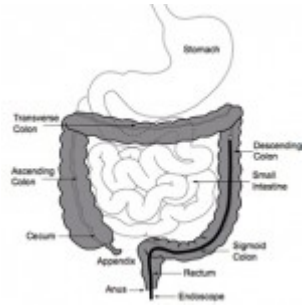
Colonoscopies – a necessary cleansing

By Kathryn Reed

Am I experiencing any pain?

Well, technically no – especially when they are hunger pangs and not hunger pain. And the gagging had stopped. And the baby wipes, as suggested, were not needed.



Oh, the joys of having a colonoscopy.

As Dr. Dan Norman said to me when he walked into the room, "So, we have your Dad to thank for you being here."

Yes, Dad's bout with colon cancer way back when is the reason I have colonoscopies before the recommended age of 50. As much as they are not on my list of Top 10 things I enjoy, it was early detection that saved my Dad and had him with us for years after the last chemo treatment.

As unpleasant as the prep is for this procedure, I will gladly endure all that it entails if it means finding something early that can be treated, instead of the alternative – which could be a nasty death.

My Dad never had symptoms. It was through his regular colonoscopy that a cancerous polyp was detected. Fortunately, I have not had polyps in the two colonoscopies I've had. My sister, Tami, has – all non-cancerous. They are removed immediately.

It’s just one of those exams to add to the list of preventive health care measures – like regular mammograms and pap smears for women, and prostate exams for men.

Yes, it’s hard to sometimes justify the money for these “elective” procedures when finances are tight. But think about what would happen if you were diagnosed with a serious illness in its advanced stage. What would your family do without you? Is it less expensive for the test today, than the treatment down the road?

Nothing about a colonoscopy is fun except for telling stories with other people who have had one. It’s drinking the liquid the night before that is the worst. It’s designed to clean out the intestinal system – and boy does it.

Other than the large bruise and bump from where the IV needle was put in my arm, there is no memory of the actual colonoscopy. I barely remember getting dressed. (The first time I had to ask my driver if I was dressed when she showed up because I didn’t remember how my clothes got back on.)

Anesthetics throw me for a loop, so I was out all night. But I slept knowing, as my sister in the oncology field says, knowing I’m a perfect ——-.

‘Race to Nowhere’ coming to LTCC

“Race to Nowhere” will be shown at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe on Jan. 7-8 at 6:30pm.

The film focuses on the saturation point many students,

teachers, and parents have reached in the high-stakes, high pressure culture of the current educational system. It highlights the mounting pressures and stresses children experience – from elementary school through high school – in an effort to gain admission to top colleges.

The film is rated PG-13 and runs 1 hour, 25 minutes.

The first showing is sold-out. To reserve a seat to the free show, call (775) 750.0742.

Following both showings there will be a discussion led by Heidi Hill Drum of the Center for Collaborative Policy at CSU Sacramento.

History: Recounting how Fallen Leaf Lake chapel came to be

Publisher's note: ***This is reprinted from the July 1973 Lake Tahoe Historical Society newsletter.***

By Marie Walsh

I doubt that I'll ever forget the overwhelming feeling of awe and inspiration that was mine to experience this morning.



Lake Tahoe Historical Society

The moment I stepped from the car, I was immediately caught up in the beauty and serenity of the surroundings – towering pines, colorful wildflowers, lush ferns, chirping birds, and melodic chimes heralding the commencement of the 10 a.m. service at Fallen Leaf Lake's quaint little Chapel of St. Francis of the Mountains.

Today's service, however was not designed for the campers, the tourists, and the townsfolk who would normally flock to the chapel to receive a bit of God 'midst the great outdoors. Rather, it was a service conducted especially for the "Friends of Fallen Leaf" in observance of the chapel's 50th Anniversary.

It was back on the fist Sunday of July, in 1923, that the picturesque chapel first opened its doors. And today, as with every 10 a.m. service on Sundays past, the chapel's wooden benches were filled to capacity, both indoors as well as outdoors neath the shading canopy.

Invitations to some 125 persons had been sent out back in mid-June, in the form of postal cards with the rustic chapel pictured on the front of each card. On the reverse side was a hand-written note inviting the Friends o Fallen Leaf to the brunch and social hour which would be held outdoors following the historic service.

As the congregation began singing the opening hymn, "America,"

I felt that surely this must have been the only hymn ever used to open each service with. Somehow the words … “I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills, my heart with rapture thrills, like that above” … just seemed to so beautifully blend in with the surroundings, and render a deeper meaning to the service.

Charm and tradition were present everywhere I looked … most particularly in the freshly-picked bouquet of wildflowers that decorated the altar and the window boxes. These flowers were just one more little nicety that the W.W. Price’s [of Stanford University who first began to develop the resource of Fallen Leaf Lake back I n 1896], and their daughter, the late Harriet Price Craven, insisted be a part of every service.

Officiating at the historic service was Bishop Edward McNair, a longtime friend of Harriet Price Craven who had not only worked with her in the chapel, but had headed the chapel program for many years.

Bishop McNair told his audience that he would share as much of Fallen Leaf Lakes’ history with us as he possibly could.

He took us back to the year 1896 when, under Mr. Price’s tutelage, Fallen Leaf was first developed as a camp for boys. Camp Agassiz was located at a spot one-half mile below Glen Alpine. By 1906 the area had become so popular that Price began the development of Fallen Leaf Lodge.

Fallen Leaf Lodge has remained in the Price family since its inception, and is today operated by Bill Craven [Harriet Price Craven’s only child] and his wife, Barbara. The Price’s devotion to the tenet that the beauty of Fallen Leaf lies in its natural surroundings is exemplified by the area’s complete lack of commercialism.

Back to 1902, it was the Prices’ dream to have a little chapel at Fallen Leaf. For several years, services were held outdoors in the woods, and around the campfire at the lodge. The

addition of a den to the lodge in 1919 made it possible for this to be the first building used for services. But economics simply made it impossible to begin construction of a chapel until more funds were generated.

The sale of Mrs. Price's booklet, "Legends of Tahoe," greatly helped, but, according to Bishop McNair, money for the chapel was coming in so slowly that other methods of fund raising were needed. It was then that Horace B. Clifton and L.P. Lattimer wrote and illustrated the lovely poetic plaque that still hangs on the outside of the chapel, to the right of the front door.

In the year 1921, Price was finally able to begin building his dream chapel. Two years later, the chapel was completed. And, on the first Sunday of July, in 1923, it was dedicated in living memory to Dr. Price.

In September of 1924, the first christening was conducted in the chapel. In 1926, the first wedding was performed uniting Dixwell Pierce and Katherine Bradley [Mrs. Pierce is one of our Life Members, and is a member of the Gilmore family that discovered and developed Glen Alpine Springs].

Bishop McNair said that if we were to walk around the chapel, "we'd see all kinds of interesting things."

– the cross upon the altar that was used in the temporary chapel of St. Grace Church in San Francisco after the great earthquake of 1906.

– the marble credence table was carved from the only unbroken pillar of the communion rail of the old Stanford Chapel.

– the mosaic head of Christ was a gift from Dr. Charles Gardner of Stanford University who had received it from an artist friend in Florence, Italy.

In addition, many memorials have been placed inside the chapel

honoring pioneers of the area, thereby making the chapel a place of charm, inspiration, and historical significance.

Personally, I felt that the most poignant memorial were the bronze plaques that have been placed on the wall alongside the altar, in honor of Fallen Leaf's three pioneers … W.W. Price [1871-1922], his wife Bertha DeLaguna Price [1870-1933], and their daughter Harriet Price Craven [1904-1973].

Bishop McNair concluded his 'sermon' by saying that "the spiritual heart of the whole of Fallen Leaf is, indeed, this Chapel of St. Francis of the Mountains."

He added that there were three distinct groups of people at the Fallen Leaf today … the Stanford people, the old-timers who have been coming to Fallen Leaf for years, and the tourists. "So, this chapel is truly the unifying force."

Before the closing hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers," was to be sung, Bishop McNair announced that the 50th Anniversary Service would culminate in a most unusual historic event. "We will now conduct the ceremony of Holy Baptism for the great-grandson of the man who, 50 years ago, stood in this exact same spot and officiated at the first service held in the Chapel of St. Francis of the Mountains."

And so, little Michael Evans Doolittle, great-grandson of the Reverend David Evans, was baptized on this, a beautifully-historic Sunday morning.

Audubon exhibit at Nevada

Museum of Art

By Mel Shields, Sacramento Bee

The images are as famous as they are fine and feathery: the flamingo with its neck stretching nearly to the ground, the bald (“white-headed”) eagle in a pose that instantly calls the nation to mind, the white and brown pelicans, and the birds with their prey – both the great white heron and the osprey about to devour fish.

The fame, of course, belongs to the artist, John James Audubon, the focus of a major exhibition up through Feb. 13 at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno. The exhibition consists of 50 of Audubon’s dramatic, life-size watercolor depictions of “The Birds of America” from the first-edition printing of the New York Historical Society Edition.

The works now being premiered at the museum have joined its permanent collection, thanks to a bequest by Reno resident Dana Rose Richardson.

Read the whole story

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20 movies worth renting during the holidays

By Howie Nave

Sometimes a season can be defined not just by the weather and the color of the leaves, but by the movies shown during that time. I have to admit Halloween is one of my favorite times what with the changing of the landscape and the scary movies,

but Christmas-time offers up the best when it comes to family, hope and potential presents.

And then there are the movies. So many to choose from – secular and religious. That's the beauty of Christmas (or if you prefer – holiday) because there's just about every movie for ones particular taste. Who doesn't love the classic black and white movies from the last century? They make me want to transport back in time just to see what the world must have been like back then.



On the comedy front there are tons of movies dealing with family, relationships and sarcastic jabs at all things Christmas. There are also movies that use Christmas as a backdrop even if the holiday isn't the central theme to the story. The first two "Die Hard" movies come to mind, as do the first two "Lethal Weapon" flicks.

I have to say some movies should never be remade purely because the originals were in black and white. Sort of a film purist that way I guess. Remakes of "Miracle on 34th Street" or "It's a Wonderful Life" should remain that way. You can see remakes of those two movies in color, but trust me, when compared to the original versions they pale in comparison. That would be like trying to remake "The Wizard of Oz" or "Gone With the Wind." Why bother?

I've also included some of my favorite animated Christmas specials because they really moved me when I was a kid. Maybe that's why people feel like kids when the holidays come around because it was always such a magical time growing up. The beauty is you get to relive your childhood and if you have kids, experience some of these classics with them. Who knows,

maybe when your kids grow up they'll have the same exact favorites that you had when you were a child.

The beauty of being online is that this time around I can expand my favorites to include more than just 10.

1. "LOVE ACTUALLY," R (2003)

You know a movie is destined to become a classic when the moment you pop it in you are instantly transported to that place in time where you almost become part of the movie and it's an ensemble cast as well. An ensemble cast that works marvelous, too. I love this type of movie especially when the stories intersect with one another and the characters as well. "Love Actually" counts down Christmas from five weeks out showing us the lives of eight couples each going through a different crisis and how they come out on the other end. I think it has one of the best messages about family, friends and co-workers with a message about forgiveness and hope. England is the backdrop for the movie that includes a stellar cast consisting of Bill Nighy, Hugh Grant, Emma Thompson, Alan Richman, Keira Knightly, Liam Neeson and Colin Firth. Writer/director Richard Curtis ("Four Weddings and a Funeral," "Bridget Jones Diary" and "Notting Hill") has an excellent track record when it comes to ensemble pieces and this one is no exception. From its opening narration by Hugh Grant at Heathrow Airport to its conclusion "Love Actually" will stay with you long after the holidays and you'll find yourself watching it again and again as it only gets better with each passing Christmas.

2. "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE," G (1946)

The quintessential Christmas movie that was almost forgotten after it was first released in 1946. The movie received a second chance when television came along, making it easily one of the best holiday movies ever. And just like its main character George Baily (played by Jimmy Stewart) he too gets a

second shot at life being able to see what the world would have been like had he never been born. In a way Bedford Falls could be any small community here in Lake Tahoe because everyone knows who you are and you realize friends and neighbors really do matter when you think the world doesn't care about you. With the guardian angel Clarence (Henry Travers) trying to earn his wings to show George that he has affected others around him "It's a Wonderful Life" will reignite the hope and optimism that was once lost back into your life and make you feel that yes, your life does in fact matter. A nice, feel-good movie with a terrific cast that also includes Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore and a host of other supporting characters like Thomas Mitchell.

3. "MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET," G (1947)

Not to be confused with the 1994 color version starring Richard Attenborough and Elizabeth Perkins, the original black and white version still shines as one of the most heart-warming holiday classics of all time. With a cast that includes Maureen O'Hara, Edmund Gwenn and a very young Natalie Wood, it's up to young lawyer Fred Gailey (John Payne) to convince Susan (Wood) that there indeed is a Santa Claus (Gwenn) and also prove the spirit of Christmas can even change non-believers such as Susan's mom, Doris (O'Hara) in believing in Kris Kringle. It's got something for everyone from working parents to skeptical kids and supporting characters like Thelma Ritter and Gene Lockhart who really fill out the cast nicely.

4. "BAD SANTA," R (2003)

I can't wait until Christmas rolls around just to watch this. Oh sure I can screen it during the other months of the year, but it doesn't have the same impact when it's not Christmas-time. This R- rated comedy is hilarious and I don't think I have ever laughed louder than any Christmas comedy ever made. Maybe because it flies in the face of anything one would

expect over the holidays or that it is so rude and in-your-face. “Bad Santa” believe it or not has a soulful ending and makes even the most cynical, non-believer (Billy Bob Thornton) into a warm character, although it just about costs him his life. Let me warn you in advance if you haven’t seem “Bad Santa,” this movie is not for children or the faint of heart. It is without a doubt the most non-traditional, anti-Christmas movie (but with a heart) I have ever seen, but also the funniest. It was also the last movie for veteran comedic actor John Ritter and sadder too because comedian/actor Bernie Mac passed away just a couple years ago. Thornton plays Willie, an alcoholic, bad-mouthing department store Santa Clause who, along with his foul-mouthed partner in crime dressed as elf Marcus (Tony Cox) robs department stores every Christmas season with great success. Director Terry Zwigoff (“Crumb,” “Ghost World”) really hits the mark with this sarcastic flick and will leave you howling with laughter throughout if you just give it a chance. The movie also stars first-timer to the screen Brett Kelly as the snot-nosed, 8-year-old boy who everyone picks on and really believes that Willie is Santa. Cloris Leachman plays the “spry” grandma. She has few lines, but is so funny visually when she does appear on-screen that you just find yourself bursting out loud with laughter. Laura Graham is also hysterical as the bartender Sue who has a thing for guys dressed in Santa suits.

5. “NATIONAL LAMPOON’S CHRISTMAS VACATION,” PG-13 (1989)

Chevy Chase, star of the “National Lampoon Vacation” movies, will probably be best remembered for this holiday spoof because it continues to be one of the most popular rentals year after year. As head of the Griswold family Clark (Chase) personifies everything that inevitably goes wrong as the Christmas holiday counts down to the big day. Beverly D’Angelo is the patient wife to Clark who loves him regardless of his stressed-out antics when the unexpected in-laws show up. By the way, Randy Quaid will forever be typecast as Cousin Eddie,

right? “Christmas Vacation” has all of the holiday family traditions from finding that elusive perfect Christmas tree, how to spend the Christmas bonus from work and the always hilarious, time-consuming task of creating the perfect Christmas decorated house with enough Christmas lights to light up the entire neighborhood. Speaking of the Christmas bonus check the movie also stars Brian Doyle-Murray as Clark’s Scrooge-like boss. Directed by Jeremiah S. Chechik “Christmas Vacation” is still a family favorite and seems to only gain in popularity with each passing year as it becomes introduced to a whole new generation.

6. “A CHRISTMAS STORY,” G (1983)

One of my all time favorite Christmas movies based on the recollections of humorist Jean Shepherd, “A Christmas Story” epitomizes your basic urban family from the 1940s with Peter Billingsley in the leading role as Ralphie. He pretty much has only one quest in this movie. That is to convince his parents, teachers and Santa that all he wants for Christmas is a Red Ryder air rifle BB gun. Melinda Dillon plays Ralphie’s mom and after watching this timeless classic a bunch of times actually plays every mom I have encountered – she is that good. It’s a great family movie to watch; told in a narrative format (voiced by Jean shepherd himself). I remember the first time I saw this movie I wanted to see if your tongue really would get stuck on a frozen flagpole. Don’t try it kids, it does. “A Christmas Story” is a must-see. And who can forget that immortal line from the movie when Ralphie says he must have that BB gun? “You’ll shoot your eye out with that thing kid!”

7. “A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS,” G (1965)

This holiday classic almost never made it to the small screen, but lucky for us it did and remains an animated classic to this day. “A Charlie Brown Christmas” became an instant classic when it first aired back in 1965 and introduced us all not just to Charles Schultz’s famous cartoon strip, but also

turned me on to jazz via the great Vince Guaraldi who gave us the soundtrack and the "sound" that would forever be immortalized via his music through Lucy and Linus. I always wanted to be Schroeder after hearing him bang out those cool piano pieces. When Charlie Brown complains about the overwhelming materialism that he sees amongst everyone during the Christmas season, Lucy suggests he become director of the school Christmas pageant. Charlie Brown accepts, but it proves to be a frustrating struggle. When an attempt to restore the proper spirit with a forlorn little fir Christmas tree fails, he needs Linus' help to learn what the real meaning of Christmas is. Any sad looking Christmas tree to this day is referred to as a "Charlie Brown Christmas tree."

8. "HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS," G (1965)



Based on the Dr. Seuss classic, this tale is still a delight to watch. Forget the fancy CGI graphics of today. "Grinch" still has that charm as if the book were speaking (and singing) to me. It still evokes fond memories from the first time I saw it on TV. Directed by the legendary Chuck Jones from Warner Bros. fame and narrated by Boris Karloff, this 26-minute animated TV classic about a Christmas-hating Grinch who wants to make everyone as miserable on Christmas as he is still is one of the most original Christmas stories ever. The poor, small-hearted Scrooge learns the true meaning of Christmas through the loving Whos in Whoville. And who can forget that poor dog of his that has to haul that enormous sleigh too wearing those antlers?

9. "HOME ALONE" PG (1990)

Before the less than adequate sequels and Macaulay Culkin's

growing pains, “Home Alone” was one of the late director John Hughe’s best holiday efforts. Nobody at the time thought that this would become such a hit, but apparently Hughes knew otherwise. Culkin plays the resourceful 8-year-old Kevin who wishes his family would just go away and leave him alone right before Christmas. Accidentally, they do, and he’s left to defend for himself against two dopey criminal types (Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern). Billed as “A Family Comedy Without The Family” this family film is both funny and entertaining with a stand out performance by Catherine O’Hara as Kevin’s mother. Hughes may be gone, but his movies will always remain and this one is one of his best to be played again and again every Christmas and also to remind you that if you’re from a large family you can still have a voice.

10. “EVELYN,” PG (2002)

Starring (and produced by) actor Pierce Brosnan, this little holiday movie was like finding a pearl in a sea of muddy water. I only first heard about this movie while living in the Bay Area and the studio had a private screening hoping to get the word out. I became a believer immediately and put the word out whenever I can, especially at this time of year. “Evelyn” centers on a young Irish girl, Evelyn (Sophie Vavasseur) and is set in 1953 Dublin. Based on a true story, the film stars Pierce Brosnan as Desmond Doyle, a poor painter and interior decorator whose wife walks out on him during the holidays leaving him to fend for their three children Maurice, Dermot, and Evelyn. Back then the government mandated children must be placed in the custody of the state and not the father even when their mother abandons them. That law would soon change when lawyers Stephen Rea and Aidan Quinn (with Alan Bates in tow) takes on the establishment. Director Bruce Beresford utilizes the emotional side of the former 007 star and shows us his fatherly side with great results. Also impressive is that of American actress Julianna Margulies as Doyle’s love interest who pulls off a good Irish accent too. It’s a

fantastic holiday flick and one to definitely watch with the entire family.

11. “WHITE CHRISTMAS,” G (1954)

One of the most time honored classic Christmas musicals, “White Christmas” features such stars as Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Vera-Ellen and Rosemary Clooney. Bing croons such Irving Berlin classics as “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas,” Vera-Ellen taps up a storm, Kaye entertains with his usual goofy antics, and this movie is overall a lot of fun. “White Christmas” offers up a lot of comedy, a little bit of romance, and just enough holiday sentiment to go around.

12. “A CHRISTMAS CAROL,” G (1951)

Also known as the “Scrooge” movie, Alastair Sim plays the quintessential Ebenezer Scrooge. It almost appears that all other incarnations were based on Sim’s definition of the character after seeing his performance here. So good in fact that he was almost typecast. Other Scrooges were based on his adaptation, that much is certain. Based on the Dickens’ classic, this adaptation about a miser who doesn’t believe in Christmas until three ghosts come to take him on three voyages still sends chills through me. Vivid with what life was like in 19th-century London, the terrific performances of the cast, including Kathleen Harrison as Mrs. Dilber, make the story come to life. This version of “A Christmas Carol” is the one to see.

13. “THE REF,” R (1994)

In yet another anti-Christmas movie (but again with a heart) Denis Leary plays a cat burglar, abandoned by his partner in the middle of a robbery who forced to take the couple from hell (from Connecticut no less) played by Kevin Spacey and Judy Davis hostage. The couple has been in therapy and he soon realizes that being held hostage is nothing compared to their constant bickering. And if that weren’t bad enough, their in-

laws are coming over for dinner so Denis takes on the role as their marriage counselor playing ref until everyone leaves the house, but who will hold out the longest? Directed by Ted Demme.

14. “JOYEUX NOEL,” PG-13 (2005)

Written and directed by Christian Carion (“The Girl From Paris”), this French movie was nominated for an Oscar under Best Foreign Film and recreates an incredible incident that took place on western front during the first World War. It was Christmas Eve 1914 the first year of the war. German, British, French and Belgian troops who had been slaughtering each other for months initiated a spontaneous and unsanctioned truce, if you will. They put down their guns, sang songs with each other, played soccer, shared rations and posed for photos. They had joint religious services and helped each other bury their dead. Mixing fictional characters with historical fact, “Joyeux Noel” becomes an extraordinary film and shows what can happen instantaneously during the madness of war.

15. “MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS” G (1944)

This is a delightful musical film that tells the story of a turn-of-the-century family in suburban St. Louis in 1903, who live in a stylish Edwardian home at 5135 Kensington Ave. The city, and the well-to-do Smith family (with four beautiful daughters), is on the verge of hosting (and celebrating) the arrival of the spectacular 1904 World’s Fair. The movie first paired director Vincente Minnelli with Judy Garland and was the most popular and financially successful film produced by the legendary Arthur Freed and directed by its star’s future husband, newcomer Minnelli (who married 23-year-old Judy Garland a year later on June 15, 1945 – it was Garland’s second marriage). This classic was Minnelli’s third film (after the all-black musical “Cabin in the Sky” (1943) and the musi-comedy, “I Dood It” (1943) with Red Skelton) and it was Minnelli’s first full-length film in color. After their

marriage, Garland and Minnelli also worked together on “The Clock” (1945) and “The Pirate” (1948).

16. “THE HOLIDAY,” PG-13 (2006)



It can be a fine line between an emotional holiday movie and your classic chick flick. Sometimes men even get to use that as an excuse to get choked up and say it’s because of the holidays. Writer/director Nancy Meyers assembled a good-looking cast that includes Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet as two women (Amanda and Iris, respectively) who find themselves at the end of failed relationships. The fact that it takes place just before Christmas amplifies the loneliness factor to the point where they both swap living locations after meeting online. Amanda lives in Los Angeles and Iris lives in Surrey, England, with things heating up after Iris’ brother, Graham (Jude Law) drops by Iris’ house and meets Amanda. At the other side of the pond Iris meets Miles (Jack Black) a film composer. Kudos to Black for being a very sensitive and calm guy this time around and he steals the picture.

17. “THE BISHOP”S WIFE,” G (1947)

When a movie moves you to tears because of the incredible casting and excellent storyline you can’t help but ask yourself, “Why don’t they make movies like this nowadays?” Exactly. In what I believe to be one of his best roles ever, Cary Grant plays Dudley, the unexpected hero who is more than just angelic. His assignment is to make us as a species be more well, human. He is the answer to the prayers coming from Episcopal Bishop, Henry Brougham (played by a young David Niven) whose plans for an elaborate new cathedral has run into a stumbling block of sorts as is his own personal life. Loretta Young gives a moving performance as she is also touched by an angel. Directed by Emil Newman “The Bishop’s Wife” will warm the hearts of even the toughest cynics out

there especially with Christmas fast approaching.

18. “THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS,” PG (1993)

Classic Tim Burton all the way even though he didn’t direct this one (Henry Selick did). Burton co-wrote and produced this time out. I liked this one the first time I saw it in part because it combined two of my favorite holidays and seasons: Halloween and Christmas. Jack Skellington (voiced by Chris Sarandon and sung by Danny Elfman) is the pumpkin king of Halloween Town. One day he stumbles across Christmas Town and so loves their holiday that he tries to incorporate his world using resident ghouls, bats and goblins with the hope of getting Halloween Town to get on board with Christmas with disastrous results. The stop-action animation is incredible not to mention the voices of Catherine O’Hara, Paul Reubens and Greg Proops.

19. “RUDOLPH, THE RED-NOSED REINDEER,” G (1964)

Another animated television special this was one of the very first shot using the stop-motion animation technique and gave singer Burl Ives his best year ever when it came to producing the now Christmas classics, “A Holly Jolly Christmas” and “Silver and Gold,” two songs he sang as the character Sam the Snowman in this holiday special. He narrates this holiday classic telling us the story about Rudolph who was in effect ousted from playing any reindeers games because of his bright red honker. Rudolph teams up with Hermey, an elf (voiced by Paul Soles) who wants to be a dentist, and Yukon Cornelius (voiced by Larry D. Mann) a prospector. The animated special became an overnight success launching the Burl Ives’ Christmas songs into regular rotation history after this aired.

20. “HOLIDAY INN,” G (1942)

Talk about your incredible chemistry. With music by Irving Berlin sung by (and starring) Bing Crosby and dancing by Fred Astaire, all I can say is “Whoa!” The movie is actually based

on an idea by Irving Berlin about a retired song-and-dance man, Jim Hardy (Bing Crosby), who retires from showbiz to become a gentleman farmer in New England only to get back into the business combining both worlds for special holidays. The film's highlight is Fred Astaire's bang-up performance of July 4th "Let's Say It with Firecrackers." "Holiday Inn" however will probably best be known for introducing the world to the first public performance of the song "White Christmas." Crosby first sang that song on his NBC radio show "The Kraft Music Hall" on Christmas Day 1941. Moviegoers then saw Bing sing the holiday classic seven months later when the movie came out. The song went on to become one of the biggest selling songs in the history of music. This was the first of three films to feature Crosby singing "White Christmas."

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.

Retailers have difficulty keeping Twain's new book in stock

By Gina Kim, Sacramento Bee

Death may be the impartial friend – who treats the soiled and pure, rich and poor, loved and unloved equally – but Mark Twain transcends the grave with his autobiography, which has become the sought-after holiday gift of the year.

Published the stipulated 100 years after his no-longer-an-exaggeration of a death, the "Autobiography of Mark Twain" debuted at No. 2 on the New York Times best-sellers list last

month and has remained in the top 10 since, landing at No. 5 this week.

Surprised retailers haven't been able to keep the dictionary-size tome on their shelves or in warehouses, relegating many would-be purchasers to waiting lists – or inflated prices reaching $750 on Amazon.com.

"We've got 10 orders waiting to be filled," said Stan Forbes, co-owner of the Avid Reader in Sacramento, which expects its supply to be replenished at midmonth. "It's a phenomenon … like the interest in opening a time capsule."

Read the whole story

Snow Gods Ball at Squaw

Squaw Valley Ski Patrol is hosting the 19th annual Snow Gods Ball on Dec. 18. Proceeds from the Snow Gods Ball allow Squaw Valley Ski Patrol to grant full scholarships to community members for Avalanche Level 1 education courses.

Open to the public, the Snow Gods Ball is set to take place at the all new Bar One in Squaw Valley's Olympic House. The doors open at 8pm and the music starts at 9pm. All party goers must be 21 or older.

This year's ball features live music by Truckee Tribe and a host of great raffle prizes. The Snow Gods Ball raffle prizes include a Squaw Valley USA Bronze Season Pass, lift tickets, avalanche gear, Helly Hansen Stoneham Jacket and Pants, Armada skis, Louie Vito Monster Energy custom snowboard, Dragon Goggles, Hestra Gloves, UNR basketball tickets and more.

Tickets to the Snow Gods Ball are $15 in advance and $20 at

the door. Tickets may be purchased in advance by calling Squaw Valley Ski Patrol at (530) 581.7260 or at Porters in Tahoe City and Truckee. More information about this year's celebration is also available by calling (530) 581.7260.

Tahoe Magic to benefit from Vail Resorts charity program

For the 13th consecutive year, the 160-plus retail and rental shops of Specialty Sports Venture (SSV) located throughout Lake Tahoe, the Bay Area, and Colorado will rally customers making purchases in their stores to share the holiday spirit by contributing to a vital cause in the local communities where the shops operate.

Through Vail Resorts Echo, the company's corporate stewardship program, each region identifies its cause or charity and then with the support of all employees, educate shoppers about the organization they are supporting and encourage shoppers to contribute whatever they can. Cashiers simply ask shoppers when finalizing their purchase if they would like to contribute.

Last year, through guest donations and a company match, SSV stores raised $190,000, benefiting 15 organizations.

SSV was purchased by Vail Resorts Inc. last spring and the commitment to Adopt-A-Cause remains intact. This year, Vail Resorts Echo which encompasses three core efforts – environmental stewardship, charitable giving and community engagement, will continue the same matching program, donating 50 cents for every dollar up to $100.

Community regions and the causes they are supporting this year are below:

Heavenly/Lake Tahoe – Tahoe Magic

Any Mountain Sports (Bay Area) – Big City Moutaineers

Aspen – Aspen Challenge

Bicycle Village (Denver) – Bikes for Tykes

Boulder Ski Deals – Toys for Tunes

Breeze Rentals (all Colorado) – Adaptive Adventures

Breckenridge/Keystone/Silverthorne – Summit County Rescue Group

Colorado Ski & Golf (Denver/Colorado Springs) – Children's Hospital

Copper Mountain – Adaptive Adventures

Crested Butte – Hospice of Gunnison

Glenwood Springs Mountain Sports Outlet – Garfield Search and Rescue

Taylor Creek (Aspen) – Roaring Fork Conservancy

Telluride – Angel Baskets

Vail/Beaver Creek – Vail Mountain Rescue

Winter Park – Adaptive Adventures

For more information about Adopt-A-Cause and this year's selected recipients, contact Nicky DeFord of Echo Vail at ndeford@vailresorts.com or (720) 524.5020.

Wine, burgers benefit Heavenly Foundation

The Red Hut Lake Tahoe will host a Burger Night fundraiser to benefit the Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation on Dec. 15 from 5-7:30pm at the Ski Run Boulevard location.

Open exclusively for this event, the Red Hut will be serving up combos that include a burger, homemade chips and a fountain soda for a $10 donation to the foundation. Ice cream treats and shakes will be $1 off. Proceeds will benefit the foundation scholarship fund.

There are 500 tickets for this week's Red Hut Burger Night which will enable the foundation to receive a $5,000 donation. Tickets are available at the foundation building Tuesday and Wednesday from noon to 4pm or by calling (530) 314.9285.

In the spirit of the holidays the Après Wine Co. will also host a Wine Down fundraiser event to support the foundation on the same day from 11am to 10pm. The Après Wine Co. is located in the Ski Run Center across from the Red Hut. Mention you support the foundation when making a purchase; 10 percent of purchases will be donated back to the foundation.

Truckee Rotary looking for

nonprofit to be auctioneer

The Truckee Noon Rotary Club is accepting applications from nonprofit organizations through the end of 2010 to host the live auction at the club's 2011 Crab & Pasta Feed.

Each year a local nonprofit group runs the live auction at the Rotary Club's Crab & Pasta Feed. The organization selected to operate the live auction will receive all proceeds raised from the auction. Previously, groups have earned from $4,000 to $14,000 for their causes. The event will be March 19 at the new Truckee Community Recreation Center. Rotary will provide the venue, the auctioneer, and the bidding audience.

Potential candidates will be asked to present at the Rotary Club of Truckee board of directors meeting on Jan. 4 for final selection. All nonprofit groups interested in being considered must submit a letter to the Rotary Club of Truckee board by Dec. 31.

Letters should include the name of the nonprofit organization, a request for consideration, and an explanation of what the organization does for the community. The letter should also communicate to the board the organization's capability to secure donated items and setup and run the live auction.

If your organization is interested in being considered, please email your letter to Erin Winter at erinmd@gmail.com. For additional information on the Crab & Pasta Feed call Erin at (775) 342.3692 or visit www.truckeerotary.org