

# Independent bookstores thrive despite big chains

Eugene's smaller bookstores rely on community support in order to compete with larger stores such as Barnes & Noble  
By Jan Montry

Oregon Daily Emerald

Seven years ago, Scott Landfield and David Rhodes converted a small warehouse into a bookstore called Tsunami Books, using wood recycled from old high school and college bleachers to create bookshelves.

Today, although they love the work, Landfield realizes that owning a small bookstore in Eugene has its ups and downs.

"At least from our point of view, it is very satisfying," Landfield said, but "we have discovered that in this American world it takes money to make money."

Eugene has a wide variety of small, independently owned bookstores, many of which rely on community support and a love of books to survive.

Peter Ogura, who owns Black Sun Books, said the combination of support makes the business important to him on a personal level.

"I really do care a lot about books," Ogura said. "And I know about books; it's not just a job for me."

According to Landfield and Ogura, the creation of large book chains and "superstores" hasn't affected their business as much as many may think.

Landfield, who deals mostly in used books, said business at Tsunami actually went up 50 percent after Borders opened locally. Landfield attributes this increase to his selection of used books and a community spirit that brings loyal readers to his store.

"We don't think in terms of competition, we think in terms of carving a niche," he said.

Landfield and Ogura added that the community spirit and faithful reader base is what makes independent bookstores worth exploring. The number of independent stores, however, makes it harder to bring in new readers. Owners must worry equally about big chains and other independent stores.

"I only strive to be a neighborhood bookstore," said Ogura. "It's



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Foolsap Books, located at 780 Blair Blvd., has many rare and discontinued titles.

## Area Book Stores

• National book chains

**B. Dalton**  
Gateway Mall  
726-0441

**Barnes & Noble**  
1163 Valley River Dr.  
687-0356

**Borders Books & Music**  
5 Oakway Center  
345-6072

**Waldenbooks**  
Valley River Center  
344-9431

• Local independent stores

**Book Mark**  
856 Olive St.  
484-0512

**Book Fair**  
1409 Oak St.  
343-3033

**Mother Kall's Books**

720 E. 13th Ave.  
343-4864

**Smith Family Bookstore**

768 E. 13th Ave.  
345-1651  
525 Willamette St.  
343-4717

**Tsunami Books**  
2585 Willamette St.  
345-8986

**University of Oregon Bookstore**

895 E. 13th Ave.  
346-4331

**Foolsap Books**  
780 Blair Blvd.  
681-9212

**Black Sun Books**  
2467 Hilyard St.  
484-3777

certainly a challenge for (Eugene's) population. We have many small, independent bookstores."

Marietta Bonaventur, who owns Foolsap Books and deals mostly in used publications, said independent book businesses give a chance for local authors to get published, and they keep consumers' money in Eugene.

Bonaventur, who plays in a band with Tsunami co-owner David Rhodes, also said many independent bookstores around Eugene rely on each other to sustain themselves.

"In this community, it's really cool that the used bookstores have

a dial-up with each other," she said.

Another venue of support for independent bookstores comes from University students and professors. Both Landfield and Ogura said they get a lot of support from the college crowd, especially the creative writing and philosophy departments at the University.

"Mostly it's a decision by people in (those departments) to support independent bookstores," said Ogura. "It's not a big money maker, but it brings new people in."

Contact the reporter at janmontry@dailymerald.com.

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