

Iconic book store in new hands

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

“For the past six years, I’ve told friends that I wanted to own a bookstore,” Lane Jacobson told *The Nugget* last week.

The bookstore he described in those conversations was very specific: about half the size of the store he managed in North Carolina — Chapel Hill’s highly regarded Flyleaf Books — one that also carried games and toys, and was located in a mountain community that cares about books and art.

Turns out, he was envisioning Paulina Springs Books. As of November 1, he is the owner of that very store.

“This is exactly that,” he said.

Jacobson grew up in a mountain resort community — Mammoth Lakes — did a brief stint at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado, then headed across the country to the University of North Carolina. An English and anthropology major, he took a part-time job at Flyleaf Books. He planned to leave on graduation, but the owners of Flyleaf made him an offer he couldn’t refuse.

“I stayed at Flyleaf and just became a big part of that store and by the time I left became the manager and lead buyer,” he recalled.

Jacobson learned the booksellers’ trade from top to bottom from mentors in the American Booksellers Association, and feels well prepared to take the reins at a shop that has been a Sisters institution for more than 25 years.

He acknowledges that it may seem counterintuitive to take ownership of an independent bookstore in an era of profound upheaval in an industry that has seen so many independents — and big chains — fold in the face of a decline in readership and competition from the online behemoth, Amazon.

Yet Jacobson firmly believes that he is riding a countervailing trend.

“Since 2009, more bookstores have opened than have closed,” he notes.

And the patrons of independent bookstores have become increasingly intentional and passionate in their support, seeking to keep their dollars local.

“People are happy to spend their money locally,” he said.

Bookstores have had to adapt, of course, and they have to deliver on both product and services.

“You kind of find your niche, you settle into it, and you do that very well,” Jacobson said. “You’re not just selling a product; you’re selling an experience.”

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Paulina Springs has been providing a unique experience to Sisters residents and visitors since Diane Campbell and Dick Sandvik founded it in 1992. In 2003, Brad Smith took ownership and put a larger-than-life personal stamp on it until his death from cancer last spring.

Jacobson is acutely aware that there is a profound legacy in the beloved institution he has taken over.



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Lane Jacobson is the new owner of Paulina Springs Books — for 25 years a Sisters institution.

“If I can at the very least maintain what (Brad Smith) had going on here, I will be very happy,” he told *The Nugget*.

Jacobson is a passionate consumer of his own product. Queried about his favorite reads of 2018, he had several ready answers — although he acknowledged that his reading of late has been, by necessity, practical.

“I’ve been reading a lot of business books,” he said with chuckle.

Jacobson lists “They’re There” at the top of his pile of 2018 reads, calling it a “groundbreaking” look at the urban Native American experience in California. He cited “The Overstory,” which he expects to win awards. He

also acknowledged a strong taste for horror fiction.

“On the drive out here, I listened to the audio edition of ‘The Troop’ by Nick Cutter — and it was absolutely horrifying,” he said.

His all-time favorite book? No question there: “Lonesome Dove,” by Larry McMurtry. He named his LLC Hat Creek Book Co. in tribute to Gus McCrae and Woodrow Call’s ramshackle cattle outfit. In keeping with that classic American epic, Jacobson can assure Sisters that there is one thing that Paulina Springs Books will *NOT* offer: They don’t rent pigs.

To follow Paulina Springs’ calendar of author events and other doings, visit www.paulinaspringsbooks.com.

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