

Vox Musica coming to South Lake Tahoe

Vox Musica: Music Worth Sharing will be at Lake Tahoe Community College on Jan. 31.

Vox Musica, directed by Daniel Paulson, was founded in 2006 in a niche of untapped potential in Sacramento's budding classical music scene. This women's vocal ensemble enjoys the privileged position of nurturing the choral arts by combining outstanding vocal artistry with innovative programming.

Vox Musica is committed to excellence in performance of diverse and challenging choral literature for women's voices and is dedicated to promoting new works, including many premiers and commissioned works.

The 7pm event at Duke Theatre is put on by Tahoe Arts Project.

General admission seating will begin at 6:30pm. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$5 for children and \$10 for seniors, and can be purchased in advance at the visitors centers in California and Nevada. To charge tickets by phone, call (530) 542.3632. Tickets will also be available at the door if not sold out.

Vox Musica will be performing in the schools the week of Jan. 27-31.

Financial independence is

possible

By Rick Rodgers

The New Year is a great time to make positive changes in your financial life. While Americans are good at creating resolutions, we often find them difficult to keep. We resolve to lose weight, save money or end bad habits, but few of us stick with those plans for long.

If your goal is to be financially independent, and it should be, you need to make some changes in 2014 that you'll stick with for the rest of your life.

Here are a few suggestions for small resolutions that can have a significant impact on your financial future:

- Spend less than you earn. If you take home \$1,000 per week, you cannot spend more than \$1,000 per week. That seems simple, but a survey released by Bankrate.com in 2013 found 76 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. Resolve to live on a budget that's below your means. You will never be able to out-earn your capacity to spend, so get your spending under control this year.
- Credit cards are a last resort. Spending less than you earn will cause your savings to grow. The savings account will be there when the car breaks down or the washing machine goes out, so you don't have to turn to credit to handle the emergency. Most Americans are not prepared financially for any type of unexpected financial burden. Your goal should be to have three to six months of living expenses set aside in a liquid account for emergencies.
- Invest for financial independence. This is not the same as saving for retirement. The goal here is to get to the point financially where you no longer have to work to support yourself. Set aside some of the money you've worked for today.

Allow it to accumulate and grow so one day that money will be working for you. Start by controlling spending so you have money to save and invest. Continue the process until the return on your investments exceeds what you earn by working. Financial independence gives you the freedom to choose to continue working, change jobs, work part-time or not at all. It is the ultimate financial goal.

- Pay less in taxes. Anyone looking for a place to cut expenses might start with their own tax return. Too many Americans pay more taxes than they should. Take advantage of tax retirement accounts through work and health savings accounts, if they're offered. There are tax credits available for children, higher education, dependent care and retirement savings. Many of these credits go unclaimed each year. Resolve to minimize your income taxes this year and put the savings into your new financial plan.

- Make a plan. Baseball great Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you're going, you wind up someplace else." This is especially true if you want to be financially independent. You need a short-term financial plan for controlling spending – a budget. You also need a long-term plan that establishes the level of savings you maintain, a plan to get out of debt and an investment plan that will take you to financial independence. The plan becomes your road map. There will be detours along the way; your goals and plan will need adjusting as you progress in life. Keep working at it. Don't be distracted by outside influences you can't control. You don't want to get to the end of your working career only to find you haven't saved enough to maintain your lifestyle and you still have a mortgage on your home.

Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." Financial independence may seem like a thousand miles now, but start the journey in 2014 is taking the first step.

Resolve to save something from every paycheck this year. Keep increasing it until you are saving at least 10 percent of your pay.

Take the first step in 2014.

Rick Rodgers is a certified financial planner and president of Rodgers & Associates.

Bruno Mars coming to Lake Tahoe

The first act for the 2014 Harveys Outdoor Summer Concert Series has been booked – Bruno Mars.

He will be in Stateline Aug. 14 at 7:30pm.

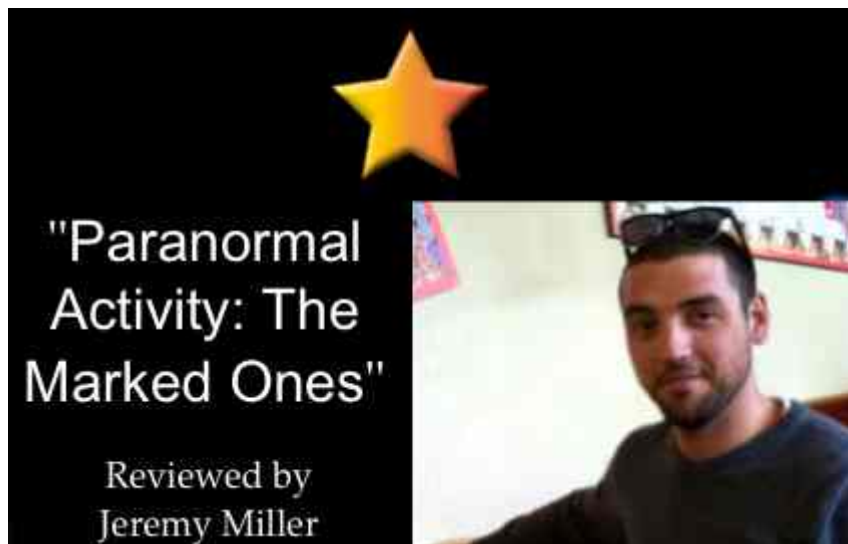
Tickets go on sale via Ticketmaster on Feb. 3. Tickets are \$69.50-\$135.50.

With 130 million singles sold worldwide, the 18-time Grammy Award nominee and winner has made music history more than once, including such milestones as scoring his first five Billboard “Hot 100” chart-toppers faster than any male solo artist since Elvis Presley.

Recently named Billboard magazine’s “2013 Artist of the Year,” Mars is also among the top nominees for the upcoming Grammy Awards.

Bruno Mars will also be playing during the halftime show of the Super Bowl on Feb. 2.

'Paranormal Activity' not worth the money



By Jeremy Miller

"Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones" is the newest installment of the Paranormal Activity franchise. Written and directed by Christopher Landon (who's responsible for Nos. 2, 3, and 4) the story surrounds a trio of teens.

It stars Andrew Jacobs, Jorge Diaz and Gabrielle Walsh.

Warning: This review has spoilers toward the end.

Jesse (Jacobs) and his pals Jorge (Diaz) and Marisol (Walsh) are going about their daily business when out of the blue his downstairs neighbor is murdered. Upon investigation he develops a mark on his arm and some pretty fun new abilities.

Things start to get weirder and weirder, as they typically do when demonic possession is at play, and Jesse's new abilities seem more like a curse than the next YouTube sensation.



The crew decides to take action by investigating downstairs. They discover a super creepy book full of demonic illustrations and witchy nomenclature.

Like every single other horror movie in existence they don't stop there.

Now, I have enjoyed the paranormal flicks thus far. They progressively get worse, as most horror film series do, but I still enjoy them. Where this one went wrong was plot. You come to discover that what's happening is much bigger than some creepy girlfriend getting possessed and killing her boyfriend. It's actually a band of witches who put a spiritual entity into unborn babies and then "harvest" it 18 years later. Their goal? To eventually breed an entire army of spirits all over the world. So, there's that.

Once the crew tied it all together and I discovered that's where this is all going, they lost me completely. These witches eventually kidnap Jesse as his demon is ready to be pulled from his body. Marisol and Jorge call upon the services of some hard-hitting gangsters they know through an old friend. The two gangsters, along with Jesse's friends mob out to the house we saw in the fourth film to seek vengeance and pull Jesse out. They pull up to the house with some firearms

and start looking.

Here is where it really lost me. As they're walking around, all of a sudden there's a witch standing there and boom! Blown away with a shotgun! There's another one? Boom! Hit pointblank and thrown 9 feet back. This guy goes on a shooting spree just blasting witches left and right. Savage.

Now, that's awesome, and I was laughing harder than I have in a while, but this isn't a comedy. Right? Darn. It just gets worse.

Suddenly as Jorge realizes that Jesse is long gone, he runs around like an idiot (passed over a dead gangster's gun) and ends up stumbling through a demonic, time traveling sort of portal and ends up in a house. Whose house? Katie's! Oh, man! We're back in the first one.

Katie comes creeping down the stairs; Jorge scares her and when Micah sees some dude in his house, Katie stabs him, not the obvious choice of the creepy dude who magically appeared in their kitchen.

Role credits, and that's it. Wow. If I really put my head to it, I could probably understand the correlation, but honestly, if they're trying to complicate it that much, it's because they know they don't have a movie. On a hot summer day, I love an ice cold Coke with lime. Problem is I only have one lime wedge. I squeeze and squeeze and I can see that nothing is coming out, but I keep trying. I have to get that Coke with lime. OK, I finally squeeze it to the point you can't even tell that thing was ever a lime wedge, take a sip and ... can't even taste it. Get it? The template for Hollywood moneymaking is perfectly summed up right there. Catch it on the RedBox and until then; avoid creepy witch books, Simon says, and senile old woman painting manikins planning your next birthday.

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

Joan Tapp – 1920-2014

Joan Tapp of South Lake Tahoe died Jan. 4. She was 93.

One of five children, Joan grew up in Ottawa, Canada.



Joan Tapp

She married Eric Tapp in 1940. They relocated to California in 1952, settling in the San Fernando Valley where they raised six children.

For the 20 years she worked for Kaiser Hospital she never missed a day of work.

In 1989, Joan and Eric moved to South Lake Tahoe where their daughter, Vicky, and her family lived. Eric passed away in 1991 and soon after Joan rejoined the workforce. She accepted a temporary position with One Stop Employment that lasted for several years; again never missing a day of work. Joan volunteered at Al Tahoe and Sierra House elementary schools.

Joan was active with the South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Douglas senior centers where she enjoyed dancing, bingo, and delivering Meals on Wheels. On many occasions you could find Joan at her favorite casino playing the slots. She was a member of Saint Theresa Catholic Church and was on the board of some of Lake Tahoe's civic organizations.

Joan is survived by her six children, Michael (Diana), Susan, Elizabeth (Jim), Kathei (DJ), Vicky (Bennie), and Maureen; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; brother Robert, (Vancouver, Canada); and sister Francis (Ottawa, Canada). She is preceded in death by brothers, Maurice, Emile; and sister Girlie, all of Ottawa, Canada.

A celebration of Joan's life will be in the spring, the time of year she loved so dearly.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Joan's name to Barton Hospice, Tahoe Douglas Senior Center, or South Lake Tahoe Senior Center.

'Young Frankenstein' at STHS

The musical comedy "Young Frankenstein" written by Mel Brooks will be at South Tahoe High School's theater Jan. 17-19 and Jan. 24-26.

The Sunday shows are at 2pm, while Friday and Saturday performances are at 7pm.

Tickets are \$15, seniors and school district employees \$10, and students \$5. Tickets are available at the ASB Office at school. (Cash or checks only.) To purchase tickets online a \$1 service fee will be added.

Before the Jan. 25 show there will be a fund-raising dinner for Tahoe Arts & Design Academy.

The \$30 steak and lobster will be prepared by the Romagnolo family in the student union at 5pm. Dinner guests get discounted tickets to the show.

For more info, call (530) 541.4111.

Historic Rainbow Lodge to get new lease on life

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

The historic, storybook Rainbow Lodge, made from native granite and heavy timber, fell on hard times in recent years after its prior owners defaulted on their loan and a court-appointed receiver took over. In late December, the venerable inn near Donner Summit was purchased out of receivership by a family from Rocklin, which plans to reopen it in February and restore some of its century-old grandeur.

The lodge, with its steeply pitched green-metal roof and stone walls, sits on the banks of the South Yuba River, not far from Interstate 80 in Soda Springs. For many years, cross country skiers warmed up there with a drink, a hot meal and a soft bed after long days on the trails. A pair of skis hang over its knotty-pine bar beneath thick wooden rafters. Historic photographs of the snow-covered lodge and trans-Sierra railroad adorn its walls. Threadbare carpet, tattered curtains and dated floral bedspreads detract from its rugged mountain charm. The worn items will be the first to be replaced, Mitchell said.

The 33-room lodge was originally built as a stagecoach stop in the 1800s. It was converted to a tavern in the 1920s and became a popular spot for gambling and fishing, said Craig Mitchell, who bought the lodge with his wife and parents and

will oversee day-to-day operations.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Popeye

Popeye is a big, happy 4-year-old boy. He loves kids and other dogs, and probably weighs around 80 pounds.

Popeye is a Bullmastiff and Boxer mix who will do well in just about any active household.

Popeye is neutered, microchipped, tested for heartworm, and vaccinated.

He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

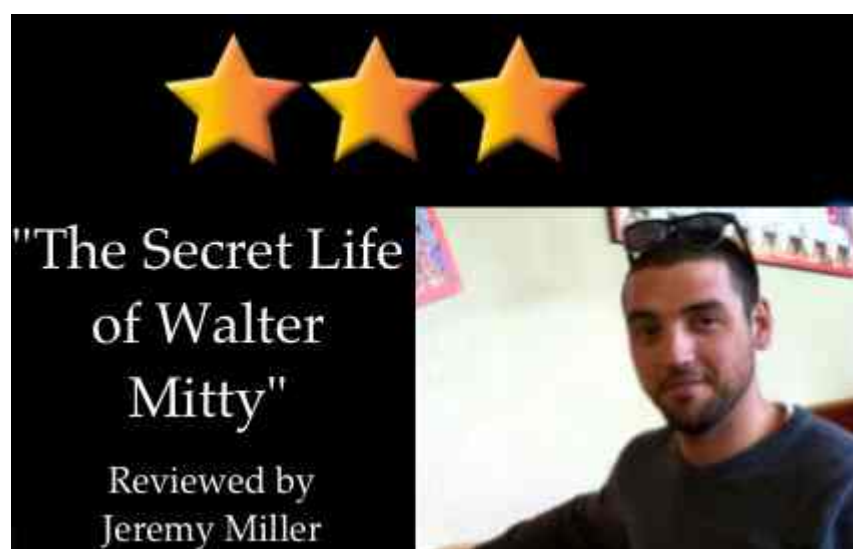
Go online to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

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

Stiller directs, stars in captivating 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty'

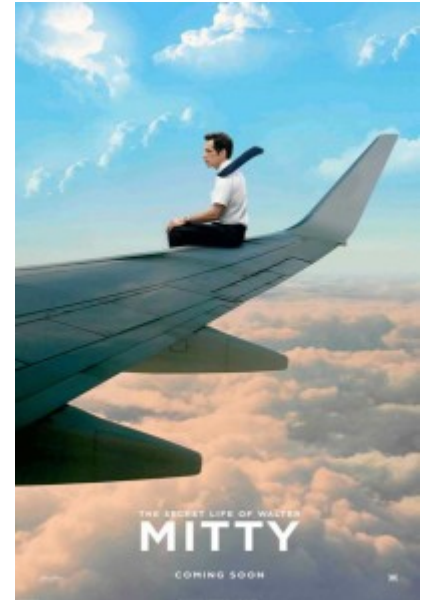


By Jeremy Miller

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" is the newest film from director Ben Stiller who also stars in it. It's based on the short story by James Thurber.

Co-starring we have Kristen Wiig, Jon Daly, Kathryn Hahn, Sean Penn and Adam Scott.

Walter (Stiller) is a lowly photo processor for *Life* magazine. He creates fantastical daydreams to escape the sad life he lives daily. The dreams center around his love interest Cheryl (Wiig) who's his quirky co-worker. In the dreams he plays the hero, sex appeal, and courageous adventurer he wishes he were. He slips off into his daydreams randomly and often during conversation, opening him up to mockery and rather harsh teasing from those around him.



The magazine is shutting its doors to the world of print and begins a switch to digital headed by Ted Hendricks (Scott) the antagonist of the film. He's a ruthless corporate cliché who sets his crosshairs on Walter from the get go.

Walter receives a package from photographer and deified badass Sean O'Connell containing his latest pictures for the magazine. Said to be included is frame 25, the greatest picture Sean has ever taken; the problem is that it's not there.

With heavy pressure from Ted, and a bit of a push from Cheryl, Walter decides to embark on a journey in the real world that is far more climactic and daring than any of his fantasies trying to track down the elusive Sean O'Connell and retrieve the missing frame. He travels across the world, always in the shadow of Sean's footsteps, and along the way, and rather inadvertently, transforms into the hero of his daydreams.

The movie overall was very uplifting and the music matched the emotional tone of the film, which I think really added to its emotional power. The extremely dramatic nature of Walter's fantasies was really something. There was one scene that particularly caught my attention in which Kristen Wiig performs a version of Bowie's Major Tom and the entire scene was absolutely serene. It had me smiling ear to ear and cheering aloud, along with 80 percent of the audience.

I give it a three because there were a few times it almost lost me. I remember thinking, "OK, OK I get it, let's move forward" but like I said, that only happened a few times. Its PG rating should give away that it's very subtle and at times a little fluffy. Ben Stiller really nails it in front of and behind the camera. I also thought it was particularly entertaining how he made himself go from puny, pathetic and repulsively boring to super model status as the film progressed. If I were directing myself, I would too! His performance was extremely charming, and the film overall was a huge achievement visually.

Sean Penn, who shows up for 10 seconds (it seems like) somehow manages to steal the show and absolutely knocked it out of the park. Kristen Wiig really outdid herself as well. You fall in love with her character almost instantly. The sequencing of the film was fluent and smooth. The plot moves exactly as you want to, and where you want it. The ending was an explosive crescendo that left me perfectly satisfied. Minus the few hiccups of temporary boredom, I loved it.

Overall, it was a fun movie and I recommend it to those whose imagination runs wild like mine.

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

'Temporary' Tahoe Humane Society exec retires

By Kathryn Reed

Dawn Armstrong never intended to run a Humane Society, let alone for more than two decades.

The 70-year-old came to South Lake Tahoe not sure of what she wanted to do. Right away she met people associated with the Lake Tahoe Humane Society. She joined the board mostly as a way to help animals and meet people. At the time the board had been looking for an executive director. After about six months and still no leader, Armstrong said she would be willing to take the job for six months.

Armstrong retired Dec. 31 after 22 years as executive director of the humane society.

"I think I'm going to like retirement. My head is spinning and I feel off balance," Armstrong told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Dawn Armstrong with Lexie, Noodles and Goldie.
Photo/Provided

Now she has time to pursue her writing (she has a book she wants to finish), enjoy Tahoe, be more physical and spend more time with her animals instead of worrying so much about all the animals.

The phrase "Keep Tahoe Kind" was created on her watch. After all, it was a corporate marketing background that she brought to the job.

"I thought that's what we were supposed to do," Armstrong said in reference to the Keep Tahoe Kind phrase. She said at the time the Humane Society was the only group to ask the League to Save Lake Tahoe for permission to alter its Keep Tahoe Blue slogan. The former League director said go for it. Armstrong envisioned people having both bumper stickers on their vehicles.

The slogan is about people being kind to each other and animals.

The local chapter was founded in 1967. It originated on the Nevada side before moving to California. At times its offices were in Meyers, while now they are in South Lake Tahoe.

In 1987 the shelter burned to the ground. Many animals died and the insurance company didn't cover the costs to completely rebuild so a fund-raising drive helped with the rebuilding.

Today the Humane Society is largely about educating people and cruelty prevention. Children's programs include the My Reading Buddy program. The society also works with many of the social service groups in town.

Besides the executive director, who is now Niki Congero, there is one other full-time employee. There is a board that oversees everything.

When Armstrong first came on board she was thrown into a controversy with South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County.

“In 1992 we gave up the city and county animal control contract and moved out of the shelter building,” Armstrong said. “We decided after looking at our finances that we would go broke if we kept doing animal control.”

Money was raised for a shelter in what is now Angie’s Signs in Meyers. This meant there were two shelters on the South Shore. It eventually closed in winter 2002. The population was starting to diminish and change to the point where two shelters were not needed.

The society then began focusing more on education.

“What kept me with it, because it’s hard, was the education aspect of it,” Armstrong said of the job. “The wonderful part is the kids. You hope when they grow up they have a new outlet and appreciation for all creatures.”

And while there were times when funding was such an issue that Armstrong had to have other jobs, the Humane Society remained a passion.

Now Armstrong is pursuing personal passions.