

Opinion: Learning from Magic Johnson 20 years after HIV announcement

Publisher's note: *Dec. 1 is World AIDS Day.*

By Chris Ballard, Sports Illustrated

For those of us who came of age in the late 1980s and early '90s, it was the closest thing sports had to a JFK moment. We can remember exactly where we were and what we were doing on the afternoon of Nov. 7, 1991. Some of us learned the news secondhand, in a dorm or classroom. Others watched live as Magic Johnson, the five-time NBA champion and the embodiment of class and charisma on a basketball court, stepped to a podium in a black suit, stared down the flashbulbs and said those words: Because of the HIV virus that I have attained ... I will have to retire from the Lakers.

In a moment our world shifted. Superstar athletes were supposed to be indestructible, especially one as transcendent—and wholesome—as Magic. I knew people who cried, as though they'd lost a family member. One friend swore off sex. Another scheduled an HIV test. After all, if Magic could get HIV, anyone could. We could.

And yet, somehow, Magic didn't seem scared. Here he was, essentially handed a death sentence — at the time, HIV was believed to lead to AIDS in nearly 100 percent of cases—and yet he smiled and said, "I plan on going on living for a long time." He neither made excuses nor ran from his diagnosis. Instead, to his everlasting credit, Magic owned the moment, as he'd owned so many over the years. By doing so he elevated the discussion above mere sports or sex or race. Imagine how different it would have been had it been a less prominent or more polarizing athlete up there. How would we have reacted?

How might the conversation have tilted?

Because it was Magic, though, we tried to understand, to empathize. It wasn't easy. When Johnson, despite being retired, was voted by fans to the '92 NBA All-Star Game, other players, including his former Lakers teammates Byron Scott and A.C. Green, said he shouldn't take part. After Magic was named to the Dream Team, the Australian national squad considered boycotting the 1992 Olympics.

It took all of 34 days for Magic to shelve his NBA comeback in the fall of '92, stung by the backlash over the prospect of his playing, including comments by Karl Malone expressing fear that Magic could transmit the virus through physical play. It took another four years for him to try again. When he did return to the Lakers in '96, beefier yet still effective, it was a powerful moment for sports but an even more powerful one for the HIV community. Here was an HIV-positive public figure who wasn't hiding, who hadn't wasted away but was instead competing against the best athletes in the world. Nearly five years after his diagnosis, Magic wasn't merely living with the virus; he was thriving. "It said to our community that you can continue to live your life and do the things you want to do," says Tom Donohue, founding director of Who's Positive, an HIV/AIDS awareness organization. "He's been a huge role model for so many of us who are positive."

Read the whole story

Budget gift: Slew of choices

at Made in Lake Tahoe

For this holiday season, many people suggest shopping locally. The reasons are obvious. But in addition to helping local business owners, why not help local artists as well.



There is a great shop in South Lake Tahoe that offers many gift ideas for under \$20. I'm talking about Made in Lake Tahoe at Ski Run Marina. The shop offers only handmade items, by over 50 local artists and crafters.

For \$20 or less you can get a beautiful pair of handmade sterling silver earrings made by Range of Light Designs which has been in business in South Lake Tahoe since 2005. Or, how about a clip-framed photo of our beautiful lake, taken by local photographer Richard Matera. They make great gifts to take along when visiting out-of-town friends and family.



Other ideas are knitted scarves and hats, ceramic items, photo cards, feather jewelry, calendars and books. All great choices for under \$20.

So have fun shopping, and help your community, too.

– Carol Matera

Concert raises money for Boys & Girls Club

Members of Eric Hellberg's Lake Tahoe Community Rock Ensemble class will be hosting a benefit concert Dec. 9 at 7pm at the Lake Tahoe Community College Duke Theater.



In addition to class members, special guest Coherence will be performing.

All proceeds from the event benefit the programs and services of the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe. Admission is \$5. Ticket and raffle tickets are available from Rock Ensemble members, at the Boys & Girls Club and at the door.

For more information, call (530) 542.0838.

PG&E turning thousands of acres over to public agencies

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

More than 1,500 acres of mountain land in Nevada and Placer counties will be handed over to public agencies as part of Pacific Gas and Electric Co. bankruptcy proceedings begun in 2004.

A part of that total – 64 acres – will go to the Auburn Recreation and Parks District for a new community park. The University of California Center for Forestry, based at UC Berkeley, will take over the remainder: 1,484 acres near Lake Spaulding in Nevada County.

The UC center will also take title to 3,100 acres in Shasta County's Pit River watershed. An adjacent 5,200 acres will go to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, along with 1,800 acres in Shasta County's Tunnel Reservoir area.

The actions, which are preliminary, were approved Nov. 16 by the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, a nonprofit created to conserve 140,000 acres of PG&E watershed lands as part of the utility's bankruptcy settlement. The process of distributing those lands is about halfway complete.

The transfers, totaling more than 11,000 acres, come at no cost to the recipients. But they must commit to manage the land for public benefits such as recreation, water quality, wildlife habitat and research.

Read the whole story

Bookstore pops up in South Lake Tahoe as a bit of a test

By Kathryn Reed

From environmental planner to book publisher to book distributor to bookstore owner. That has been the career path of South Lake Tahoe's Michael Scialfa.

How long he will have the title of bookstore owner remains to be seen. For now, Lake Tahoe Books and Art is what's called a pop-up bookstore. It opened Thanksgiving weekend down the stairs from Sports Ltd. in the Village Center. The lease expires at the end of December, with an option to keep going through February.



South Lake
Tahoe has a
bookstore
again -- for
now. Photo/LTN

The last store devoted to selling new books in South Tahoe – Neighbors Bookstore – went out of business in January 2008. That was before the economy totally tanked and ebooks became mainstream.

Three main things led Scialfa to open the store: believing it would be a worthy community endeavor, a desire to make money, and a way to get feedback on book buying trends that would be useful in his wholesale business.

It was two weeks from the day he pulled the trigger to launch Lake Tahoe Books and Art to the day the open sign was put in the window.

Prior to that mid-November decision, a survey had been sent to a slew of people with about 100 people responding. It gauged reading interests, book buying patterns and shopping interests as related to books.

“One result of the survey strongly indicated there may be local support for a bookstore,” Scialfa said. “The real shock and disappointment was they would not patronize a store two to three miles from their home.”

Considering it is five miles from the Y to Stateline and four miles from Zephyr Cove to Stateline, time will quickly reveal if people will drive for a new book.

Prior to ever sending the survey were numerous conversations between Scialfa, his friends, colleagues and others about whether the South Shore could sustain a bookstore.

Despite the doubt that persists if the right demographic exists to keep a bookstore open, Scialfa is willing to take the gamble for the short term.

What the survey revealed is there are voracious readers in the area. A couple people said their households buy more than 100 books a year. Most buy the real tangible item, as opposed to the digital variety. And several buy both.

Ninety percent of the respondents are year-round Tahoe residents, with the median age being 52, and women outnumbering men 2 to 1.

Background in books

Scialfa has been along for the ride though the ever-changing book business since the mid-1990s. He started as an environmental consultant with a focus on recreation and interpretive planning. Projects included early signage on the Tahoe Rim Trail, work on the Shasta-Trinity Forest, and interpretive planning near Mount Rose.

He was putting together brochures and other promotional material. These were the days before desktop publishing.

What was missing was a book about day hikes in Lake Tahoe. Scialfa and Lyn Barnett partnered to create “Trail Guide to

the Lake Tahoe Basin and Vicinity". More than 3,000 copies sold the first year.

People told them they should do more guides – on fishing, biking and other topics. But Scialfa knew they existed already and told storeowners how to get them. But they ignored his advice.

That's what led Scialfa to go from micro-publisher to distributor. He knew he could figure out a way to get those books into stores. And so, Crystal Range Associates – Outdoor Books and Maps was born. To this day it is his main job.

In the late 1990s he was dealing with a handful of publishing lines. Today he works with more than 300 publishers who represent about 10,000 titles. Most of his accounts are in Northern California, though he goes east to the Rockies.

"We bring to people content knowledge about books and what is appropriate for a geographical location and customer base," Scialfa said.

One change through the years is growing niche markets and where people are buying books.

People traveling like to read about the area (fiction or non-fiction) or they want something by a local author. They are picking up books in visitor centers and gift shops.

Scialfa isn't worried Kindles and other ereaders will wipe out the printed book. His fear is much deeper.

"I think the Internet and Twitter and Facebook are a greater risk than Kindle because people don't know how to read," Scialfa. He fears people are all becoming e.e. cummings – without the prose, without the ability to wordsmith.

Lake Tahoe Books and Art

Selections include fiction, non-fiction, contemporary

bestsellers, literary classics, outdoor and nature guides, travel guides, maps, history, food and cooking, gardening and landscaping, humor, gift books, young adult, children's titles, posters and note cards, plus selected titles in Spanish, and a miscellaneous assortment of other genres.

To ensure the store has the title you want before the end of the month, call (530.542.3245) or email (LakeTahoeBooksandArt@yahoo.com) before Dec. 3.

The store will be increasing its hours after Dec. 10. For now they are Sunday-Monday 11am-6pm, closed Tuesday-Wednesday, Thursday noon-6pm, and Friday-Saturday 11am-7pm.

Special events are planned. All of those details will be posted on the store's Facebook page.

LTVA receives \$10,000 from Nevada tourism officials

By Reno Gazette-Journal

A \$10,000 grant to help the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority develop its sports tourism initiative was among nearly a half-million dollars in rural tourism grants announced Tuesday.

The Nevada Commission on Tourism doled out a total of \$492,711 to 72 applicants for projects that include a smartphone application, a website aimed at attracting geo-cachers and training to promote tourism to Indian tribes. The money, awarded twice a year, is paid to rural nonprofit entities out of state room tax revenues. Applicants are required to provide

a 50-50 match in funds or volunteer hours.

Read the whole story

Arson at defunct casino extinguished quickly

STATELINE – Tahoe Douglas firefighters are looking for the individual who set fire to the cloth hanging on the scaffolding of the old Bill's Casino at Stateline.

A security guard from MontBleu casino used a fire extinguisher to put out the blaze that consumed about a 10 foot by 12 foot piece of cloth.



Someone on
Nov. 30 set
fire to
material
covering
scaffolding in
the Stateline
casino
corridor.
Photo/LTN

Eric Guevin, acting fire marshal with Tahoe Douglas, said his department got the call about 3am Nov. 30 from security at the casino.

The only description of the suspect is: middle aged male wearing a ball cap.

The fire didn't stop renovation of the building from continuing Wednesday.

Anyone with information is asked to call the fire department at (775) 588.3591.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

South Shore recreation JPA board to meet

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority will meet Dec. 5 at 1pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

The board expects to establish the process and schedule for seeking applicants for the Bicycle Trail and Fields Advisory Committees required by Measure R.

The JPA will also consider potential refinancing of the existing JPA bond and the retention of a financial advisor and bond counsel for that process.

‘Sing Christmas’ at Squaw

The Truckee Tahoe Community Chorus of Sierra College, directed by Susan Horst, Chris Nelson and Tom Acord, will present its holiday concert “Sing Christmas” at the Resort at Squaw Creek on Dec. 10 at 7pm and Dec. 11 at 2pm.

“Sing Christmas” is an eclectic array of delightful, celebratory seasonal music, spanning the globe as well as the centuries. A little gospel, Latino, baroque, and contemporary arrangements are part of the mix.

The chorus will be accompanied by a string ensemble comprised of Tahoe and Reno musicians, and will again bring the kids up for the traditional audience sing-a-long.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and may be purchased online, from chorus members, or at the door. Students and children are admitted free. Group rates are also available.

Opinion: Bread & Broth says thank you

To the community,

For most people in America, Thanksgiving was spent with family and friends sharing a huge meal, football games, and a nap.

But for some in our local community, they would have had nothing without the generosity of others to be thankful for.

Every Monday Bread & Broth (a local nonprofit organization) feeds a hot meal to anyone hungry in South Lake Tahoe. The Monday before Thanksgiving was a bit different. They served a traditional turkey dinner complete with all the trimming for those who would normally be alone and hungry.

Volunteers from Bread & Broth prepared for days for the event, which would not be possible without people and businesses in Lake Tahoe community.

Bread & Broth would like to take a moment of thanks for all those who made this holiday possible for so many in need:

Overland Meat

Bonanza Produce

Raley's

Safeway

Barton Mountain Café

Grass Roots

Blaise Carrig, Vail Resorts

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care

Sugar Pine Bakery

Tahoe Daily Tribune

Lake Tahoe News

Local donations from the community.

David Smith, Bread & Broth