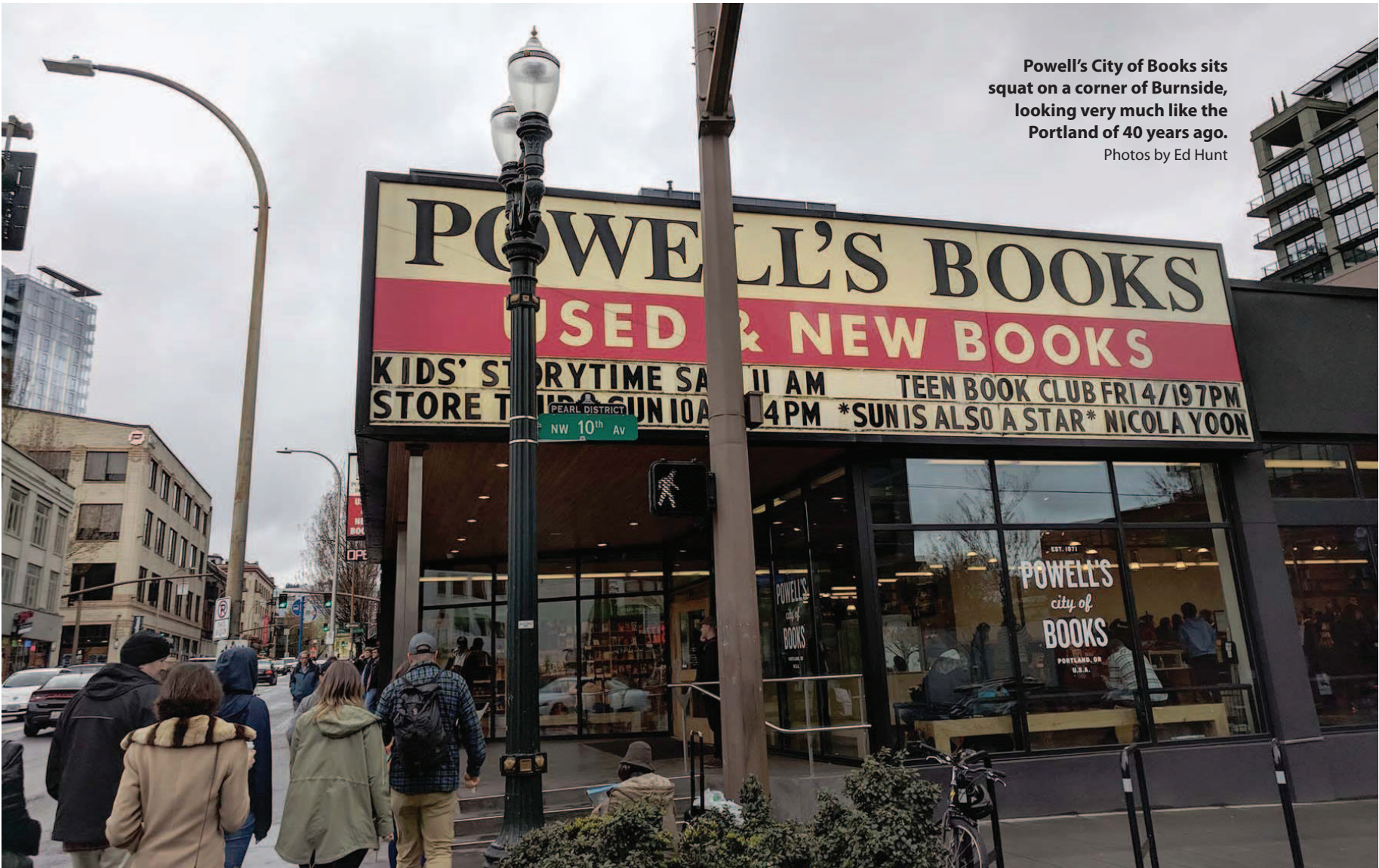


CONTACT US
Erick Bengel | Features Editor
ebengel@dailyastorian.com

WEEKEND BREAK

F FOLLOW US
facebook.com/
DailyAstorian

Getting lost in the CITY OF BOOKS



Powell's City of Books sits
squat on a corner of Burnside,
looking very much like the
Portland of 40 years ago.
Photos by Ed Hunt

By ED HUNT
For The Daily Astorian

A good book can save a life.
A book can make you cry, make you laugh,
make you smile when you need to smile.
A book can make you angry, can make you stand
up and fight for what is right.
A book can make you forget your worries for a few
hours in a day.
It can make you wonder at the
world in a whole new way.
Each year, we try to make a family
pilgrimage to the City of Books.
If that sounds like a magical
adventure to a place just beyond Oz,
well, for a book lover, it is not far off.



Yet, it is an odd destination in its own way.
It doesn't look like a cathedral by any means.
Inside the decor is nondescript and mostly unadorned.
You can still see auto dealership and warehouse roots
of the building under the glossy layers of industrial
paint.
Yet it is one of the biggest attractions for those vis-
iting Portland.
I have stood in the Long Room at Trinity College in
Dublin, Ireland. That place is a monument to ancient
knowledge where neat rows of leather bound tomes
reach skyward toward perfect carved wooden arches
and marble busts of philosophers looking down from
each row of books — some so old they are hand illus-
trated on the skin of lambs.
Powell's City of Books is different, yet a worthy
destination nonetheless.
It sits squat on a corner of Burnside, looking
very much like the Portland of 40 years ago. From
the street it does not look like much, but oh, if you
love books, you must go. Inside is room after room
of functional unassuming shelves packed with new
and used books. The largest independent bookstore
in the world.
We started our annual trips years ago when the
girls were little.
It began as a part of our Shamrock Run routine
each March — something to look forward to, to get
us through the darkest days of winter. Books are a
necessity in the Pacific Northwest. In the rain months
— and there are many — books are essential for men-
tal survival, the perfect companions as misting gray
swirls outside.
Books keep the mind warm and active when it is
dark outside.
We are blessed in this area to have the wonder-
ful and modern Timberland Library system where
you can order books online and have it delivered to
your local library. Our daughters have grown up in
the cozy little Naselle branch and it was there they
learned the magic of pulling a book off the shelf and
holding it in your hands.
I would have loved to have had access to a library
like that when I was growing up.

See City of Books, Page C2



Grace Hunt finds a book in the science section.



Lindsay Hunt finds a place to sample her books before
buying.



Lindsay, Amy and Grace Hunt meet to compare discoveries.