



Ann Arbor Independent Booksellers Association

A community rooted in books

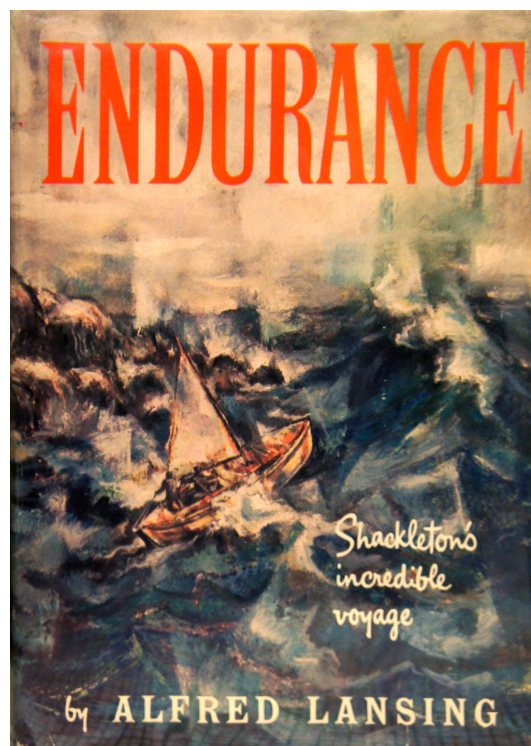
(End of) September Newsletter

Raffle Winner!

Thank you to all the book lovers who stopped by to visit us at the Kerrytown BookFest, and entered the drawing to receive a \$25 gift certificate to your favorite bookstore. Congratulations goes to Grace Hsu, who will receive a gift certificate to Literati. Have fun shopping Grace!

On the Shelf

It was 100 years ago that an extraordinary story of survival took place. Ernest Shackleton led an expedition in an attempt to be the first to cross the Antarctic Continent. Before they could reach the continent itself, their ship, Endurance, was crushed by the ice in the Weddell Sea. With no means to tell the world of their danger, Shackleton led his men to safety with no loss of life. First published in 1959, Alfred Lansing's *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*, gives a highly readable account of perhaps the greatest story of human survival in modern times. Lansing was able to interview surviving members of the expedition which gives his book a degree of intimacy. Endpapers, maps and photographs



taken on the expedition add to the pleasure of reading the book. Be sure to wear your long underwear!

--Jay Platt, owner, West Side Book Shop

A Chance Encounter

On our return from our cottage in New Hampshire this past summer, we stopped at a motel in Binghamton, N.Y. for the night. The car in front of us had Michigan plates on it but I thought nothing of it, just some other weary travelers also on their way home.

After unpacking the car and getting settled in our room, I took our dog, Charlie, for a walk. In the back parking lot, I glanced at a man getting something out of his car. He looked at me and said, "Sue?" I looked at him and said, "Peter?" It was Peter Blackshear who, with his wife Megan, own and manage Bookbound Bookstore in Ann Arbor (along with their dog Chester). I have enjoyed shopping and attending poetry readings there as well as getting to know Peter and Megan who are fun to talk with about books and very helpful in serving their customers.

After expressing our surprise at seeing each other there, I casually asked him where they were traveling from. "Center Sandwich, New Hampshire," he said, and my jaw dropped. Center Sandwich is a tiny town most people have never heard of and the ones who have consider it a treasure. Surrounded by mountains and near a stunning lake, both Peter's family and my husband's each have property there and have been coming to their respective cottages for over 30 years. But they had never met each other there.

Peter and I and then John, my husband, shared histories and laughed about the strange coincidences that bring familiar people together in unfamiliar surroundings.

I was thinking later about this chance meeting and how it was made so much richer because of my time spent with Peter and Megan at their store. The nature of an independent bookstore is such that rapport can develop easily and there is that commitment from the people who work there to get to know you, and you, them. When you meet in unexpected places, you know that you'll see them again and look forward to more conversation, whether on great hikes in the mountains or the latest Ann Patchett novel.

--Sue Budin
Reader/Writer

Do you have a story, past or present, that you would like to share about a bookstore in Ann Arbor? We would love to hear from you! Please email us at rachel@a2books.org

Snapshot of the Past

This piece was originally published in the *Agenda* in December of 1995. As true now as it was then. Support the bookstores who bring so much to our community, so we don't lose any more gems!

Courtesy of oldnews.aadl.org.

Spending Wisely...

Support Your Local Bookstores

By Arwulf Arwulf

If you think there are elements in your community which make it unique, and if in fact you feel at times that without those elements you would probably move away to somewhere cheaper and much quieter, then support those special elements. Lest they disappear altogether. We haven't much to say about it most of the time; the bagel franchise which replaces the beautiful old sandwich shop is always going to happen. There will be many other nights like this, but there will never be another *Drake's*.

Enterprising folk have every right to buy up every inch of the world and pimp anybody that comes along for the sake of a profit. That's the way it is around here. Pimps and pushovers. If we are to exist in a capitalist cartoon, then let's play the fucking game. Right? What little impact we are able to make with our regular investments of small sums of money, this much power we do have. It's an application of very real power. We should be aware of what our money is doing as it fritters away in the hot bake of this famously expensive college metropolis.

Example: If your regular coffee shop treats its workers like shit and they all quit in protest, why then you can channel the inflated cost of your liquid amphetamine beverage habit into a worthier cafe, or at least one which is managed a bit less obnoxiously. Money talks, swears, threatens. Money is a weapon. Use it wisely, and with caution.

Anybody who's operating an independently-owned business in Ann Arbor is sticking their neck out and paddling upstream against enormous odds. The people who maintain bookshops in particular are to be treated with

is in used printed texts. While virtually inaccessible to wheelchairs, **Books In General** and **David's** are each worth the climb to the second floor. Incredible selection in both shops. **Dawn Treader**, too, is about a mile deep. Set aside at least an hour for each location when you visit the bookshops of Ann Arbor.

Kaleidoscope has endless piles of antiques mixed in with the books. It's like being inside the brain of the owner, and at the same time one feels awed as by a museum. **West Side Book Shop** is a sacred temple for the bibliophile. It reminds me of bookshops I visited in Boston some thirty years ago. Friendly and cozy. **Wooden Spoon** contains something like a book seller's cooperative, which is cool. **Aunt Agatha's**, of course, is specifically devoted to mystery, suspense and a bit of horror and the supernatural. All of these places are businesses but they're also very precious archives, run by really wonderful people. Treat them with love and respect.

Afterwords, at 219 S. Main, and **Bargain Books**, 1621 S. State, deal pretty much exclusively in remaindered and discontinued titles. Afterwords should get some kind of award for bringing so many fine books into our hands for so little. All bookworms eventually crawl through these aisles, and few go away empty-handed.

Common Language, at 215 S. Fourth Ave, is considered by many to be one of the best book stores of its kind in the country. Specifically devoted to Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Feminist literature, Common Language is also a gathering place for activists who care about what gets accomplished rather than what the trends are. This is the most progressive bookstore in town.

respect and consideration. Without them our town would be entirely indistinguishable from Southfield. Among the few precious remaining factors which keep people like you and me from moving away and staying away are the books and the people who sell them. (If you're not so bookish, please pardon my presumption.)

I'm referring specifically to the book stores which are peculiar to Ann Arbor. Since word got out that this is among the most intensively literary communities in North America, big companies have erected immense stores, glutted with merchandise, and usually equipped with a cappuccino counter. Books are stacked to the ceilings, and people mill around in a daze, blinking at the wealth. These places are undeniably neat and fun but they can and do obscure the real local bookstores which must be supported if they are to survive.

Used books are the best deal in town. (The only exception I can think of are the discounted long-playing vinyl classical records at PJ's; these may be the best deal in the world). Anyway, here are the shops which deal almost exclusively in used books:

- **Books In General: 332 S. State (upstairs)**
- **David's Books: 622 E. Liberty (upstairs)**
- **Dawn Treader: 514 E. Liberty**
- **Kaleidoscope: 217 S. State**
- **West Side: 113 W. Liberty**
- **Wooden Spoon: 200 N. Fourth Ave**
- **Aunt Agatha's: 213 S. Fourth Ave**

Each of these shops has its own personality, and each represents a stash of texts worth visiting. I've listed them this way so that you can see at a glance how rich downtown Ann Arbor

is the most progressive book shop in town, hands down. It's about ethics and real life. Even the children's book section is refreshingly realistic.

Crazy Wisdom, at 206 N. Fourth Ave, focuses on spirituality and healing. Lots of candles and beautiful sculpture, too. This is a good counterpoint to Common Language; visit both places consecutively to remind yourself that progressive politics and alternative spirituality grow out of the same blood roots.

I've saved **Shaman Drum**, at 313 S. State, for the finish. This is the dream of a fellow who's dared to stock a store with specialized titles; the considerable textbook sales which take place upstairs make it possible for Shaman Drum to carry some profoundly unusual scholarship on the main floor. The American Indian section is in itself a triumphant dedication to meaningful subject matter. The extensive Poetry stash has always blown me away. Who else would take the time and space for Marsden Hartley and Lew Welch? Rent ain't cheap in this stretch of downtown; Shaman Drum is a daring vote of confidence in your integrity as a buying public.

Support this and all of our most unique book shops. Try and curb the impulse to invest in the franchises. They don't need you. Corporatism smells like fascism. It's based on the same hierarchic principles. The littler book shops I've described must have the continued support of Ann Arbor's readers. Otherwise, extinction. I put it bluntly so it gets across and maybe sticks with you awhile. Your money is power. Use it accordingly. Knowledge, too, is power. Invest in books. And buy them from local people who deserve your money.

Food for Thought



*"If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."
Marcus Tullius Cicero*



Copyright © 2016 All rights reserved.
Ann Arbor Independent Booksellers Association

Our mailing address is:

P.O. Box 7176
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Ann Arbor Book Society · P.O. Box 7176 · Ann Arbor, MI 48107 · USA

