

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Mirella

Mirella is a 10-month-old tabby who is quite beautiful. She likes other cats, and especially likes dogs.

Mirella needs a special home. She has a birth defect which has left her with odd eyes. She may go blind as she gets older, but right now she is quite active and loves to play.

Mirella is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online or 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 Lake Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

STMS students express themselves in writing

By Kathryn Reed

Fifteen South Tahoe Middle School students proved their generation could express themselves in more than 140 characters. And they can do so about serious topics.

Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra honored the students last week at the annual Writing Festival awards breakfast. These aren't all overachievers. Some are English learners, other are average students. But what they have in common is they are the top writers out of a school of nearly 800 students.

Most of the first-place winners chose to read their essays. They did so in a room full of Soroptimists, parents, siblings and grandparents.

Eighth-grader Leah Marino was the last to go, but seemed to captivate the audience the most with her essay on the need for schools to be a safe place for students. She advocated for having surveillance cameras in schools to thwart the threat of violence.

"It's only a matter of time before it becomes normal," Marino said of school shootings.

She's not worried about stomping on the privacy of students.

"What privacy is there to invade at school?" Marino asked.

Marino said the cameras would curtail the use of guns, fights and drugs.

Seventh-grader Alexis Andersen wrote about the need to have a

teen curfew.



Alexis Andersen talks about teen curfews while Soroptimist Wendy David listens. Photo/LTN

“Is it better to be at a party or get good grades and have a successful life?” she asked.

Sixth-graders McKenna Beisel and Emma Aaron tackled the topic of homework.

“I strongly believe kids don’t have time for homework,” Beisel said.

She questioned the importance of hours of homework after spending the day in school. Beisel added that homework takes away from time for sports and family.

While Aaron believes in homework, she said there is such thing as too much.

“It’s important teachers give out learning work and not busy work,” Aaron said.

The Writing Festival winners are:

6th Grade High Point Program

- Diana Chavez – first

- Saintychelle Bascao – second

6th Grade Language Arts

- Emma Aaron – first
- Logan Chapman – second
- Anne Edwards – third

7th Grade Read 180 Program

- Danny Guillen – first
- Ervin Espino – second

7th Grade Language Arts:

- Alexis Anderson – first
- Chase Cunningham – second
- Riley Turner – third

8th Grade Read 180 Program

- McKenna Beisel – first
- Faith Brown – second

8th Grade Language Arts

- Leah Marino – first
 - Mia Idzorek – second
 - Bailey Segers – third.
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Academy would be wrong to snub DiCaprio

By Jeremy Miller

It's finally here! The Oscar season draws to a close Sunday night, with many of us sitting and watching Hollywood's elite gather for the 86th Academy Awards.

Of the last five years, this year is by and far the most unpredictable.

This year we have an extremely widespread variety, especially when it comes to the Best Picture category. Nominated films include Spike Jonze's "Her", "12 Years a Slave", "American Hustle", "Gravity" and of course Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street". Paul Greengrass' "Captain Phillips" also snuck into the running despite an early release in the season. When you put a guy like Tom Hanks into an inspirational, action packed powerhouse like this one, you can be sure you'd see it nominated for something, but with heavy hitters in every best picture nominee it's not as if he's got an easy competition.



Leonardo DiCaprio is up for best actor for his performance in "Wolf of Wall Street".

Spike Jonze's "Her", the semi-futuristic love story involving a lonely man and his operating system, has won the heart of just about every critic in America. While it's an underdog compared to the season's blockbusters, I believe it has a strong chance. I also happened to be biased toward the film, as I'm a total sap for quirky indie romance flicks.

The real competition in my opinion is between Alfonso Cuarón's "Gravity", "12 Years a Slave" and "American Hustle". Many think that Scorsese will walk away with a best picture Oscar; however I think that his film "The Wolf of Wall Street" was nothing more than a new-age remake of his classic "Goodfellas".

The Academy Awards also tend to be heavily political. It's as if there's an unspoken agreement that a film can't win based on certain principles of which "Wolf" definitely violates.

"Gravity" is a heavy contender as the film takes place in space and was an absolute masterpiece in terms of aesthetics and special effects. Sandra Bullock definitely takes away some of the power as I feel her performance was lacking, especially compared to co-star and legend George Clooney by her side.

"12 Years a Slave" is definitely a likely winner as its subject content is what the Academy lives for – controversial, powerful, educational, and a thick emotional backbone.

"American Hustle" is also the talk of the town as its edginess and bold plot set it apart from its competition. It's in a category all its own really as a period piece that's packed full of drama, drugs, sex appeal and an all-star cast.

The best actor category is another unknown for those of us trying to predict the winners. The nominees are Christian Bale ("American Hustle"), Chiwetel Ejiofor ("12 Years a Slave"), Bruce Dern ("Nebraska") Matthew McConaughey ("Dallas Buyers Club"), and last but certainly not least, Leonardo DiCaprio for his performance in "Wolf of Wall Street".

I was a huge fan of "Nebraska", and I absolutely love Bruce Dern. I feel he'll get snubbed because the film didn't have nearly as much opportunity for real power as the rest. McConaughey definitely pushed himself to the limits physically for his role, but as far as just all around acting, he delivered but didn't blow me away. Christian Bale is one of my all-time faves, and I have a certain affinity for him as I am a huge Batman fan, so I'd be OK with him taking home the "W". Chiwetel Ejiofor has always been a talented and often overseen actor. His performance warrants an Oscar, but honestly, because the Academy is so political, I almost don't want him to win just based on that.

Now, as many of you may know, DiCaprio has had a rough streak at the Oscars. He's been snubbed more times than anyone in the last 20 years. He was looked over for his most notable roles in "The Departed" and "Blood Diamond" and really I just want the guy to win an Oscar. He's deserved one for years and I think that finally the Academy will take an honest look at his talents and give him the credit that he's deserved for so long.

As far as the Oscar for best actress in a leading role, I believe it is between two of the five contenders. It's between Amy Adams for her role in "Hustle" and Sandra Bullock for "Gravity". As previously stated, I don't believe Bullock really brought the power, but I could see how she'd be nominated out of respect for the torture of shooting a movie that takes place in space. It's not easy to sit in front of a green screen and act as though there's no gravity, being suspended by wires all day long. If it were up to me, and I based it on talent alone, Adams would win it by a long shot.

The last category I'll discuss is for best director. The nominees that have a chance are David O. Russell for "American Hustle", Alfonso Cuarón for "Gravity", and Alexander Payne for "Nebraska". Payne definitely has a shot as almost all of his films bring him home a bucket of awards. His depiction of

loneliness and familial bond was near perfect in his film "Nebraska" and though not a blockbuster with a shut out weekend at the box office, his film was moving and powerful and beautifully depicted. "Hustle" was a good time, sure, but best director material? I don't think so. It wasn't unique in the way its story was told, and the camera work was so-so. Alfonso broke the ceiling of science fiction with newly developed camera techniques and technologies and that right there is worthy of an Oscar.

All that being said who are my official picks for Sunday night?:

- Best Picture – "Her"
- Best Director – Alfonso Cuarón for "Gravity"
- Best Actor in a Leading Role – Leonardo DiCaprio for "Wolf of Wall Street"
- Best Actress in a Leading Role – Amy Adams for "American Hustle"
- Actress in a supporting role – Jennifer Lawrence for "American Hustle"
- Actor in a supporting role – Jonah Hill for "Wolf of Wall Street".

I would like to end this piece by saying that if DiCaprio gets snubbed one more time by the Academy, I am going to flip out and lose faith in the members of the Academy. Though the movie wasn't my favorite, he deserves it, just give him one. Enjoy the Oscars on ABC at 4pm. See you on the red carpet.

For a full list of nominees and any other information on the 86th Academy Awards, go online.

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

Talk, slideshow about summiting Mount Kenya

Tahoe-Truckee local Jen Gurecki will share what it's like to work hard and play hard in Kenya. Her latest adventure – Summit for Our Sisters – took her up Mount Kenya, an ancient, extinct volcano that boasts the second highest peak on the continent of Africa, towering more than 16,000 feet.

With 12 glaciers that are expected to disappear within the next 30 years, Gurecki seized the opportunity to summit and make turns down the Lewis Glacier, while also raising more than \$12,000 to help women start small businesses in Kenya through the nonprofit she founded, Zawadisha.

On Ladies' Night at Tahoe Mountain Sports, Gurecki will talk about her experience and present a slide show. The event is March 5 from 6-8pm.

The shop is at 8331 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach. For more info, call 866.891.9177.

Party planned for South Shore Olympians

South Lake Tahoe, Meyers and Sierra-at-Tahoe will celebrate the South Shore's three Olympians with a party on March 15.

Jamie Anderson and Maddie Bowman, who won gold for

snowboarding slopestyle and freeskiing halfpipe, respectively, and Hannah Teter who placed fourth in snowboarding halfpipe, all live in Meyers and ride for Sierra-at-Tahoe.

A procession will take the Olympians via fire truck from South Tahoe High School, onto Highway 50, past the airport and through Meyers, concluding at Sierra. Community members may line Highway 50 along the route and cheer the Olympian procession as it drives by.

The party will include autograph signings, music, food and drink specials, prizes and a raffle with proceeds to the Sierra Foundation, which grooms future world class athletes.

The athletes will depart from South Tahoe High School at 1pm.

Parking at the resort is expected to be limited, so carpooling is encouraged.

‘Still Life with Iris’ coming to LTCC

“Still Life with Iris” chronicles a young girl’s quest to regain her memory, her past, and with them, her home. It is a fantastical adventure that centers on a young girl’s search for a simple thing: home.

The play comes to Lake Tahoe Community College in March.

Rather than using all adult actors for the production, LTCC Theater Director Susan Boulanger cast five children to play the leading role of Iris and her friends.

There are two sets of real-life parents and children who have

been cast in this production. Maddy Evans, who plays the role of Iris, will share the stage with her brother, Sam, as well as her mother, Diana, who plays the role of Iris' mother. Emery Hansa Beaver will also be onstage with her mom, Carolin.

Performances of Still Life With Iris are March 14, 15, 20, 21 at 7:30pm, with Sunday matinees on March 16 and 23 at 2pm. Tickets are \$10 for general admission, \$7 for seniors and groups of eight or more, and \$5 for students with a valid student ID and children under 13. Tickets may be purchased in advance at LTCC's bookstore starting March 3. The box office will be open for ticket sales one hour prior to performances. For more information, call (530) 541.4660, ext. 207.

Pills may be impacting performance

By Drew Grossman, Outside

Your supplement isn't just worthless – it's detrimental to performance. A recently published study by the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences shows that taking large doses of vitamins C and E may blunt the effects of endurance training by interfering with cellular adaptations to exercise.

The study tracked 54 athletic men and women participating in an endurance training program over an 11-week period. Subjects received either 1,000 milligrams of vitamin C, combined with 235 milligrams of vitamin E, or a placebo pill.

These dosages are consistent with amounts commonly found in

such over-the-counter products as Emergen-C.

Read the whole story

Study: U.S. exercise habits atrocious

By Dominique Mosbergen, Huffington Post

The exercise habits of the average American are appalling, according to a study recently published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings.

For the study, scientists tracked the activity of 2,600 people for two years. They found that obese women average a mere 11 seconds a day of vigorous exercise (that's about an hour a year), while men and women of normal weight exercised vigorously – engaging in fat-burning activities such as jogging or jumping rope – for fewer than two minutes daily, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that adults get at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise or 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every week, in addition to bi-weekly muscle-strengthening activities.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Domingo and Carrerras

Domingo and Carrerras are beautiful black smoke-Tiffany mix brothers, about 9 months old.

Their fur is unusual; long and with many shades of black and gray. They are full of personality and are quite playful. They must be adopted together.

Domingo and Carrerras are neutered, microchipped, 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.

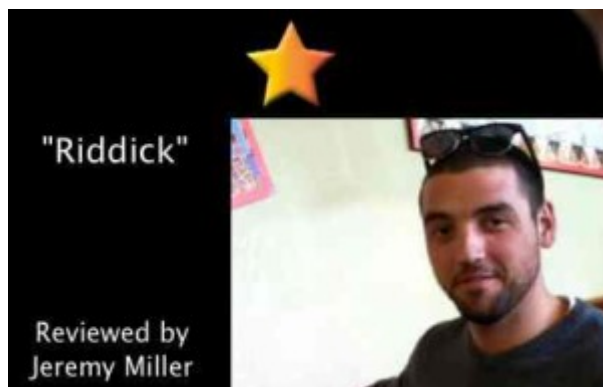
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– Karen Kuentz

Latest 'Riddick' movie a complete disaster



By Jeremy Miller

Well here's the newest installment in the "Riddick" franchise. At the helm of course we have Vin Diesel sided by Katee Sackhoff, Jordi Molla, Matt Nable, and Karl Urban.

After being deserted by his newly adopted Necromonger pals Riddick gets back to his roots and rediscovers his more savage side in order to survive a whole new set of local beasts. After his betrayal, Riddick quickly discovers that the planet he now calls home has threats to be taken a little more seriously than he's used to.

For about half an hour of the film he gets very Bear Grylls on us as he adapts to his new turf and plans his escape. He eventually discovers a small abandoned out-post and with the help of his personally trained dog-type creature he heads out through a gauntlet of your typical sci-fi terribleness. Once he arrives, he fires up an emergency beacon, which essentially puts him on blast to anyone watching.



Before you know it two ships descend upon him. One of them is full of a more modern breed of bloodthirsty mercenaries, and the other carries a crew with an interest that stems beyond monetary gains. From there it's the typical cat and mouse that Riddick plays, taking names along the way in pretty inventive ways. He lures the mercs into his trap, as he typically does, and starts his rampage. His only intention is getting off this rock and heading home to Furya. Obviously the

mercs have different plans.

Now, I was a huge fan of "Pitch Black" and "Chronicles of Riddick" wasn't terrible. I didn't see whatever it was that came in between. Either way, this one had promise. I was entertained for about an hour. As it fumbled toward an ending, I snapped out of my "Riddick is so badass" trance and realized I was watching a bunch of no name actors trying to make it tolerable for us to watch them. It got pretty rough.

No one on screen had anything to offer except for Vin, and even he struggled with delivery.

Now, here's the deal. In science fiction movies I expect a certain level of cheesiness in the script. I even settle for B-list actors who haven't really figured out how to act yet so long as the story is solid and I am entertained visually. This flick tried to hang on to the legacy but came up way short. As the plot developed, every passing minute I lost a little more interest. The last 20 minutes of the flick had me wishing I had a brand spankin' new set of Williams-Sonoma pots and pans I could use to bash my head in with.

The writers completely emasculated Riddick, not just through touchy feely dialogue, but his fight scenes and just overall demeanor. They made him soft as butter. They took a page from

Bryan Singer's "Superman Returns" and decided to take one of the all-time badasses of my generation and give him the ole snip-snip and call it quits.

If you're a fan of the first two, and you want your image of Riddick to remain the same, don't waste your time. It's extremely unfortunate that the last 20 minutes of a film could ruin it this much for me, but it did, and that's on them. Writer-director David Twohy must just be going senile, I don't know where his vision went, but evidently, it's gone.

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