiler and black smoke from the stack of the historic engine.

Perhaps best known as the train that graced the front of the Nevada State Museum for four decades – a favorite artifact for thousands of school kids, railroad buffs and visitors – it has been at the Nevada State Railroad Museum since 1982.

The museum’s shop crew – headed by chief maintenance officer Chris DeWitt – spent years restoring the locomotive, piece by piece, to get it back to operational condition and on Nov. 19, the biggest hurdle to date was cleared as the engine was fired for the first time since 1926, passing a key safety inspection.

Read the whole story

Truckee couple repurposes wine bottles

By Cathie Anderson, Sacramento Bee

Expectant parents Amy and Craig Davies made a lifestyle choice four years ago, and it gave birth to a small-but-growing Truckee business called Rescued Wine.

The couple are not vintners. They make and wholesale candles.

The Davies' company name points to the fact that they collect wine bottles discarded by Tahoe-area casinos, restaurants and other businesses and repurpose them as candleholders. They cut the bottles in half and fill the bottoms with a wick and soy wax. Rescued Wine isn't their first foray into candles.

Craig Davies founded Tahoe Candle 14 years ago, when he was still single. He made sales at festivals, craft fairs and other events, and his inventory grew until it overran first his kitchen and then his garage. He eventually leased space for his production in midtown Truckee and opened a retail shop downtown.

[Read the whole story](#)

Hospice provides comfort at

the end of life

By Tina Bruess and Rebecca Phillipsen

At Barton Hospice, we help people with advanced illness live more comfortably and meet the end of life with confidence, grace and dignity. Our clinicians and staff give a voice and provide knowledge about what a person and family needs to know as the person approaches the final chapter of life, with a focus on quality of living and relationships.

Here are some myths and facts unraveled about Hospice care:

Myth: Hospice is only for cancer patients.

Fact: Hospice is available to all terminally ill individuals and their families, regardless of diagnosis.

Myth: Hospice means giving up hope.

Fact: Hospice does not mean “giving up hope,” but can help people and their families revise what they hope for. Hospice focuses on maximizing the quality of life based on individual choices, so that the person may live as fully as possible for as long as possible.

Myth: Hospice is only for elderly individuals.

Fact: Hospice care is for individuals of all ages facing a life-threatening illness.

Myth: Hospice care is only provided by special nurses.

Fact: Barton Hospice care is provided by an interdisciplinary team of professionals – physicians, nurses, home health aides, rehabilitation staff, a medical social worker, a spiritual advisor, bereavement counselors, and volunteers.

Myth: Hospice accelerates the dying process.

Fact: Hospice does nothing to hasten or postpone death. It is simply a service to make patients more comfortable at the end of life. If the patient begins to show signs of recovery, they

can be discharged from hospice and resume their daily life. Choosing hospice care is not a death sentence.

Myth: Hospice services end when the patient dies.

Fact: Barton Hospice provides that patient's family bereavement support for 13 months following the patient's death. This support includes individual counseling, group grief support sessions, as well as our specialized support for children – Camp Sunrise. Barton Hospice also hosts a memorial ceremony annually honoring loved ones lost at Light up a Life. This year's Light up a Life will be Dec. 3 from 6-7pm at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

For more information about Barton Hospice, go online or call 530.543.5581. Barton Hospice will be the recipient of all proceeds from the sixth annual Barton Health Festival of Trees and Lights, Dec. 3-7 at Harrah's Lake Tahoe.

Tina Bruess is Hospice services coordinator for Barton Home Health & Hospice and Rebecca Phillipsen is a medical social worker for Barton Home Health & Hospice.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Owen and Legend

Legend and Owen are brothers who will be 2-years-old on Dec. 2. We know pit bulls are not for everyone, but these two boys are the kind of dogs who will be great pets for just about anyone who would consider adopting them.

They are energetic and playful with each other, but are also very affectionate with people and quickly calm down to be petted. They have beautiful, huge heads and very sweet dispositions. If adopted together, one adoption fee has been sponsored, but they can go to separate homes.

Legend and Owen are neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. They are at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Independent bookstores are more than places to buy books

By David Rosenberg, Slate

Like the independent bookstores he photographs, Bryan David Griffith is a bit of a throwback. He does have an email address, but if you want to reach him on the phone, you have to dial a landline, and most likely track him down through his answering machine. His yearlong project covering more than 20 independent bookstores around the country was photographed with a large format film camera; he travels to each location from his home in Arizona via a makeshift camper in which he sleeps, loads film, and stores his equipment.

“I’m kind of old school,” he said. “I have an engineering degree, so it’s not like I’m a technophobe. I just haven’t adopted technologies that don’t enrich my quality of life.”

One of those things he doesn’t want to see leave are the independent bookstores, a business he sees as a lot more than simply a place to buy books – they’re a meeting place away from the often segregated, homogenous world of social media.

“You’re going to encounter other people who work there or who will be there by chance who might have different experiences that you do,” he said. “I think that’s a healthy thing for our society to interact with and make friends with people who have different ideas than what we do.”

Read the whole story

McConaughey masterful in 'Interstellar'

By Jeremy Miller

In the distant future Earth is struck with famine and drought, and crazy climates. Humanity has transformed from a technologically driven society to one much simpler, working solely for food and survival.

In "Interstellar" Cooper (Mathew McConaughey) is a dying breed; having once been an engineer/pilot for NASA he's firm on his faith in technology. Like most of the human race, despite his past career and education, he's turned farmer. He lives on the farm with his father-in-law Donald (John Lithgow) and his two children Tom (Thimothée Chalamet and Ben Affleck) and Murph (Mackenzie Foy and Jessica Chastain). His eldest kid Tom shows a strong liking to farming and unlike his father finds joy in knowing that's his future.

His daughter Murph, however, shows more of inkling towards science and engineering like her father.



The Miller Metter – 5 stars out of 5.



Some freak occurrences start taking place at the farm and Cooper takes Murph on an expedition that leads them to what will become their future. Desperate for a solution to the human race's undoubted extinction, Cooper agrees to take part in an expedition to a mysterious rip in the space/time continuum in order to find a habitable planet.

Leaving his family is obviously the hardest thing he's ever done, especially since he's parenting solo due to the death of his wife some years prior.

Murph is at the tender age of 10, and knows enough to know that chances are slim he'll come back to her. His boy on the other hand, is prepared to take over the farm and be the man of the house.

Coop has an absolutely heartbreaking farewell with his kids, especially with Murph, and off he goes to NASA to save the world. Heading the operation is Professor Brand (Michael Caine) who's uplifting and calming presence actually makes you feel like this could all work.

Cooper's joined by a small crew, each with their own purpose. We find a healthy taste of sexual tension with one of his co-explorers Brand (Anne Hathaway) whose brilliance is matched by her beauty.



Flying toward the black hole the team is faced with the hardest decisions ever made by man in history, and Cooper must decide between the fate of the human race and seeing his children again.

McConaughey – wow! “Dallas Buyers Club” was a good movie with good performances. He did a great job in that flick. That was nothing compared to what he did here. I have never seen him channel so much intensity, so much emotion and raw realistic power, and he did it flawlessly. This is hands-down the best performance of his entire career.

There were scenes that literally broke my heart, there were scenes that I cheered and some I panicked, and McConaughey’s acting was what drove that home for me. Every once in a while Cooper receives a transmission from his kids and when he does, get ready ... not a dry eye in the joint.

Caine is always phenomenal in these supporting roles. He’s the glue of the emotional web of characters, holding all of it together. Matt Damon pops his head in for a while, he doesn’t disappoint either.

Visually this thing was absolutely perfect. Though it’s set in the distant future, it has a certain calming simplicity to it, nothing over the top or unimaginable. The camera work was literally perfect, every scene looked like a perfect picture and everything director Christopher Nolan did to capture life in space was relayed beautifully.

The film received some heavy criticism for its scientific

accuracy and to those who do I say this – it's a movie, one of the best, so shut up and enjoy yourselves.

Christopher Nolan and Jonathon Nolan penned one of their (if not the) best screenplays to date and behind them they had world-renowned physicist Kip Thorne, so settle down.

I like to think that I understand the basics of black holes and time travel, etc. but this movie took these subjects to a whole different level. No movie that I've seen is equally stunning visually as it is emotionally and story/script-wise.

Another thing that people seemed to complain about was the sound mix. Idiots. When a space ship is crashing do you think that everyone can hear each other clear as day? No. Nolan does that on purpose to maintain realism. Deal with it. Sound mix is fine, you may have to pay a shred more attention here or there but you should be anyways.

The last hour of the film was quite possibly the best last hour of any movie I've seen in longer than I can remember. Brace yourselves to have your hearts and minds ripped out and smashed together for three hours. This was not a mellow experience. When it was over, I was literally speechless.

Nolan proves again why he is absolutely unparalleled when it comes to making big movies. Brilliant movies, movies that make you think and wonder not just explosions and nonsense. The movie has emotional ups and downs and I would not call it a happy movie for the family to see on a Friday night. I went alone; glad I did because I cried probably five times.

Nolan could have catered to what people always want/need/receive in a movie and given a totally unlikely outcome where everyone wins and everything is happy and perfect, but no! He goes with realism and it hurt and it was sad and stressful beyond belief, but the payoff was so much sweeter.

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

Sedans making a move on SUV snow market

By Andy Stonehouse, Ski

Grand and gracious full-size sedans come to mind for a night on the town, not a ski trip up to the slopes. But vehicular times they are a-changin'.

Some of America's most beloved four-door family brands now boast models with the winter-beating traction and agility of all-wheel drive, handling all but the deepest of blizzard-buried roads. And even the Koreans are getting into the game.

The Chrysler 300 – often called “the baby Bentley” – manages to take its imposing street cred into winter's worst when it's equipped with the optional all-wheel-drive package. The result is reliable all-season mobility coupled with fuel savings (up to 27 mpg) in the non-winter months, when the 300 defers to two-wheel-drive mode.

Chrysler does a great job of offering AWD 300s in every flavor. A 370-horsepower Hemi engine? Can do. (There's probably an Eminem-approved ski rack on a designer's computer screen.)

Read the whole story

Study: 'Text neck' becoming an 'epidemic'

By Lindsey Bever, Washington Post

The human head weighs about a dozen pounds. But as the neck bends forward and down, the weight on the cervical spine begins to increase. At a 15-degree angle, this weight is about 27 pounds, at 30 degrees it's 40 pounds, at 45 degrees it's 49 pounds, and at 60 degrees it's 60 pounds.

That's the burden that comes with staring at a smartphone – the way millions do for hours every day, according to research published by Kenneth Hansraj in the National Library of Medicine.

The study will appear next month in *Surgical Technology International*. Over time, researchers say, this poor posture, sometimes called "text neck," can lead to early wear-and-tear on the spine, degeneration and even surgery.

"It is an epidemic or, at least, it's very common," Hansraj, chief of spine surgery at New York Spine Surgery and Rehabilitation Medicine, told the *Washington Post*. "Just look around you, everyone has their heads down."

Can't grasp the significance of 60 pounds? Imagine carrying an 8-year-old around your neck several hours per day.

Read the whole story