

Ritz in Beaver Creek – a world of luxurious comfort

By Susan Wood

BEAVER CREEK – After two hours of chatter hearing “turn,” “exit” and “continue” in the car from Denver, the GPS chimed: “You’ve arrived.”

Upon pulling into the circular driveway of the Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch, the navigation device couldn’t have been more sound in judgment. So, this is how the 1 percent lives.

In its chain of 32 luxury hotels, this Ritz-Carlton located at 8,300 feet and 20 minutes west of Vail on the mountain of Beaver Creek Resort has just captured a gold badge honor as one of the best hotels in the United States, according to *U.S. News and World Report* – and for good reason.



Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch has no problem catering to guests. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The attention to detail, and more specifically to the guest, is unparalleled.

The on-mountain hotel displays that ideal balance of mixing into its national forest surroundings and providing a look of elegance. A stroll into the “Great Room,” i.e. the comfy

lounge area that splits Spago's fine dining room and the Buffalo Bar's casual fare, makes it obvious this luxury mountain getaway was modeled after some of the great park lodges of our time. Think the Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park and the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite. Even the grand, three-story stone fireplace that's the centerpiece of the Great Room may rival the one at the Ahwahnee's – a hard feat to pull off.

Massive timber logs notched to forge giant beams and broad gables provide a perfect backdrop when guests decide to relax and read in the cozy chairs surrounding the fireplace and large picture windows. One night, a man was comfortable enough to fall asleep in a chair right in front of the fireplace despite a sizable after-dinner crowd.

Ordinarily, this hotel is definitely a place for those who want to be isolated. Outside, there's no village. There's no town. In back, there's live music and yet another comfortable seating area around a large fire pit and heat lamps as well as picnic tables next to Daniel's outside bar. This is where bartender Devon Pierce will serve up his own "Red Twist" made with Malibu red rum, coconut liqueur and Sprite – all with a smile. Pierce likes his job and it shows.

"This is the best job here," he said.

Also rounding out the offering on the big patio is an afternoon Champagne station, a heated pool and three hot tubs – oh, and yes, a chairlift steps away from the hotel that whisks skiers up on the slopes of Beaver Creek, where the impeccable and exclusive customer service continues.

The Bachelor Gulch section of Beaver Creek Resort is quiet and seems private. Even on a powder day, one might be the only skier on the run while others pack the busy part of the Colorado ski area. It's a wilderness experience swishing through the aspen trees, private residences and resort cabins

that dot the landscape.

Bachelor Gulch was named for seven bachelors who settled in the area alongside the Ute Indians for prospecting purposes in the 1900s. They stayed for farming and ranching. (Note: the Trapper's Cabin hosted "The Bachelor" television show a few years ago.)

Today, skiers and boarders riding Beaver Creek and staying at the Ritz notice the level of service upon every turn. On a ski day, it starts by trading room slippers for ski boots at the Ritz ski valet and having a worker insist on carrying the skis and poles up to the lift line. Now, that's a true ski-in, ski-out experience – whether for a hotel guest, fractional timeshare participant or whole owner.

Chris Gerlach and his companion from St. Louis, who were riding the Beaver Creek shuttle bus after a food and wine event, liked the Ritz fractional timeshare experience so much he bought a house in the Bachelor Gulch neighborhood.

"I'd go home and not know what to do. There was no one there to say 'my pleasure,' every minute," he quipped about the Ritz guest services.

And to think, this luxury hotel that claims to go to "heaven and Earth and back" to answer the whims of its guests, admits to having room for improvement.

After 10 years as of last November, Beaver Creek's only AAA-rated 5-diamond resort is set in April to undergo a \$15 million remodel that's designed to improve the guest experience.

"The enhancement plans will add a renewed sense of energy to this iconic resort," Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch General Manager Abdullah Vural said in a statement.

Spokeswoman Jen Winkeller told *Lake Tahoe News* the update

would provide “a contemporary perspective to the existing rugged décor while preserving the Ritz-Carlton elegance and comfort.”

For starters, linens in the guest rooms as well as furniture, paintings and other decorative items will be updated. Even without feeling they need upgrading, food and beverage outlets will get a makeover as well.

For now, in-room dining has an extensive list of burgers – from bison and lean elk to vegan and gluten free. On the lobby level, Peet’s coffeehouse provides casual drinks and snacks. The Buffalo sports bar offers middle-of-the-road entrees and appetizers. (Recommended: two people may gnaw on the nachos for two meals.) For fine dining, Spago’s fun Jersey-cow seats at its restaurant and bar are almost as recognizable as its famous chef, Wolfgang Puck – who pops in on occasion to check on staff or for special events. (Recommended: at the bar, the Perfect Martini is off-the-charts refreshing with its mix of Absolut Pears Vodka, pear puree and fresh lime juice.)

And eating and drinking isn’t the only way to unwind here after a full or half day on the slopes.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch comes with a 21,000-square-foot spa and fitness center featuring 19 treatment rooms surrounding a rock-lined grotto designed to emulate the mines of the 1900s that mark the area’s history. The grotto has a large hot tub filled with salt water from a free-flowing waterfall to place sore shoulder and back muscles under. Between the soothing hot water, comfortable seating and dim lighting, it’s easy to fall asleep and lose track of time. That’s why the outside hot tubs provide a refreshing option for those who relish the 10-degree night air in their faces.

Before settling into a guest room, the spa’s steam room and sauna allow for a warm-to-the-bones, melt-into-the-night way of tucking in for the evening.

The 180 guest rooms, divided by their offerings of a valley or mountain view and gas fireplace and/or balcony, have some nice touches without overstating its wooden mountain decor. The fridge is stocked every day with free Colorado-brewed beers and fresh water. Wander from the oversized bathtub or glass-lined shower in a soft, cushy robe and you may never want to leave the room.

But when deciding to meander through the Ritz, guests never know what may come their way. Staffers stand sincere and ready to accommodate. Chestnuts roasting on the fire are handed out one night, mulling wine on another night. (Note: if not for attending Beaver Creek's recent Food and Wine Festival where wine poured day and night, I would have sampled the latter.)

A guest can even order what time housekeeping shows up, as I discovered upon checking out. The request can be "put in your file," front desk staffer Jacki Smith indicated. Smith added how the hotel undergoes changes to improve the guest experience. These include reorganizations to keep the chain solvent, as in the Bachelor Gulch hotel's foreclosure deal.

Nowadays, that's a part of the hospitality world. (Note: The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe underwent the same type of restructuring at about the same time.)

In the meantime, staffers have come to embrace the Ritz lifestyle nearly as much as the guests.

Tim Rowland may argue with Pierce that he has the best job.

Rowland, who operates the hotel shuttle vehicle, has double duty as a caretaker for one of the Ritz's mascot dogs, a St. Bernard named Bachelor. (An ice sculpture of the canine greets guests at the front door.) Bachelor greets guests in person at 11am and 3pm. He's groomed twice a month for the job and racks up "an expensive food bill," Rowland noted.

"It's a good company to work for. They train you well and

there are a lot of perks,” he said, while driving us to Vail to ski one morning.

What’s his favorite perk?

“The hotel discounts,” he said.

Guests may say the same thing this year to mark the hotel’s 10th season. Through March, the Ritz is offering its Ritz Kids recreation program for \$10 an hour. Also for 10 bucks, guests may get a fourth night when they stay for three on the 10th anniversary package deal. There’s also a \$10 apres ski menu at the Buffalo Bar from 3-5pm, and late-night dinner specials at that price after 10pm.

Otherwise, guests coming to stay after March 31 may need to pull out their wallets. After all, it’s the Ritz-Carlton.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder Click on photos to enlarge.

Women’s Fund has money to give out in El Dorado County

Applications are now open for the 2013 grant cycle for Women’s Fund El Dorado.



This philanthropic organization is based on the principal of collective giving and operates under the umbrella of the El Dorado Community Foundation.

Each donor member gives \$200 or more annually, and each has an equal vote in deciding how to distribute the year's grant money. The organization's Grants Committee researches various nonprofit and educational requests to fund specific programs and then determines which will appear on each year's ballot.

This group in its first five years of existence has granted \$200,000 to local nonprofit organizations in El Dorado County.

This year, the donor members of the Women's Fund have chosen the following categories to focus on:

- \$40,000 in Youth Development Grants
- \$10,000 divided three ways to programs and/or services for Women & Children, Senior Support, and Physical Health & Mental Health/

Complete guidelines and application forms are available at the office of the El Dorado Community Foundation, 312 Main St., Placerville. All proposals must be received by noon March 20.

Exchange student embraces life at STHS

By Rebekka Kuehnapfe

Before I came to America I thought: "Tahoe looks amazing" and now I can say: "It really does."

Tahoe is the perfect place to spend a year as an exchange

student. I love to go skiing or watching the sunset at the beach. It almost gives me a feeling of being home. Especially my wonderful host family makes me feel even more welcome. We go out for dinner, on trips or watch movies together. So I can tell, honestly, I have found a second mum, dad and sister.



Rebekka Kuehnapfe is adapting to her home away from home. Photo/Provided

What I like the most about America are school sports. In Germany school and sports are two different things. To do a sport we have to join a club outside of school. So I was fascinated by the school spirit and now I am proud to be a Viking too!

I was on the tennis and the basketball teams. Next season I will do swimming. In basketball I had the most fun. I met a lot of nice people, who love to play sports as much as me. Right now I am thinking about continuing to play in Germany.

Also I have really enjoyed South Tahoe High School, taking fun electives and learning about U.S. history.

It seems like my reasons to come to America: speaking better English, seeing a different culture, making new friends or just growing up, are all becoming true. But it was not always easy. I changed host families after a few months and hope to continue making lasting friendships.

All these experiences are making me stronger. This is a year to look back on and be proud of.

Rebekka Kuehnappel 15, is a sophomore exchange student at South Tahoe High School. She is from Germany.

—

Note:

International Student Exchange is looking for families to host students who will attend South Tahoe, Whittell, Douglas Carson and Dayton high schools. Local education coordinator is Deborah Malone, (775) 443.6874.

Library looking for donations for book sale

The Friends of the Library is accepting donations of books and audio/visual materials (DVD and books on tape-CD only) for the upcoming book sale.

Book Sale



The materials should be in good condition and with a copyright date no earlier than 2000.

Especially needed are recent children's books and children's

DVDs, as well as recent materials in Spanish.

All donations are tax deductible, with receipts available from the front desk. All proceeds from the book sale go to Friends of the Library, and help to support various library programs and events for children and adults.

The Friends of the Library annual Spring Book Sale is March 16 from 10am to 3pm. This year the special offering is the 33-book set of the Complete Works of Charles Dickens, including his private letters. This Red Edition was published in 1895 and is in excellent condition. Similar sets are selling on eBay for in excess of \$1,000, but it can be yours for \$350.

In addition, the sale boasts a large selection of material to choose from. Hardcover and paperback, DVDs, VHS, audio books, and children's books will also be available at bargain prices.

All members of Friends of the Library are invited to a preview of the book sale, from 9-10am. New members are welcome to sign up at the door.

For additional information, call (530) 573.3185.

Longtime chronicler of science news keeping writing at 94

By Maria L. La Ganga, Los Angeles Times

SAN FRANCISCO – David Perlman had two deadlines on his mind as

he elbowed his way through the Exploratorium, cane in one hand, notebook in the other.

As the *San Francisco Chronicle's* veteran science writer, Perlman has been covering the granddaddy of hands-on science museums since it was just a glimmer of an idea in the fertile mind of physicist Frank Oppenheimer, the “uncle of the atom bomb.”

Now, after 43 years in the elegant but drafty Palace of Fine Arts, the museum was getting ready to close before moving to new digs on the Embarcadero, and it was Perlman's job to chronicle the last day in its original home.



David Perlman sits at his desk at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, where he has been a reporter for 63 years. Photo/Peter DaSilva /Los Angeles Times

So the first deadline was his own – 6pm to make the next day's paper with a front-page story. The second belonged to the woman tagging along behind him.

She's “doing a story about the oldest living reporter – me,” Perlman told the amused museum staff. “She has to be done before I die.”

Science and journalism have come a long way since Perlman

picked up a fountain pen and began to write.

He was born in 1918, a decade before the discovery of penicillin. Pluto had yet to be discovered, let alone demoted. The ballpoint pen was invented the year he got his first real newspaper gig, a 1938 summer job covering cops in upstate New York.

Perlman can't remember the name of the now-defunct publication, but he sure can recall his first story, a jailhouse interview with a prostitute that began something like this: Pretty Kitty Kelly sobbed in her cell at Schenectady County Jail last night.

"It was atrocious, but it was the kind of thing you did," said Perlman, who learned his craft in the glory days of the New York tabloids. "That kind of journalism no longer exists."

Some might quibble with Perlman's premise (think coverage of Lindsay Lohan, Casey Anthony, Kim Kardashian), but one thing cannot be denied: It is the rare journalist who has cranked out stories as long and as skillfully as the dapper dean of science writers.

Perlman turned 94 in December, closing out a year in which he wrote 111 stories. Although only 0.2 percent of America's full-time workers are 80 or older, he has no plans to slow down.

He has shrunk a bit in recent years, but the cane is more for his three children's peace of mind than his own safety or mobility. He's about to turn in his outdated flip phone for a newer, smarter model. A Twitter lesson is in the offing. His driver's license is up to date.

After all, he said over a burger at a South of Market dive near *Chronicle* headquarters, "I'm doing exactly what I wanted to do all my life, be a reporter."

Perlman credits his mother for a journalism career that has spanned nearly eight decades and included stints at the *Bismarck Capital* and the European edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* and 63 years at the *Chronicle*.

Sara Perlman took her son to see "The Front Page" – probably the Broadway version, which premiered in 1928, but possibly the 1931 movie. Perlman the nonagenarian can't remember which; Perlman the boy was smitten either way.

The motley crew of Chicago reporters portrayed in the comedy were waiting to view a public hanging. Perlman remembers them as "seedy, catatonic Paul Reveres, full of strange oaths and a touch of childhood. I thought, 'What a romantic characterization.' I wanted to be that."

Shortly thereafter, he started his first newspaper. At summer camp.

He now bears the title of "*Chronicle* science editor." Prizes for science and medical writing named in his honor are awarded each year. But writing about the physical world did not come naturally to the Columbia University graduate.

After six years covering everything from a shoe store opening to the obscenity trial over Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," Perlman broke his leg skiing at Squaw Valley in 1957, an injury that laid him up for months. A good friend gave him a copy of "The Nature of the Universe" by British cosmologist Fred Hoyle.

A detective story would have been more welcome, Perlman recalled thinking, but by the time he had finished the pioneering science tome and was back on his feet, he was itching to find out what astronomers did all night. So he headed up to Mt. Hamilton just east of San Jose, home to the University of California's Lick Observatory and workplace of astronomer George Herbig.

"I said, 'What do you do for a living?'" Perlman recounted.

“And he said, ‘I’m interested in stars that are being born in the Orion nebula.’ I’ve never forgotten that... Stars getting born? It was kind of an epiphany.”

In the 56 years that have followed, Perlman has written about the changing fields of astronomy, anthropology, archaeology and alternative energy. He’s done stories on microbes, meteors, mammoths, mad cow disease, the Milky Way, the missing link.

He has covered disasters natural and man-made (earthquakes, tsunamis, oil spills) and spacecraft of all shapes and sizes (Voyager I and 2, Mariner 9, Galileo, Viking 1 and 2, Pathfinder, Sojourner, Messenger, Phoenix, rovers, Kepler, Hubble).

There was no such thing as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome when Perlman began covering science and medicine; he would go on to write more than 300 stories about the disease that broke his adopted city’s heart.

Somewhere in his messy cubicle at Fifth Street and Mission he keeps a copy of his first AIDS story – among the earliest published, penned before the disease even had a name.

On June 5, 1981, the Centers for Disease Control ran an item about an outbreak of a mysterious lung ailment.

“In the period October 1980-May 1981, 5 young men, all active homosexuals, were treated for biopsy-confirmed *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia at 3 different hospitals in Los Angeles, California,” the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report began. “Two of the patients died.”

Perlman was a regular reader of the report. When he saw the piece, he immediately called Dr. Selma Dritz, assistant director of the communicable disease bureau at the San Francisco health department.

"Hey, is this happening here?" he asked. "Oh, yeah," Dritz said. "We've had maybe five cases too, which have not yet been reported to the MMWR."

The short article Perlman wrote was buried deep inside the June 6 paper: "A mysterious outbreak of a sometimes fatal pneumonia among gay men has occurred in San Francisco and several other major cities, it was revealed yesterday."

He didn't bother to put his byline on it. At the time, he said, the cases were "just a curiosity."

Twenty years later, his anniversary story about the "worst pandemic in modern history" cataloged the damage – "nearly 22 million people are now dead worldwide, and the count grows higher every day; more than 36 million humans are infected with the deadly virus but still alive."

In 2008, Perlman wrote Dritz's obituary.

Perlman has outlived colleagues he has written with, scientists he has written about, Anne, his wife of 61 years, who died in 2002. He is dating again. (In fact, at a recent wedding, he caught the bouquet.)

"I'm so lucky still to be able to do something, to do what I do... I'm still pretty OK," he said. "Anyway, as long as they'll have me [at the *Chronicle*], I'll stick around."

Dr. J. Michael Bishop, chancellor emeritus at UC San Francisco and a winner of the 1989 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine, describes Perlman as "an iconic figure in American science writing." His curiosity is "insatiable," his energy "even at 94 is remarkable." Perlman, he said, "knows how to get to the essence of the science problem and explain that in terms that are clear to the general public."

Perlman's favorite kind of story is equal parts physical adventure, scientific discovery and opportunity to watch

brilliant researchers at work.

He embarked on one such journalistic jaunt in 1977, the only reporter on board when the Galapagos Hydrothermal Expedition discovered deep-sea geysers 8,250 feet below the ocean's surface, 400 miles west of Ecuador.

Scientists on the research vessels Knorr and Lulu were pretty sure the vents would be surrounded by a barren, underwater desert. Instead, they found a wild habitat teeming with crabs, mussels and tall, white-stalked tube worms with bright red tops.

Perlman wrote his stories on a portable Olivetti typewriter. Using a Xerox telecopier scanner, the Knorr's radio operator sent the exclusive dispatches using a single-sideband radio to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Staffers there forwarded them to the *Chronicle* via Western Union.

"They have pinpointed geysers of hot water venting from fissures in fresh lava and sending warm plumes of brine shimmering upward into the near-freezing lower levels of the sea," Perlman wrote in a March 9, 1977, story whose headline boasted "Astounding Undersea Discoveries."

Woods Hole would later call it a "scientific discovery that changed the world."

On a much more recent adventure, Perlman camped in the Ethiopian desert with a team of fossil-hunting paleoanthropologists who would go on to discover and assemble the partial skeleton of a pre-human creature known as *Ardipithecus ramidus* – a.k.a. "Ardi" – who lived 4.4 million years ago.

The researchers were working in the Afar desert, the birthplace of humankind, a two-day drive from Addis Ababa. Daytime temperatures soared to triple digits. At night, tents were zipped against scorpions and venomous snakes.

The team was protected by guards toting AK-47s, Perlman wrote, “against whom or what was never clear – but huge lion paw prints spotted at one lunch site were clear hints of danger.”

He was 88.

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

0. 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 Misérables," 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," Quvenzhané 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 predictable 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 Quvenzhané 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 Misérables,” 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 Misérables" 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 Misérables" 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.

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 previously 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.

Sexual harassment awareness seminar

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Sierra Human Resources Association are offering The Generations and Sexual Harassment: Awareness and Prevention for Business Owners and Managers on Feb. 26, 9-11 a.m.



The event will be at the North Lake Tahoe Visitor Information Center, 100 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City.

This workshop, required as per California's AB1825, will bring your business into compliance regarding sexual harassment awareness in the workplace. SHRA President Laura Moriarty, of Tahoe Training Partners, will present this topic in an engaging and provocative way from the perspective of generations working side-by-side.

Registration is \$39/person for SHRA members, \$49/person for chamber members and \$59/person for non-members. Walk-in registration is \$49/person for SHRA members, \$59/person for chamber members and \$69/person for non-members.

To register and for more information about the workshop, call Laura Moriarty at (530) 573.0224.

Tahoe Snowcial combines sports, social media

Officials from Facebook, GoPro and Nestle will speak at this month's Tahoe Snowcial event.

Dean Eckles is a social scientist, statistician, and member of the Data Science team at Facebook. He investigates how interactive technologies affect human behavior by mediating, amplifying and directing social influence.



Paul Crandell is vice president of marketing for GoPro, the world's leading activity image capture company.

In her role as brand manager for Nestle, Stephanie Naegeli is responsible for the digital communication, social media and branding for the Nescafe and Nesquik product lines.

The speaker roster that already includes:

- Tariq M. Shaukat, Caesars Entertainment
- Patrick Harrington, Targeting@WalmartLabs

- Stanley Hainsworth, Tether
- Christopher Steiner, Aisle50
- Ian Swinson, Salesforce.com
- Chris Heuer, Deloitte Digital.

Called the Sundance for the Facebook generation, Tahoe Snowcial is sponsored by Heavenly Mountain Resort, and Harrah's and Harveys Lake Tahoe.

The event is Feb. 27-March 2. It is designed for any and all technology, social media and snowsports enthusiasts looking to increase their knowledge base and connect with other brands in the changing digital landscape.

Locals are being offered \$100 off the conference only package. Go online and under Register and the Conference Only, use the promo code "Local".

30-year-old billionaire rules the burger world

By Seth Lubove, Bloomberg Business Week

The closely held In-N-Out Burger chain, celebrated by fans for its Double-Double and fresh ingredients, has made third-generation owner and President Lynsi Torres the youngest female billionaire in the U.S. and one of the youngest in the world.

Just 30, Torres oversees the fast-food company her family built from a single hamburger stand into an almost 280-

restaurant empire in five states that's worth about \$1.1 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

"We will remain a private and family-owned company that ensures quality by owning all of our restaurants, growing slowly and not franchising," Torres said in a statement. She has never appeared on an international wealth ranking and generally keeps a low profile. Few in the restaurant industry have met or know much about the hamburger heiress, who has little formal management training and no college degree. "I was even surprised there was a granddaughter," said restaurant consultant Janet Lowder.



Torres' most visible presence has been on the drag racing circuit, where she competes in the National Hot Rod Association's Super Gas and Top Sportsman Division 7 categories. She inherited that passion from her grandfather and her father,

whose 1999 estate included 27 vehicles. Her third husband, Val Torres Jr., is also a race car driver. She popped up in real estate blogs in September after buying a \$17.4 million, 16,600-square-foot mansion in Bradbury, a wealthy Los Angeles County enclave.

When Harry Snyder, who founded In-N-Out with his wife, Esther, in 1948, died in 1976, his son Rich became president, expanding the chain to 93 restaurants from 18. Torres' father, Harry Guy Snyder, took over following Rich Snyder's 1993 death in a plane crash at age 41.

The chain expanded to 140 locations under Guy Snyder, who died at age 48 of a prescription-drug overdose.

Esther Snyder maintained control of the company until her death in 2006 at age 86, which left Torres the sole family

heir. She now controls the company through a trust that gave her half ownership when she turned 30 last year and will give her full control when she turns 35. The company has no other owners, according to an Arizona corporation filing that lists Torres as president and a director.

The Bloomberg valuation for In-N-Out is based on earnings multiples of similar publicly traded companies, including Yum Brands and McDonald's. Carl Van Fleet, the company's vice president of planning and development, said in an email, "In-N-Out Burger is a private company and this valuation of the company is nothing more than speculation based on estimates from people with no knowledge of In-N-Out's financials, which are and always have been private."

Whether the mother of twins will maintain ownership in the chain after she gains full control in five years is uncertain, says John Gordon, founder of restaurant consultant Pacific Management Consulting Group. "I don't know that she has restaurant blood in her veins," he said.

It's at least clear Torres inherited her uncle Rich's religious faith. She's funded a nonprofit called Healing Hearts & Nations that proselytizes in Africa, according to a 2010 Form 990 foundation filing that lists her as chief financial officer.

Former In-N-Out Vice President Richard Boyd alleged in a 2006 California state court filing that Torres attempted to fire him because he was not a "man of God." She denied Boyd's claims in the company's legal rebuttal, which alleged breach of contract through fraud and embezzlement on his part. The litigation was dismissed after a confidential settlement in which Boyd resigned.

In her statement, Torres said the company remains "steadfastly dedicated to the values instilled in us by my grandparents."

If she wants to devote herself to racing full time, though,

she'll have no trouble selling the family business. In-N-Out store openings often resemble product releases from Apple, with customers lined up hours in advance.

"They have done a fantastic job of building and maintaining a kind of cult following," said Bob Goldin, executive vice president of food industry research firm Technomic. "Someone would love to buy them."