Bookstores' relevance weens with e-readers

By Julie Bosman, New York Times

In March 2009, an eternity ago in Silicon Valley, a small team of engineers here was in a big hurry to rethink the future of books. Not the paper-and-ink books that have been around since the days of Gutenberg, the ones that the doomsayers proclaim — with glee or dread — will go the way of vinyl records.

No, the engineers were instead fixated on the forces that are upending the way books are published, sold, bought and read: e-books and e-readers. Working in secret, behind an unmarked door in a former bread bakery, they rushed to build a device that might capture the imagination of readers and maybe even save the book industry.

They had six months to do it.

Running this sprint was, of all companies, Barnes & Noble, the giant that helped put so many independent booksellers out of business and that now finds itself locked in the fight of its life. What its engineers dreamed up was the Nook, a relative e-reader latecomer that has nonetheless become the great e-hope of Barnes & Noble and, in fact, of many in the book business.

Several iterations later, the Nook and, by extension, Barnes & Noble, at times seem the only things standing between traditional book publishers and oblivion.

Inside the great publishing houses — grand names like Macmillan, Penguin and Random House — there is a sense of unease about the long-term fate of Barnes & Noble, the last major bookstore chain standing. First, the megastores squeezed out the small players. (Think of Tom Hanks's Fox & Sons Books

to Meg Ryan's Shop Around the Corner in the 1998 comedy, "You've Got Mail".) Then the chains themselves were gobbled up or driven under, as consumers turned to the Web. B. Dalton Bookseller and Crown Books are long gone. Borders collapsed last year.

No one expects Barnes & Noble to disappear overnight. The worry is that it might slowly wither as more readers embrace e-books. What if all those store shelves vanished, and Barnes & Noble became little more than a cafe and a digital connection point? Such fears came to the fore in early January, when the company projected that it would lose even more money this year than Wall Street had expected. Its share price promptly tumbled 17 percent that day.

Read the whole story

University student dies after fall from Utah chairlift

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

PARK CITY — A young University of Utah student died Sunday after a fall from a ski lift at Canyons Ski Resort.

Resort spokesman Steve Pastorino said the woman was on the High Meadow chair lift when she fell at 11:49am. Despite quick ski patrol response and on-board care during a medical flight to an area hospital, the woman was pronounced dead less than an hour later.

Pastorino said a prior medical condition may have contributed to the woman's fall or death.

Read the whole story

White 5-peats in superpipe with perfect run

By Colin Bane, XGames.com

ASPEN – Shaun White, who rides for Northstar, scored the first perfect score in Winter X Games history in Men's Snowboard SuperPipe finals on Sunday, winning his fifth consecutive gold medal – a first in Snowboard SuperPipe. The victory comes after a left ankle sprain that plagued him earlier in the week forced him to miss the Slopestyle event he had hoped to compete in.

"It's unreal," White said, after scoring 100 out of a possible 100 points on his final run. "I've been wanting that 100 forever. Thank you so much, everybody, tonight. I came here on a mission: I couldn't compete in Slope and it kind of broke me. I didn't know what to do. I was sitting around icing my ankle wondering if I could even ride tonight, and I kind of took out a little bit of that anxiety and anger that I couldn't compete in Slope in the pipe tonight."

White had already sealed up the win in Run 1 after posting a score of 94.00, beating out Swiss rider Iouri Podladtchikov, who came close with a 93.00, and Japan's Ryo Aono. But White was determined to unveil his newest trick, a frontside double cork 1260. He fell attempting the trick in Run 2, then nailed it on the final wall of his victory lap in a run that included a massive 18-foot backside air, a fronstside double cork 1080, a Cab double cork 1080, a frontside stalefish 540, a double McTwist 1260 and the frontside double cork 1260. White is

officially the only person to have ever landed a frontside double cork 1260 in competition.

“I was a little upset with my first front double 12 tonight because it just wasn’t there and I put my face in the wall,” White said. “I was just trying to shake that off and get back up and do it again, and it happened.”

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Redevelopment is the topic of the Jan. 30 5pm South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport. Here is the special meeting agenda.

• Krys Bart, president/CEO of the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority, has earned the American Association of Airport Executives’ Distinguished Service Award.

• How does the world supply food for 9 billion people? Click on this link from the Center for Investigative Reporting to learn more. It’s projected that will be the world’s population in 2050.

• Paradise Real Estate has merged with McCall Realty on the South Shore.

• Here is Caltrans’ Sierra roadwork and El Dorado-Tahoe schedules for this week.

S. Tahoe planners talking dogs, bike paths

Dogs and bike paths are two issues the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission is scheduled to discuss Feb. 9.

Residents in the 900 block of Merced Avenue want to have six dogs at their single-family residence. City law permits no more than four without a special use permit.

While the commission in June approved the bike path on the north side of Highway 50 from El Dorado Beach to Ski Run Boulevard, a revision will be before the commission. Two parcels that were going to be part of California Tahoe Conservancy project could be added to this bike project.

The project plans are available at the city's Engineering Department, 1052 Tata Lane or call Sarah Hussong-Johnson at (530) 542.6033 for more information.

The meeting is at 3pm that Thursday at Lake Tahoe airport.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

RAOK: Helping neighbor be

able to stay warm in the winter

Bob Hart is the latest winner of *Lake Tahoe News'* Random Acts of Kindness promotion.



His ability to teach his neighbor how to split her own wood last summer means the utility bills are much less this winter. Bob will be receiving a gift basket from Heart Rock Herb & Spice Co.

Lake Tahoe News' monthlong kindness promotion is winding down, with two days left. To participate, all you have to do is write about something kind you have seen, something kind that was done to you or something kind that you did. Just post a comment at the end of this story.

Opinion: JPAs need to be more transparent

To the community,

As a member of the City Council, I served on three JPA boards (joint powers authority). They were the recreation JPA created by Measure S; the refuse JPA; and the fire-ambulance JPA.

Recently, the recreation JPA has been through a meat grinder. It has paid for two elections; one failed, one passed. It has been decided that non-taxable Mello-Roos bonds will become taxable bonds which will bail out the contract for the private

operation of the ice rink. The JPA board is comprised of a city rep, a county rep, and a Tahoe Paradise rep. A staff employee handles the books for a wage of $40 per hour.


Bill Crawford

The refuse JPA has a city rep, a Douglas County rep, and an El Dorado County rep. This JPA does not make sense because each member has a separate contract with the South Tahoe Refuse Co. The city's contract has mandatory residential pick up. Douglas County does not have mandatory pick up. El Dorado County pays a different rate than the city for the service.

The ambulance-fire JPA has a board of two, the city fire department and Lake Valley. I was short termer on the JPA. I attended two meetings. At that time, the JPA was six years behind in its audits.

The major problem with the three JPAs is the lack of oversight. Who is accountable? For example, the recreation JPA has never (as far as I know) had an audit. It only has a mandated once a year meeting. Special meetings can be called as was the case in the feuding between advocates for bike trails and ball fields. JPAs are mostly out of sight and out of mind. But they do conduct the public's business. They need to be out of the shadows in full view.

The city should mandate that twice a year each JPA will in open City Council meetings provide full disclosure of their financial operation and financial condition. Such information would help the council decide if the partnerships should continue.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Publisher's note: ***This Aug. 11, 2011, Lake Tahoe News story has information about the recreation JPA audit.***

South Tahoe parceling out fire marshal responsibilities

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe Fire Department is the only agency in the Lake Tahoe Basin without a fire marshal. And there is no plan to have one again anytime soon.

This was the City Council's doing when the five approved the budget last fall that came with reorganization plans in the department. The reorg eliminated the three battalion chief positions, one of whom doubled as fire marshal.

When *Lake Tahoe News* asked the city to provide a job description of the fire marshal position, the response was, "We've never had a fire marshal job description."



The next time there is a

fire in South Lake Tahoe, neither Ray Zachau, right, nor any staff fire marshal will be available for Chief Brian Uhler to call. Photo/LTN file

Even though Ray Zachau has not been fire marshal since the end of 2011, his photo and job are still on the city's website. (Though it's possible the city will take it down when people read this.) No one has the job. That page says the fire marshal's job includes:

• Engine Company Occupancy Inspection Program

• Fire Investigation / Team Leader

• New Construction Inspections

• Occupancy Inspections

• Ordinance Development

• Permitting

• Plan Review

• Revenue Development

• School Curriculum

• State Inspections

• Wildland Fuel Reduction.

"We do not have an officially designated fire marshal," Fire

Chief Brian Uhler said. “There are lower levels of certification that allow people to do business inspections and planned inspections. It doesn’t require a full-blown fire marshal to do those inspections.”

Uhler contends the residents of South Lake Tahoe are safe, that necessary inspections can be done by people in the department who have specific certifications that are recognized by the state, that others will be trained and that negotiations are under way with Lake Valley Fire Protection District to handle the majority of South Tahoe’s fire marshal needs.

Even though the elimination of the fire marshal position has been talked about for months and was known for months after the council voted to do so, a memorandum of understanding has yet to be drawn up between the two agencies.

Once the powers that be work out the language and terms, it will need to be approved by the South Lake Tahoe City Council and the Lake Valley board of directors.

Investigating fires is a large component of a fire marshal’s job – something these lower level certifications don’t empower an ordinary firefighter to do. This is why the MOU between the departments is necessary.

Lake Valley Fire Chief Gareth Harris is that department’s former fire marshal. John Poell, who has been in the fire business for 20 years, is now Lake Valley’s fire marshal.

“It’s occurring frequently in our business, the consolidation of services,” Harris told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The bottom line is we are all in this together to ensure the safety of our community.”

Harris and Uhler are confident an agreement for Lake Valley to provide fire marshal services at a yet-to-be released level for a yet to be released price will be in place in the coming

months.

“There is nothing that says a department has to have a fire marshal,” Daniel Berlant told *Lake Tahoe News*. He works for CalFire – the state fire department that has some jurisdiction over local agencies. “The law says the fire chief will enforce fire and life safety codes. Then the fire chief can appoint a fire marshal or battalion chief to carry out those duties.”

Berlant would not comment on the specifics of South Lake Tahoe Fire Department having one person who has the title of fire chief and police chief (Uhler has no fire experience), a department with no battalion chiefs, and a department with no fire marshal.

Uhler is working with City Manager Tony O’Rourke on how best to structure the department. Uhler has also been getting input from the firefighters’ union.

Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I received a letter (last week) from the association that there is a willingness to hire firefighters rather than a higher level administrative position. Maybe we will have two firefighters instead of an administrator to fill in the shifts that are short now. That negotiation process is under way.”

Full moon yurt dinner

Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Foundation is having a Full Moon Yurt Dinner Fundraiser on Feb. 3.

Douglas Dale of Wolfdale’s will be the chef for the night.

The evening adventure starts with a moonlit ski or snowshoe from the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area to the trailside warming hut on Yellow trail where there will be fireside hot mulled wine and hot chocolate. The terrain is gentle.

Skiers return to the yinner Yurt. When the meal is complete you are within walking distance to your car. Limited tickets are available at $65 per person. This is an evening out for adults. All money raised benefits the Winter Discovery Program at Tahoe Cross Country.

Call (530) 583.5475 to make a reservation for the 6-9pm.

Free hair cuts for people willing to donate locks

Sessions in South Lake Tahoe is offering a free haircut-style to anyone with at least 10 inches of good hair to donate to the Locks of Love Foundation.

The foundation creates wigs for children who have lost their hair because of an illness.

The promotion is going on throughout February. It is a $45 value.

Call (530) 541.2722 to make an appointment.