



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 3, 2016

THE BOOKSMITH

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-002
Business Name: The Booksmith
Business Address: 1644 Haight Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Christin Evans, Owner
Nomination Date: July 21, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Booksmith is an independent bookstore in the Haight-Ashbury that has served as a literary mecca for neighborhood residents, tourists and book lovers since 1976. Located on Haight Street between Clayton and Cole streets, The Booksmith is well-known for its leading events program that continues to feature prominent figures in the fields of art, journalism and literature. The business was one of the first bookstores to offer a community Book Swap event, regularly opens its doors to neighbors and community groups for meetings and events and attracts hundreds each month through its popular fanfiction event, "Shipwreck."

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in SF for 30 or more years, with no break in SF operations exceeding two years?

Yes, the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1746 Haight Street from 1976-1985 (9 years)
1644 Haight Street from 1985-Present (31 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood's history and identity.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with the traditions of bookselling and organizing literary events.



SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

- The business has contributed to the Haight-Ashbury community's history and identity by serving as a neighborhood book store, literary mecca and venue for high quality literary programming.
- 1644 Haight Street is associated with significant architecture. It is a representative example of a 1920s utilitarian commercial building and is located within the proposed Article 10 Haight-Ashbury Historic Landmark District (added to the Landmark Designation Work Program in August of 2016). The 1926 structure is considered a "Category A Building" and is located within the California Register-eligible Haight-Ashbury Historic District. It was also identified in the Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Historic Resource Survey (pending approval by the Historic Preservation Commission) as a contributor to a California Register-eligible district.
- The business has been cited in the following publications:
 - American Bookseller Magazine, 1998; Bookselling This Week, 6/6/1994, "How Much is That Author in the Window?" published by the American Booksellers Association
 - SF Gate, 3/24/2002, "Indy Booksellers Reach Crossroads," by Hillel Italie
 - SF Business Times, 8/17-23/2016, "Duo seeks to turn bookstore decline into fiction," by Sarah Duxbury
 - The New York Times, 12/5/2010, "A Reader's San Francisco," by Gregory Dicum
 - San Francisco Chronicle, 6/26/2011, "Indie bookstores offer greater sense of community," by Katherine Seligman.

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that The Booksmith qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Stock of quality books featuring traditional and emerging literary works.
- General interior layout, including window displays and front table displays.
- Shelf-talkers (hand written staff book reviews).
- Storefront system, including recessed entryway, terrazzo flooring at entry, vertical and horizontal single pane windows, cornice, and tile and wood siding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include The Booksmith currently located at 1644 Haight Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Manager
Legacy Business Program



SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CENTER / SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION
1 DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT PLACE, ROOM 110, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102-4681
Small Business Assistance Center (415) 554-6134 / Small Business Commission (415) 554-6481



Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 3, 2016

THE BOOKSMITH

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-002
Business Name: The Booksmith
Business Address: 1644 Haight Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Christin Evans, Owner
Nomination Date: July 21, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR THE BOOKSMITH, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1644 HAIGHT STREET.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, and the Small Business Commission finds that the business has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, the business would face a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on October 3, 2016, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore



SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes The Booksmith in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at The Booksmith:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Stock of quality books featuring traditional and emerging literary works.
- General interior layout, including window displays and front table displays.
- Shelf-talkers (hand written staff book reviews).
- Storefront system, including recessed entryway, terrazzo flooring at entry, vertical and horizontal single pane windows, cornice, and tile and wood siding

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on October 3, 2016.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –



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**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-002
Business Name: The Booksmith
Business Address: 1644 Haight Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Christin Evans, Owner
Nomination Date: July 21, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? X Yes No

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: August 22, 2016

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



President, Board of Supervisor
District 5



City and County of San Francisco

LONDON N. BREED

Thursday, July 21st, 2016

Rick Kurylo
Legacy Business Program Manager
Office of Small Business
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Suite 110
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing to proudly nominate Booksmith at 1644 Haight Street for the Legacy Business Registry Program. Booksmith has been a fixture of the Haight-Ashbury community since its founding in October 1976. While many changes have occurred in the neighborhood since then, Booksmith continues to be known as a cultural gem in the neighborhood.

Booksmith is known as a “literary mecca,” providing a destination for neighborhood residents, tourists, and book lovers everywhere. Diverse figures in the fields of arts, journalism, and literature have had readings or participated in events there, including Nobel Prize-winning Polish poet Czesław Miłosz, science fiction great Ray Bradbury, children's author Lemony Snicket, rock legends Neil Young and Patti Smith, and Beat generation poet Allen Ginsberg, just to name a few.

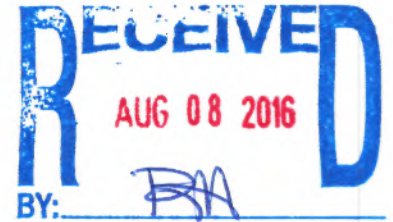
The founder, Mr. Gary Frank, and the current owners, Ms. Christin Evans and Mr. Praveen Madan, have worked hard to make this establishment a community gathering space as well. They frequently offer the bookstore as a location for community meetings and events. Furthermore, Ms. Evans currently serves as the President of the Haight Ashbury Merchants Association. Her leadership has ensured that the merchants in this neighborhood are getting the support they need to thrive in San Francisco.

Please contact Ms. Evans at christin@booksmith.com, or 415-863-8688. And feel free to contact my office if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "London Breed".

President London Breed
Board of Supervisors
City & County of San Francisco



Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:

The Booksmith

BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)

CHRISTIN EVANS, PRAVEEN MADAN
 Previous owner + current landlord: GARY FRANK

CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:

1644 Haight Street

TELEPHONE:

(415) 863-8688

EMAIL:

christin@booksmith.com

WEBSITE:

booksmith.com

FACEBOOK PAGE:

facebook.com/booksmith

YELP PAGE

yelp.com/biz/the-booksmith-san-francisco

APPLICANT'S NAME

CHRISTIN EVANS

Same as Business

APPLICANT'S TITLE

OWNER

APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:

1644 Haight Street
 San Francisco, CA 94117

TELEPHONE:

(415) 863-8688

EMAIL:

christin@booksmith.com

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:

0418673

SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):

200713910018

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff

NAME OF NOMINATOR:

DATE OF NOMINATION:

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
1746 Haight St., San Francisco, CA	94117	1976
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1976-1985	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
1644 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA	94117	Start: 1985 End: current

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

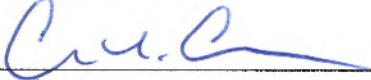
San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Christin Evans 7/29/16 
Name (Print): Date: Signature:

Written Historical Narrative for The Booksmith in support of its application to become a SF legacy business:

Criterion 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years.

The Booksmith has operated in San Francisco continuously since it was founded by Gary Frank in 1976. The original location (building since torn down) was at 1746 Haight street located underneath the popular I-Beam nightclub. In 1985, the building for the current location of the store at 1644 Haight street was purchased & remodeled. After 30 years of running the store, Gary Frank sought to sell The Booksmith which he did in 2007 to Christin Evans and Praveen Madan, a married couple. The Frank Family retains ownership of the building which houses the bookstore. The Booksmith remains open 7 days a week, 364 days of the year (closed Christmas Day) and recently won San Francisco Magazine's honor for Best Bookstore (2016).

Criterion 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community. Community does include a business or industry community.

The Booksmith has served as the historic Haight-Ashbury's independent bookstore since 1976. In addition to being one of a handful of surviving independent bookstores in the city, it has been a pioneer amongst its peers in a number of ways.

Perhaps best known perhaps for its leading events program – the store has hosted numerous celebrities and literary luminaries over the years including:

- counter cultural icons Allen Ginsberg (last reading before his death), Timothy Leary, Stewart Brand and Hunter S Thompson (a young Johnny Depp was shadowing the author in preparation for his upcoming role in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and also attended that event and book signing at the bookstore)
- rock legends Neil Young, Patti Smith, Carlos Santana and Ozzy Osbourne
- artists Art Spiegelman, Maira Kalman, Lynda Barry, Camille Rose Garcia, and Paul Madonna
- photographers Annie Leibovitz and Richard Avedon
- acclaimed literary luminaries Adam Johnson, Dave Eggers, Neil Gaiman, Neal Stephenson, William T. Vollmann, Bret Easton Ellis, Khaled Hosseini, Rebecca Solnit, David Talbot, Thomas Pynchon, Kelly Link, Mary Gaitskill, Anne Rice, Amy Bloom, Junot Diaz, Bharati Mukherjee, Beth Lisick, Michelle Tea, William Gibson, Ray Bradbury, Kazuo Ishiguro, China Mieville, David Foster Wallace (last bookstore event before his death) and many more
- published former & current store staff members Paco Ramone, Tom Tomorrow, Lewis Buzbee, Kiara Brinkman, Na'amen Tilahun, Sarah Maria Griffin and many more

The Booksmith was one of the first bookstores to have its own website, www.booksmith.com and was a technology innovator in collaboration with IBID, Inc to build one of the book industry's first point of sale and inventory management systems (now a cloud based software solution with significant market share).

There have been a number of community building activities the store has engaged in. It was the first bookstore to offer a community Book Swap event where participants brought books to share & exchange. Booksmith is also home to the very popular fanfiction event Shipwreck started in 2013 which draws hundreds to the store each month. The bookstore has hosted numerous community forums and panels on current issues & topics including San Francisco's homeless challenge, the changing landscape of public investigative reporting and journalism.

Criterion 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms.

The nature of curation of the stock of an independent bookstore is its own particular art form. The book buyers and bookstore staff weigh in on new titles offered by large and small publishers alike. Of 50,000+ new titles published every year, the buyers base their decisions on community interest, past performance, advance copy reviews and creative input to determine which handful of titles to feature in window displays, front table displays, in the annual holiday catalog and online.

Booksmith's physical layout has remained relatively unchanged since 1985 when the store re-located to its current address at 1644 Haight street. Starting in 2007, the store brand was amplified with colorful chalk art throughout the store hand drawn by long-time staffer Sean Chiki and more recently store artist Madeline Gobo. The artwork incorporated in Booksmith's email newsletter, website and print marketing are all produced in store by Booksmith staff. And, the storefront was updated with a new colorful palette which included ink black, turquoise, purple and lime green. As times & tastes change, the Booksmith periodically updates its physical presentation with its characteristic shelf talkers (hand written staff book reviews) but its heart remains artistically true to supporting traditional and emerging quality literary works our community demands.

Section Five:

Supplemental Historical Documents.

In addition to the narrative, please include as many supplemental historical documents as are available. This information will provide the Commissioners a visual context to build an argument for listing on the Legacy Business Registry.

Materials should include information on all physical features, traditions and practices noted in the written narrative and that identify the business for the Legacy Registry.

Historic Legal Documents, such as:

- Change in Business Ownership (if current business ownership is less than 30 years)
- San Francisco Business Registration Certificate (original or dating back to 30+ years)

Photographs:

Required

- 1 overall exterior photo (a current photo is fine, including older photos is a plus to help to provide historical context)
- 1 photo of exterior and interior business signage (a current photo is fine, including older photos is a plus to help to provide historical context)
- Additional photos of any unique interior and exterior features of the location called out in the list of "physical features or traditions" that are closely and strongly associated with the significance of the Community engagement

Supplemental If Available

- Historic photos of the business location
- Historical events
- Photos of the unique craft, art, cuisine, or tradition that define the business
- Visual support to what is written in the historical narrative

Ephemera and Memorabilia:

(*Example:* advertising print, audio and video, advertising trade cards, bookmarks, catalog, greeting cards, letters, magazines, matchbooks, menus, pamphlets, postcards, posters, prospectuses, and tickets.)

- Newspaper Clippings from past and present newspapers that support the historical narrative. (please include publication and date of clipping)
- Audio and Video News stories
- Letters of Support

SF Heritage has a [Historical Research Guide \(http://www.sfheritage.org/resources-links/researchguide/\)](http://www.sfheritage.org/resources-links/researchguide/) on where to locate possible supplemental documents or materials.

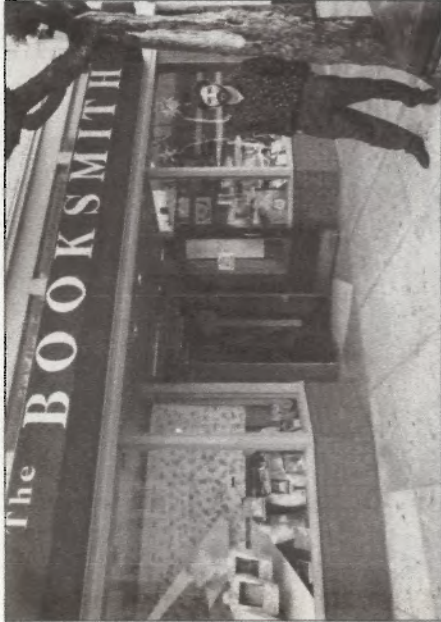
The BOOKSMITH
10-11-2
MON - SAT.
1100 HIGHT ST
SAN FRANCISCO
CALL THE TALK



PAPERBACKS
HARDBACKS
NOTE CARDS
SPECIAL ORDERS

VINTAGE BOOKMARK

GARY FRANK IN AMERICAN BOOKSELLER MAGAZINE 1988



(Above) Owner Frank is justly proud of the store's award-winning windows. At left, sectioned mannequins call attention to new computer books; at right, Einstein acts as figurehead in a display of science books.



(Above) The two sides of the Haight. Even as the area becomes gentrified, it still attracts transients and the homeless. To help, some of the Haight's merchants have established a workfare program.

agency. Explains Frank, "We sometimes [have] so many books on a certain subject that they get lost. The psychology section was getting overwhelmed with these recovery books, for instance, while the true crime books were getting lost in sociology or biography."

Frank's penchant for merchandising finds expression in the store's windows, which, thanks to the efforts of a talented designer, have won several publishers' display contests. For a recent travel display, one window featured an outsize camera, complete with flashing light, suspended in the air along with various Fodor's travel guides; the display took second place in a Fodor's contest. Another window featured a huge, outsize suitcase with Prentice Hall travel titles spilling out of it.

The Booksmith recently took one of the prizes in Vintage's window contest for its contemporary fiction series; the prize included a visit to the store by Vintage authors Mona Simpson, Richard Ford, and James Crumley. In addition, author signings or readings, featuring the likes of Tama Janowitz and Jim Carroll, take place at The Booksmith about once a month, and are a primary means of store promotion. "We don't make a lot of money on the event, but we gain a lot in bringing new people into the store," says Frank. "Readings are basically the kind of thing we advertise in local periodicals like the *Bay Guardian* or *Poetry Frisk*. I find we don't have to do advertising on a regular basis to bring in clientele."

Frank notes that, before moving to his new store, he was the bookstore consultant for and first on-line bookstore user of the original IBID computerized inventory control system. Although he is not involved in IBID directly at this point, he uses the system

people near the Haight living and sleeping in their vehicles, he notes.

Frank says that the presence of street people expresses itself in the aggressive panhandling that is becoming common in many urban areas. Another serious problem is theft, which Frank says can cost him thousands per month. "It is undoubtedly my biggest problem," he claims. "It's mostly, I think, drug addicts, who actually make a living stealing books from bookstores. And I'm not talking about one book, I'm talking about people we catch who have stacks of books." As an example Frank describes how he apprehended a shoplifter in the store's occult section who had hidden approximately 20 books in a small duffel bag and was beginning to stash books in the sleeves of a jacket he had taken off.

To address the problem of street people, Frank has joined with other Haight Street merchants in a kind of workfare program. "We interviewed five or six people, and decided that they were truly homeless, not addicted to anything, and truly wanted to better themselves." Under the plan, the people were hired to clean the streets each morning, which Frank says, "got a little bit of attention from City Hall." He adds that the president of the block association "is also working on a poster to educate people that you'd be better off giving your money to a program, rather than to people on the street who will probably use it for drugs. I give my money to the Switchboard, even though it's one of the reasons that the street people are here."

The expansion to a bigger store has allowed Frank to triple his gross sales within the past three years. "I could expand again now," he says. "In a neighborhood that serves a fair number of people and has a good turnaround in book sales, you can't hurt yourself



BOOKSMITH, EARLY AUGHTS

JUNE 6, 1994

BOOKSELLING This Week

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION

HOW MUCH IS THAT AUTHOR IN THE WINDOW?

Quiz for booksellers: How do you jam your store with hundreds of people first thing in the morning, encourage dozens of them to make large purchases over the course of the day, attract the attention of the local media, and take part in an act of creation with an award-winning writer for good measure?

For San Francisco's Booksmith, it all just fell into place the day Harlan Ellison sat in the window.

The Booksmith had invited the prolific Los Angeles-based science fiction writer for an evening event, hoping that Ellison would agree to promote his volumes of essays and short stories at the store. But Ellison, the author of such works as *Darkford Stories* (Macmillan) and *Angry Candy* (Dutton), said he had a better idea.

The writer staged an all-day stand in the front window of The Booksmith, where he paraded out a new short story on his portable Olympus 1000 camera. The store's graphic arts department, who spent more than \$80 in the store that day.

He mugged for the cameras and chatted with the crowd. And he invited his actor friend, Robin Williams, to kick the day off by bringing

the meeting between Ellison and Williams in front of a throng of onlookers that spilled out onto the street in front of the store. "They were really entertaining. Williams gave him the beginning of a story—

'The Computer Vampire, or the Bye that Bites,' Ellison, of course, hated it, because he doesn't use a computer. But he came up with a story."

After Williams left the scene, fans and curiosity seekers hung around in the store, waiting as each page of the Ellison story was photocopied and hung in the window. And at the end of the day, another crowd gathered to hear Ellison read the finished story. "It was his idea to do this thing in the window, and his idea to do this promotion giving away copies of the manuscript," said Booksmith owner Gary Frank, who marvelled at Ellison's business sense. "We're used to walking a careful line and



Robin Williams (left) helped Harlan Ellison draw a crowd for his all-day appearance at The Booksmith in San Francisco.

Robinson Williams & Harlan Ellison
writing in our windows, 1994

Robinson Williams & Harlan Ellison
writing in our windows, 1994

Indy Booksellers Reach Crossroads

HILLEL ITALIE Published 4:00 pm, Sunday, March 24, 2002

Associated Press Writer

Gary Frank, longtime owner of The Booksmith in San Francisco, is thinking about retirement. Finding a buyer shouldn't be that hard: The bookstore is doing well and it's located in the historic Haight-Ashbury district.

But Frank isn't sure he'll succeed. His children aren't interested in running the family business and he's wary of just anyone taking over. He wants someone who cares about books, someone undeterred by all the talk about the decline of independent stores.

After a decade of competing with superstore chains and online retailers, booksellers such as Frank now face a truly immovable foe — time itself. Hundreds of owners who founded stores in the 1960s and '70s, a golden age for independent sellers, are now in their 50s and 60s and wondering who will replace them.

"You have all these people who really want to bow out and just don't know what to do," says Frank, 50, who started The Booksmith in 1976.

"There are a lot of good bookstores that are still good businesses sitting there, waiting for a good buyer. But where are the good buyers?" says John Barringer, owner of the Little Professor Book Center in Charlotte, N.C.

Barringer, 66, considered selling a few years ago, but encountered only "tire-kickers," those who simply liked the idea of running a bookstore. Now semiretired, he says he could guarantee a 20 percent return on the investment, but still doubts that he'd find any takers.

"A bookstore in most communities is not terribly salable because there are so many of them," says Barringer, whose store is within 2 miles of three superstores.

The "succession" problem has caused so much concern that the American Booksellers Association is planning a workshop at this May's BookExpo America. A recent suggestion that California store owners meet and discuss retirement strategies received an "overwhelming response," according to Hut Landon, executive director of the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association.

"Many of the stores have been in business 15, 25, 30 years. It's a very mature market, with a lot of customer loyalty, and they've been able to fight the superstores," Landon says. "But the other side of the mature market is that a lot of owners are ready to retire."

Selling an independent bookstore, owners say, is nothing like selling an ordinary business. The goal isn't to make a profit and walk away. They see their stores as members of communities and want them to remain so.

"Booksellers want to find someone they believe will carry on the tradition of the store," says Rusty Drugan, executive director of the New England Booksellers Association. "The prospective buyer should have a passion for what the store stands for and not just a passion for money."

Store employees are a possible solution, although few can afford it. Andy Graves needed generous terms to take over The Happy Bookseller in Columbia, S.C. The previous owner, Rhett Jackson, is allowing him to pay off the debt through profits from the store.

Finding people to start new stores is just as difficult as finding buyers of existing ones. According to Oren Teicher, chief operating officer of the American Booksellers

Association, just 100 members were added in 2001, the lowest annual figure in years.

Meanwhile, between 250 and 300 stores closed, bringing association membership down to about 2,200, less than half the number a decade ago. And competition from the chains has meant that more and more sellers run "specialty" shops _ stores appealing to a specific niche such as travel or self-help. Few aspire to be like Tattered Cover in Denver or Powell's Books in Portland, Ore., independent shops with a vast, general selection.

Opening a bookstore is far more expensive than it was a generation ago. Frank says he needed less than \$50,000 to start The Booksmith. Teicher says a typical store now would cost around \$750,000.

Publicity about the struggles of independent stores has made it less likely that banks will extend credit. And Teicher wonders how many prospective owners would be willing to risk a business not known for easy profits.

"There still are lots of people who have this romantic notion to run a bookstore, but then they look at the economics: working seven days a week, 14 hours a day," Teicher says.

"You're operating a retail bookstore and earning \$25,000-\$30,000 a year. Look at that in comparison to what a college graduate might earn in some other field. In today's economy, it's a hard sell."

Duo seeks to turn bookstore decline into fiction

BY SARAH DUXBURY
San Francisco Business Times

A pair of reformed management consultants have bought Booksmith on Haight Street with hopes of creating a 21st century business model for independent bookselling.

Christin Evans and Praveen Madan, who are married, are entering the Bay Area book market in the wake of high profile closures of independents like Cody's Books in Berkeley and San Francisco and A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books in San Francisco. At the same time, big boxes like Barnes & Noble and Borders have recently opened mammoth new stores at Corte Madera Town Centre and Westfield San Francisco Centre, respectively.

"There's been a lot of innovation in terms of operating efficiencies at the big boxes, and Amazon provides services and makes millions of books available at the tips of your fingers," Madan said. "There's not been enough systemic innovation in independent bookselling, as a result of which there were 5,000 in 1990 and today there are 2,000."

Yet Evans and Madan, who advised Fortune 500 companies while consultants, believe they can roam with the dinosaurs while eluding a similar fate.

That's going to mean better technology, a social networking site for both customers and other booksellers called LitMinds.org, and fostering the sense of community that has sustained independent bookstores like Book Passage in Corte Madera.



New story: Madan (left), Evans pin hopes on technology and new social networking site.

As the closure of Cody's shows, it's not enough that Booksmith is a neighborhood institution. "We have to give them a reason to come," Madan said.

"We think that bookstores have, by and large, lagged behind using technology to their advantage. It's partly skill set, partly resources and it's also intent. They have not thought aggressively about how to use new ideas and processes."

The duo will bring technology into the store. They plan a number of kiosks where shoppers can find out whether a book is in stock and read reviews or blog postings on it. The kiosks should be

active in time for the holidays.

Then there's customer service, from a nice browsing environment to a knowledgeable staff to author events. Booksmith now hosts about 80 events a year; it hopes to double that number.

Elaine Petrocelli, who owns Book Passage, said that being a close part of one's community is key to being a successful independent. That authenticity has helped Book Passage grow to over 600 author events a year, some of which are hugely profitable. (When Al Gore came to town, Book Passage sold 2,000 copies of his book.) But the store doesn't

do author events or hold seminars to make money. Indeed, Petrocelli is wary of applying overt business or consulting practices to the book business.

"I don't think there's a model anymore," Petrocelli said. "Things have changed a great deal and it is the creativity of each bookstore owner or leader to look at what that bookstore needs to do."

"That changes from store to store," she said, and can't be faked or copied.

Madan and Evans are pinning part of their hopes on LitMinds, which the pair introduced in February. They envisioned it as a free consulting service to independent bookstores, a forum to share new ideas and best practices, but it's something of a message board for news about the book world with readers, authors and book sellers all joining. Madan won't share specific membership figures for the site, but said that it has had nearly 200,000 unique visitors since its debut, and month to month the site is growing between 30 percent and 50 percent.

Part of the intent of the couple's purchase of Booksmith from founder Gary Frank for an undisclosed sum was to have a real world lab where they could test the ideas floated on LitMinds.

"Our goal is not that we are magically and heroically going to swoop in and save" all independent bookstores, Madan said. "We're bringing a systematic approach ... very focused on innovation and experimentation to see what works and what doesn't."

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The New York Times

December 5, 2010

A Reader's San Francisco

By GREGORY DICUM

ON a balmy fall evening in the Mission District of San Francisco, hundreds of people spilled onto Valencia Street, where they chatted happily for a few minutes before pouring back into bookstores, cafes and theaters. It was a giddy, animated crowd, but most of all bookish -- a collection of fans and believers, here to listen to the written word.



The occasion was an event called Litquake, which, over the course of nine days, would draw some 13,000 residents and visitors to readings by scores of authors, many of them -- like Maxine Hong Kingston and Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket) -- local celebrities. The "Lit Crawl" finale alone featured more than 400 readings at bars, laundromats and even the police station in a single evening.

Litquake is an annual event, but on almost any day or night in San Francisco, there is likely to be something for the literary-inclined -- a poetry reading at a bar, a book swap in a cafe or a reading in the book-lined lobby of the Rex Hotel. This is a place, after all, where dozens of fiercely independent bookstores not only survive but thrive, thanks to a city of readers who seem to view books not only as a pleasure, but as a cause. For the out-of-towner, these one-and-only shops can be destinations in and of themselves.

Books, we are told, are a half-millennium-old technology on the cusp of being swept away forever. So a journey to San Francisco to immerse oneself in them might seem the cultural equivalent of going to visit the glaciers before they melt. But in San Francisco, the home of many of the very technologies

that have drawn a bead on the book, visitors will find a living, historically rooted literary scene that, though it has surely heard the news of its own demise, isn't buying it.

THE same quality that gave rise to the city's proliferation of small bookstores -- compact, walkable neighborhoods with a militant objection to chain stores -- makes it easy for visitors to explore the city's literary terrain. Though the center of gravity has moved around over the years -- from the old Barbary Coast in the days of Mark Twain and Ambrose Bierce to North Beach during the Beat era to the Haight a decade later -- today the scene is most visible in the Mission.

Valencia Street around 20th Street is an excellent place for a visitor to begin. A cluster of shops -- 826 Valencia; Borderlands, a science fiction and fantasy bookstore and connected cafe; Modern Times, a bookstore collective; and the used-book store Dog Eared Books -- is surrounded by cafes and bars that host regular literary events. It is a neighborhood in which one can see an author read one evening and spot him at the next table at a restaurant or cafe the following day.

One of those restaurants might be Osha Thai at 819 Valencia Street, a sleek neighborhood favorite, where, on a recent afternoon, I found myself perusing 826's "San Francisco Literary Map" over moroheiya noodles with yellow curry. More than a map, it includes historical timelines and a slightly out-of-date list of bookstores and readings. In it, I could see that the Valencia cluster is only the most obvious part of the Mission literary scene.

Not far away, above a dubious shop selling remaindered paint, in an all but unmarked building at 2141 Mission Street, is a bell jar for an eclectic collection of booksellers. To enter, visitors must be buzzed in and follow a series of unpromising signs taped to the walls in the drab stairwells. My first stop was Libros Latinos, a crypt-quiet space filled with books imported from Latin America. Like the other bookstores in the building (which also includes Meyer Boswell, a shop that specializes in antiquarian law books, and Valhalla, which features novels in their first printing), Libros Latinos mostly sells to collectors and institutions, but is also open to anyone who can find it.

I proceeded to Bolerium, the anchor of the group. It is a cavern jammed with books and disordered papers concerning 20th-century radical politics. Groaning shelves of books produce the wonderful side effects of deadening all sound and scenting the air with the drowsy, musty perfume of old wood pulp -- intangible features of the world we are losing.

John Durham, the owner, sat at a desk surrounded by piles of books. Bearded and a little shaggy, he seemed at one with his cluttered environment. An expert in his narrow field, Mr. Durham is the archetype of the bookstore obsessive. In response to a research need for a book I am working on, he drew my attention to "The Masses," an early-20th-century radical monthly. He then pointed out a

collection of lyric sheets, which featured songs with titles like "Albania, Our Beacon" and "Eternal Glory to JV Stalin." "If you sing that one," he said, "you have to make sure everyone knows you're kidding."

THE Mission may be San Francisco's current book hub, but it isn't the only neighborhood where you'll find one-of-a-kind bookstores. If, for instance, you're exploring Noe Valley, seek out Omnivore, a tiny, carefully curated shop that fulfills the food-mad city's appetite for gastronomic literature. On Haight Street, Bound Together is a roughly 30-year-old anarchist collective, a closet of a shop crammed floor to ceiling with the heavy, serious literature of a parallel universe (among the shelves, near "Magic and Spirituality," is one marked "Against Religion"). The Green Arcade, on Market Street at the edge of Hayes Valley, focuses on the more capitalism-friendly progressive genre of sustainability and eco-living.

Even the biggest used bookstore in the city, Green Apple, on Clement Street in the Richmond, maintains a distinctive feel thanks to staff members who know their way around the sprawling shop and around the world of books itself. "It's not the kind of thing people could create from scratch these days," said Pete Mulvilhill, one of the owners.

But if you don't have weeks to investigate nooks and crannies, your next stop should probably be City Lights, in the heart of North Beach, the neighborhood associated with the Beat writers of the 1950s. City Lights is the grande dame of the city's independent bookstores. Founded in 1953 by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the poet and artist, as the first all-paperback bookstore in the country, it made its name when it published Allen Ginsberg's incendiary "Howl and Other Poems" in 1956. The matchless publicity of an enduringly influential obscenity trial made "Howl" a best seller and -- improbably -- part of the American literary canon. In the process, it turned City Lights into a top destination for literary-minded visitors to the city.

I went down to City Lights one gloriously sunny Saturday, strolling past strip joints and seedy bars; the neighborhood that popularized topless dancing in America thankfully retains some of its midcentury flavor. The bookstore was comfortably bustling as I walked between the tall shelves of political philosophy and gender studies and made my way up a narrow staircase leading to the Poetry Room. There, next to a window open to the Pacific breeze, I found a chair with a hand-lettered sign tacked to the wall behind it: "Have a Seat + Read a Book."

I made for the Ginsberg shelf and, bypassing the new 50th-anniversary annotated edition of "Howl," selected the slim original, still published in the same disarmingly bland cover.

Rather than sit there, I bought the book and went across the lane (Jack Kerouac Lane, to be precise) to the Vesuvio Cafe, a bar that was once a Beat hangout. Vesuvio is a cozy space of dark wood, tiled floors and stained glass, with framed photos of the neighborhood greats -- Kerouac, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti -- covering the walls. I ordered a shot and a beer, which seemed an apt Beat lunch, and went upstairs to the narrow mezzanine to read.

"Visions! omens! hallucinations! miracles! ecstasies! gone down the American river!"

I paused for a sip of whiskey and looked out the window, down onto Jack Kerouac Lane, where a steady stream of well-scrubbed tourists stopped to pose next to a mural and read some of the more innocuous Beat verse that had been inlaid in the sidewalk.

A couple at a table behind me were discussing Neal Cassady's role as connective tissue between the Beats and the Merry Pranksters. At a small table in the corner, light streaming in the open window next to him, a bearded, bespectacled man sat hunched over a book with the intensity of a monk, an empty glass and a stack of new books beside him.

Looking up, he announced that he was reading Henry Miller's "Tropic of Cancer" in a single sitting. "I'm reading my way out of a breakup," he explained. "I read books in cafes, then leave them behind when I'm done."

This is literature as sustenance. And it is commonplace in San Francisco, where the average annual per capita expenditure on books is perennially among the highest in the nation. Same goes for booze -- according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, San Francisco is the only city that ranks in the top three for both (New York is ninth by both measures). Hence all the readings in bars.

Of course, many cities have vibrant literary atmospheres. New York, home to the likes of Gary Shteyngart and Richard Price, has a reputation as a professional's town, where the presence of a huge publishing industry can sometimes make the act of writing seem like a blood sport. San Francisco, with its unapologetic nostalgia for -- and its ongoing celebration of -- the written word, is more laid-back. With its highly educated, young population, it is a city loaded with dreamers who can easily lose themselves in a novel or a poem, a place where people can talk for hours about writing without anyone ever asking who their agent is.

"There isn't an enormous publishing and entertainment industry in San Francisco," said Jack Boulware, a journalist and author who is one of Litquake's founders. "If you're a writer here, you aren't bound by restrictions you might find in other cities; you can express yourself and innovate and experiment."

"And," he deadpanned, "everyone is stoned and sitting in cafes in the middle of the day."

Yet the recent flourishing of the literary scene in San Francisco is not accidental. Much of it stems from a decade of work by local authors who wanted to carry on a legacy that includes Jack London's smoking ruins, Dashiell Hammett's dark alleys, Jack Kerouac's dawn railroad yards, Amy Tan's Chinatown, and Michelle Tea's wild Valencia Street nights.

"Litquake came from a group of writers sitting in a bar realizing that we needed to do something," said Mr. Boulware, the organizer of the festival, which had its 10th run this year. The same era saw the genesis of other San Francisco literary institutions, including the Grotto, a collective of mostly nonfiction writers including Po Bronson and Ethan Watters, and 826 Valencia, a free writing school for kids (and pirate supply store) co-founded by the novelist Dave Eggers that now has branches in six other cities. These ideas were anachronistic from the start.

"We launched at the height of dot-com fever in San Francisco," Mr. Boulware said. "If we were less inclined to be attached to literature, we would have started Web sites."

Ten years on, events are so numerous that Charles Kruger, who blogs at stormingbohemia.com, spent the summer attending 90 literary and artistic events in 90 days and blogging about it. Evan Karp, another newcomer to the scene, has quickly become a local literary gadfly. "I went to my first ever reading just a year ago," he said. "On a whim, I started filming them and putting them on YouTube." Since then he has recorded more than 1,800 author readings. "I realized there are all these little groups of really talented people," Mr. Karp said, "but they didn't really know each other."

This social approach to literature makes locating the scene little more than a matter of finding the right Web sites. Though there is no single source, visitors starting with sfstation.com/literary-arts, sfheart.com or Mr. Karp's litseen.com will find themselves in the thick of things before long.


Each reading series has a distinctive flavor. Some, like those hosted by the online magazine *The Rumpus*, regularly pack bars even on Monday nights. I attended one, the Literary Death Match at the Elbo Room, a grungy Mission standby (get the pint-size margarita) where a panel of judges put a group of readers through an Iron Chef-like competition.

Before long, Alia Volz, the hostess, in bright red lipstick and a satiny evening gown, was spouting fake blood from her mouth to catcalls from the audience.

✦ Bookswap, an event hosted by Booksmith, a beloved neighborhood store in Haight-Ashbury, is more studiously literary. Everyone brings a favorite book -- I brought my copy of "Howl" -- and in small

groups moderated by the staff and guests (including, that evening, the novelist K. M. Soehnlein), participants talk books in a sort of literary show-and-tell.

It could have been dreadful (one young woman informed the group that "Ayn Rand has this awesome philosophy called Objectivism?") but the enthusiasm of the participants and their well-read inclusiveness made the evening feel like speed dating meets book club.

"The longer you are in San Francisco, the more you realize it is just one big scene with a lot of different ways of making itself known," said Mr. Soehnlein, whose own novels, like this year's "Robin and Ruby," live on the gay lit shelf. "In S.F. people ask more questions. In New York or L.A. it's like crickets out there, even if they are very attentive. Do they think they're too cool to ask questions?" 

At that point, crickets sounded appealing to me -- I needed to find somewhere to put the finishing touches on the piece I was planning to read at Litquake. Though San Francisco is awash in cafes, not every cafe is suited to writing, or even reading. I found the Borderlands cafe in the Mission to be among the best -- there's no Wi-Fi and no music, and the place is furnished with couches and work-friendly tables.

But for hours of serious reading or writing, nothing beats the Mechanics Institute Library, on Post Street at the edge of the Financial District. The private library -- founded in 1854, it's the oldest library on the West Coast -- is a little-known gem. The nine-story building houses a collection of 160,000 volumes in Gilded Age splendor. Marble, oak and cast iron lend a cozy feel to the reading rooms and a top-floor chess room. I bought a day pass and settled into a desk by a window, quickly falling into another world.

The Hotel Rex is not far from the Mechanics Institute Library, so I stopped in for a drink. There was no reading taking place, but a string quartet from the Golden Gate Philharmonic, a nonprofit youth orchestra, was playing in the spacious but cozy bar. Shelves along the walls held books signed by authors who had stayed there.

Later, after my reading, I was part of the Litquake throng lingering in the fresh night air. I wandered around the corner to the Fabric8 gallery, where I heard Matt Hart reading his poem "Minerva System." It was a "sonnet of sonnets," and Mr. Hart read furiously, rocking back and forth, his face red. Members of the audience, sitting on the floor or leaning against the wall, nodded their heads to the iambic pentameter. Mr. Hart's dense imagery jumped around, a restless, slippery dream, an indictment of the now.

"She may be a monster," he half-mumbled and half-yelled, "but I love her!"

IF YOU GO

BOOKSTORES

City Lights, paperbacks and poetry. 261 Columbus Avenue; (415) 362-8193; citylights.com.

The Booksmith hosts Bookswap, among other events. 1644 Haight Street; (415) 863-8688; booksmith.com.

Omnivore Books, food-related books. 3885a César Chavez Street, (415) 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com.

Green Apple, used and new books. 506 Clement Street; (415) 387-2272; greenapplebooks.com.

Bound Together, anarchist books. 1369 Haight Street; (415) 431-8355; boundtogetherbookstore.com.

Borderlands, science fiction and fantasy. 866 Valencia Street; (415) 824-8203; borderlands-books.com.

Modern Times, progressive lit. 888 Valencia Street; (415) 282-9246; mtbs.com.

Dog Eared Books, used books. 900 Valencia Street; (415) 282-1901; dogearedbooks.com.

The Green Arcade, books about sustainability and green living. 1680 Market Street; (415) 431-6800; thegreenarcade.com.

Libros Latinos, Spanish language books. 2141 Mission Street, Suite 301; (800) 645-4276; libroslatinos.com.

Meyer Boswell, antiquarian law books. 2141 Mission Street; (415) 255-6400; meyerbos.com.

Bolerium, 20th-century radical thought. 2141 Mission Street; (415) 863-6353.

Valhalla, first printings and novels. 2141 Mission Street, Suite 202, (415) 863-9250.

OTHER

San Francisco Writers' Grotto, 490 Second Street; sfgrotto.org.

826 Valencia, 826 Valencia Street; (415) 642-5905; 826valencia.org.

Fabric8 Gallery, 3318 22nd Street; (415) 647-5888; fabric8.com.

Vesuvio Cafe, 255 Columbus Avenue; vesuvio.com.

READING SERIES

Litquake, annually in October, various locations throughout San Francisco. litquake.org.

Writers With Drinks, a decade-old, eclectic monthly at the Make-Out Room, 3225 22nd Street, (415) 647-2888; writerswithdrinks.com. \$5 to \$10 sliding scale.

The Monthly Rumpus, a very popular monthly at the Make-Out Room (it fills up even on Monday nights), 3225 22nd Street; (415) 647-2888; therumpus.net. \$10.

Edinburgh Castle Pub, a longstanding host for readings. 950 Geary Street; (415) 885-4074. castlenews.com.

Literary Death Match, various locations (and various cities), including the Elbo Room, 647 Valencia Street; (415) 552-7788; elbo.com and literarydeathmatch.com. \$8.

Quiet Lightning, a reading in which all the pieces at each night's event are submitted beforehand and printed in a bound magazine available only at the reading. Various locations; qlightning.wordpress.com.

Pop-Up Magazine, a literary variety show that is designed to be ephemeral --no recording devices are permitted. Various locations, (415) 294-1870; popupmagazine.com.

Radar, at the main branch of the San Francisco Public Library. 100 Larkin Street, (415) 557-4400; radarproductions.org.

PLACES TO WRITE

Mechanics Institute Library, 57 Post Street; (415) 393-0101; milibrary.org. \$12 for a day pass.

Borderlands Cafe, 870 Valencia Street; (415) 970-6998; borderlands-cafe.com.

AND A PLACE TO MAKE A BOOK

San Francisco Center for the Book, workshops and exhibitions on bookmaking. 300 De Haro Street; (415) 565-0545; sfcbook.org.

MUSEUMS

American Bookbinders Museum, a small, obsessive collection of machinery and ephemera focusing on the 19th-century transition from hand to machine bookbinding. Limited hours. 1962 Harrison Street; (415) 824-9754; bookbindersmuseum.com.

The Beat Museum hosts regular readings and other events, and houses a collection of objects and manuscripts related to the Beat saints. 540 Broadway; (800) 537-6822; thebeatmuseum.org.

PLACES TO STAY

The Fairmont has a penthouse suite that includes a two-story, wood-paneled library, complete with a secret passage hidden behind a bookshelf. 950 Mason Street, (866) 540-4491; fairmont.com/sanfrancisco.

TheHotel Rexis self-consciously styled after literary San Francisco in the 1920s. It includes reading rooms and a library. 562 Sutter Street, (800) 433-4434; jdvhotels.com.

PHOTOS: Dog Eared Books, in the Mission District, offers an eclectic collection of new and used books. (TR1); FROM LEFT: Sharing a drink at Vesuvio Cafe, in North Beach; writers and listeners from a reading event mingle in front of The Booksmith in Haight-Ashbury; in the Mission, at Bolerium, which specializes in 20th-century radical politics, John Durham consults on the phone; Tom Walter sells books and CDs produced by readers at the monthly Rumpus event at the Make-Out Room in the Mission.; ABOVE: Kristin Scheel, with glass at right, listens to a reading at a Rumpus magazine literary event at the Make-Out Room. BELOW: Stairway at the private Mechanics Institute Library, a great place to read at the edge of the Financial District. ABOVE LEFT: Bolerium wears its political heart on its shelf. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOR SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

San Francisco Chronicle

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

Indie bookstores offer greater sense of community

Katherine Seligman, special to the Chronicle

Sunday, June 26, 2011

Someone let the clowns into the bookstore.

On a recent Friday night, between the cooking, children's and travel sections, they did what clowns do - rode a unicycle, played an accordion and kazoo simultaneously, created characters out of balloons - and some things they usually don't do, like read out loud from a novel.

The occasion was a monthly event called Literary Clown Foolery held at the Booksmith on Haight Street. Based on what could only be called a loose interpretation of Armistead Maupin's "Mary Ann in Autumn," the show drew a crowd of about 50 into a neighborhood bookshop whose owners now do a lot more than sell books.

In an era when booksellers are struggling to survive, it's nothing new for them to add cafes, wine bars, free wireless access or kiddie play areas. But the Booksmith is attracting attention with an unusual array of events - community forums on issues like youth homelessness, speed-dating-style book swaps and book-themed clown cabarets.

"We saw the Booksmith as the perfect place for a lab experiment," said Christin Evans, who bought the store in 2007 with her husband, Praveen Madan. "Our goal was to create an inviting, welcoming space. Our business plan was to do anything that Amazon and Google won't."

The store, which used to host about 80 events a year, now sponsors 200, not all of them in the neighborhood. It still features visits from emerging and eminent writers, but earns an important part of its livelihood from ticketed events like the clown show (\$10) and book swap (\$25). Recently it began sponsoring the literary forum Berkeley Arts & Letters, which brings big-name authors to venues like the Sundance Kabuki theater and Berkeley's Hillside Club.

"Many of our members who are doing well are doing well because they are trying all kinds of new things," said Meg Smith, membership and marketing representative for the American Booksellers Association. "There are stores that have consignment clothing sections or day camps. There is a lot of creative thinking out there."

Smith can name stores with print-on-demand machines or that offer rental books or "coffee with the bookseller," but not others with clown shows, even in the petri dish that is Northern California. It was in San Francisco, after all, that City Lights emerged as a cultural institution in the 1950s, with performances, meetings and readings.

Though chain stores and many independents in the area have faltered recently, others have carved out unique niches.

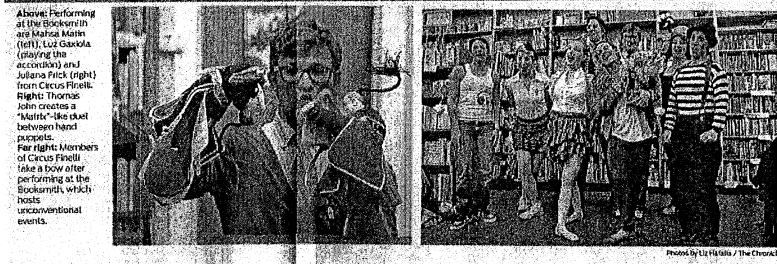


"Our business model is, I love to go out on floor and sell books because that's where I learn what works," said Elaine Petrocelli, founder of Book Passage, which now sponsors literary luncheons, three writers conferences, more than 750 author events and 300 classes a year at two locations in Corte Madera and San Francisco.

Petrocelli started inviting authors to give lectures at the Marin County store shortly after buying it in 1976. Her strategy just evolved organically, she said, based on response from customers who wanted more classes and guidance for their own writing.

"One hundred percent of our customers are writing a book," she said. "Giving classes is what we need to do. We also teach Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian."

Evans and Madan were working as management consultants when they decided to take a break and contemplate their next step in life. Avid readers who spent time roaming bookstores, they focused on starting a literary



Above: Performing at the Booksmith are Kazuo Aoki (left), Luz Gavola (playing the saxophone) and Juliana Frick (right) from Circus Finelli. Right: Thomas John creates a "Mantle"-like duet between hand puppets. For night Members of Circus Finelli take a bow after performing at the Booksmith, which hosts unconventional events.

Photo by Liz Haskin / The Chronicle

venture, a website they envisioned as a community for readers, writers and independent bookstores.

With huge changes unmooring the publishing industry, the website was difficult to support, so Evans and Praveen began thinking about buying a bookstore. They researched the business side and talked to owners before finding an ad for the Booksmith, a respected independent.

"It was a great location with a conscious neighborhood, tourism and legacy of the '60s and counterculture in general," said Evans.

They made changes slowly after interviewing longtime patrons and talking to other merchants. They jazzed up the interior with table displays, added eclectic journals and zines and joined the major neighborhood associations, a few of which are perpetually at odds over social issues. Instead of taking sides, Evans, said, she wanted the bookstore to offer itself as a space to discuss issues. (Madan wrote an editorial against the city's sit-lie ordinance, which is heavily enforced in the Haight, but he did so as individual and not a representative of the store, Evans said.)

When a neighborhood resident brought in a book about runaways and urged them to read it, Evans and Madan went a step further and arranged a panel discussion at the store featuring service providers and street kids.

"A lot of the homeless kids came," said Evans. "It was rewarding to have events like that. I'm educating myself and providing a dialogue for the community."

The idea for the clown show evolved during a walk Evans took with her personal trainer, Polina Smith, who is also a trained clown. Smith offered to produce the shows and has put together cabarets focused on Amy Chua's "The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mom" and Timothy Ferriss' "Four-Hour Body," (a takeoff called "The Four-Hour Orgasm.")

The latest show - held on Maupin's birthday - grew out of Smith's relationship with the writer, who is a former client. In some ways it was less of a literary stretch because "Mary Ann in Autumn" includes characters based on Smith and her ex-boyfriend.

For the show, Smith dressed as a confused professor in oversize plastic glasses and under attached mustache and interviewed herself about their relationship. (She had to look him up on Wikipedia at first because she'd never heard of him.)

Smith also read a few passages from the book and introduced other acts, some trained at the nearby Circus Center's clown conservatory. There was a three-woman band from Circus Finelli and puppeteer Thomas John, who created scenes of a cow and flying saucer out of little more than his hands. Intermittently, two women working on a show about Alice and Wonderland appeared, as if lost.

"I haven't laughed so much in a while," said Joan Boyd, a nurse who's lived in the neighborhood 34 years and had brought in the book that inspired the forum on homelessness.

Before the evening was over, Evans was considering booking "Alice: Down the Rwrong Wrabbit Whole" for a full show this summer. The night's only missing element was Maupin, who was busy with the opening of the American Conservatory Theater production of his "Tales of the City." The clowns sang "Happy Birthday" for him anyway and passed out cupcakes and drinks, careful not to spill on the books.

E-mail Katherine Seligman at style@sfchronicle.com.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/26/LVVA1JQOE7.DTL>

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BOOKSMITH, 2015





ALICE IN WONDERLAND
SHIPWRECK ATTENDEES, 2016



CHRISTIN & PATTI SMITH, 2016

Booksmith

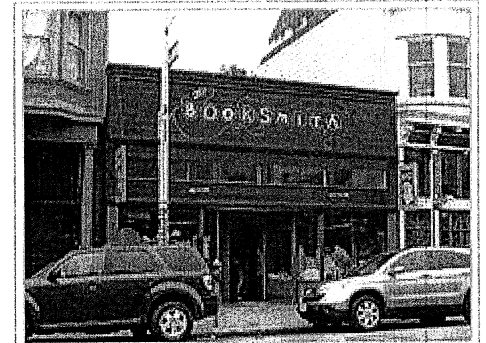
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Founded in October 1976, **The Booksmith** is an independent bookstore located in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco. When first opened, the store was located at 1746 Haight Street, below the former I-Beam nightclub. In 1985, the store moved to its current location at 1644 Haight Street at Belvedere, about a block and a half from the intersection of Haight and Ashbury. Other neighborhood businesses include the Persian Aub Zam-Zam, Recycled Records, Amoeba Music, and Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. Also located nearby is the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic.

The Booksmith caters to neighborhood residents as well as tourists seeking the counter-cultural ambiance of Haight Street. The Booksmith is general interest shop, and is a member of both the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association (NCIBA) and the American Booksellers Association (ABA).

In June 2007, The Booksmith was sold by its founder Gary Frank to married couple Christin Evans and Praveen Madan.^[1] The original business was closed, and a new business, Haight Booksmith LLC, opened in its place. According to media reports at the time, the new owners plan to take the store in a different direction.^[2] ^[3]

In May 2011, SF Weekly in its "Best of San Francisco" issue named Booksmith the city's "Best Reimagined Bookstore." Describing the changes to the bookstore, "The new owners gutted the clogged entranceway, feng shui-ed the interior, and gave it a cool Victorian steampunk black-and-teal paint job... with more than 200 in-store author readings a year, Booksmith is more of a literary mecca than ever."^[4]



Booksmith

Contents

- 1 Authors events
- 2 Other information
- 3 References
- 4 External links

Authors events

The store is known for its "ongoing celebrated events program."^[5] In the past, the series has featured many authors including novelists, poets, science fiction writers, biographers, historians, cartoonists, Pulitzer Prize, and Booker Prize winners.

Among the celebrated authors who have appeared at past Booksmith events are the Nobel Prize–winning Polish poet Czesław Miłosz, science fiction great Ray Bradbury, gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson, children's author Lemony Snicket, rock legends Neil Young and Patti Smith, and photographers Richard Avedon and Annie Leibovitz. Notably, Beat generation poet Allen Ginsberg gave his last ever reading at The Booksmith, a few months before his death.^[6]

Located in the heart of the Haight Ashbury, the store has hosted many individuals associated with the 1960s counter-culture. These include sixties icon Timothy Leary and one-time Digger Peter Coyote. Among the musicians who have appeared at the store are Grateful Dead band members Phil Lesh and Mickey Hart, as well as Grace Slick (Jefferson Airplane), and Ray Manzarek (The Doors). Some of the Beat-related authors who have appeared at the store include Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Michael McClure, and Diane DiPrima.

Other information

Over the years, a number of authors have been employed by The Booksmith, including writer Lewis Buzbee (author of *The Yellow-Lighted Bookshop*), novelist Kiara Brinkman (author of *Up High in the Trees*), syndicated cartoonist Tom Tomorrow (author of the *This Modern World* comic strip), *San Francisco Bay Guardian* contributing writer Todd Lavoie, short story writer Lisa K. Buchanan, and humorist Paco Romane.

References

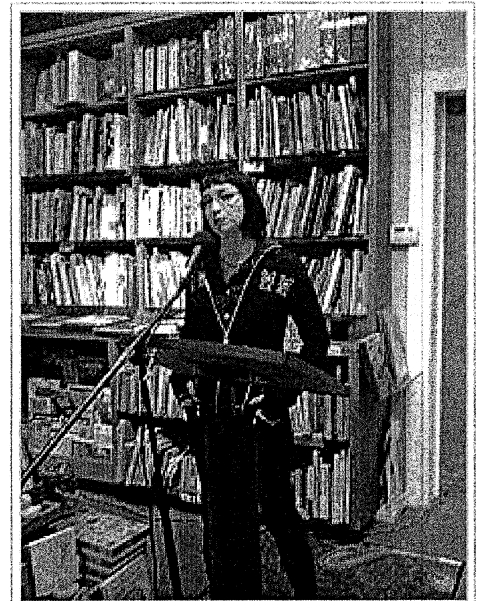
1. "Streitfeld, David. "Bookshops' latest sad plot twist." "Los Angeles Times", February 7, 2007". Latimes.com. 2013-03-02. Retrieved 2014-07-08.
2. "Duxbury, Sarah. "Duo seeks to turn bookstore decline into fiction." "San Francisco Business Times", August 17, 2007". Bizjournals.com. Retrieved 2014-07-08.
3. C.W. Nevius (2009-01-15). "Nevius, C.W. "Bay Area indie bookstores beat the odds." "San Francisco Chronicle", January 15, 2009". Sfgate.com. Retrieved 2014-07-08.
4. "Best Reimagined Bookstore". Sfweekly.com. May 2011. Retrieved 2014-07-08.
5. Cohen, Katherine Powell. *San Francisco's Haight Ashbury* (Arcadia Publishing, 2008)
6. "Video of Ginsberg biographer Bill Morgan speaking about the poet". Fora.tv. 2008-10-23. Retrieved 2014-07-08.

External links

- Official website (<http://www.booksmith.com/>)

Retrieved from "<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Booksmith&oldid=664922973>"

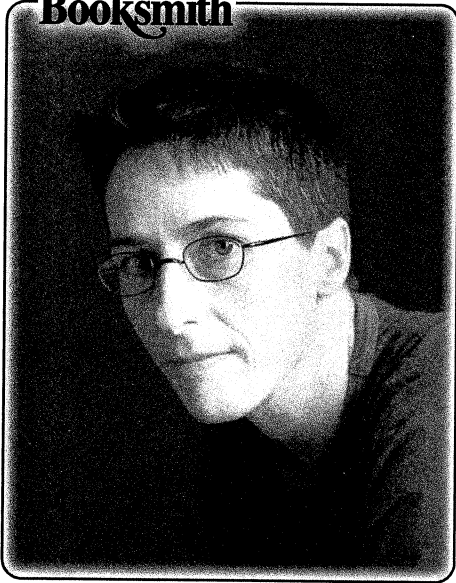
Categories: Bookstores in the San Francisco Bay Area | Independent bookstores of the United States
| Companies based in San Francisco, California | Retail buildings in California
| Buildings and structures in San Francisco, California | Retail companies established in 1976
| 1976 establishments in California



Violet Blue at Booksmith, is reading Mistress Morgana Maye's "Open Letter to the Bush Administration." (The store is SRO)

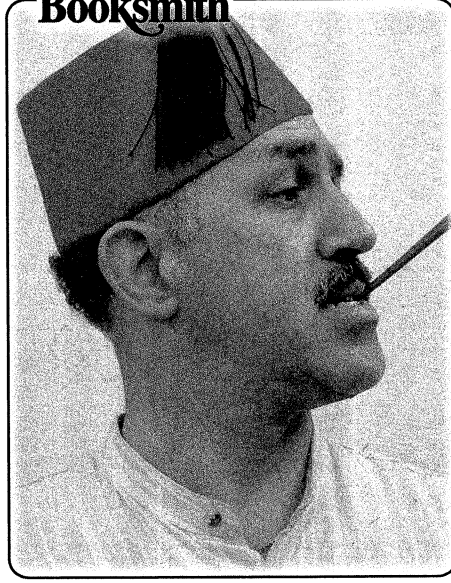
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The Booksmith



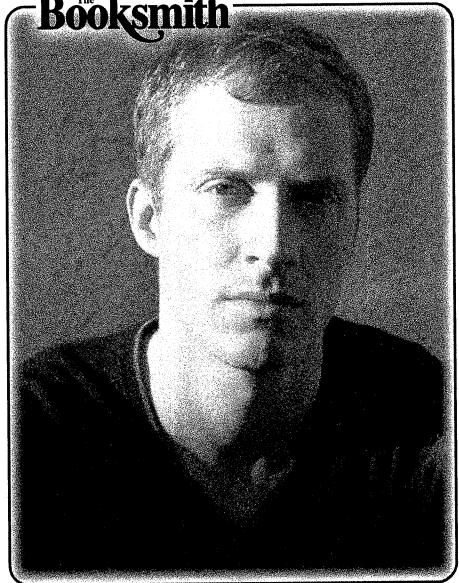
Alison Bechdel

The Booksmith



Khalil Bendib

The Booksmith



Andrew Sean Greer

The Booksmith

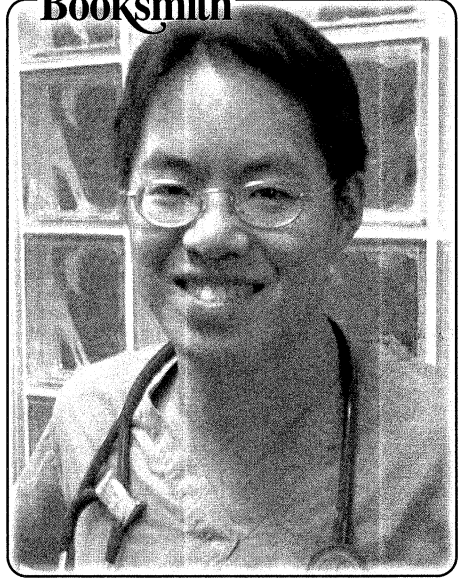


Susan Griffin



Kai Hart Hemmings

The Booksmith



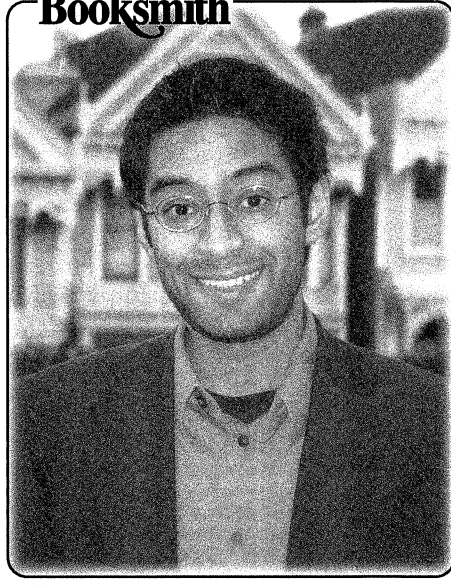
Vincent Lam

The Booksmith



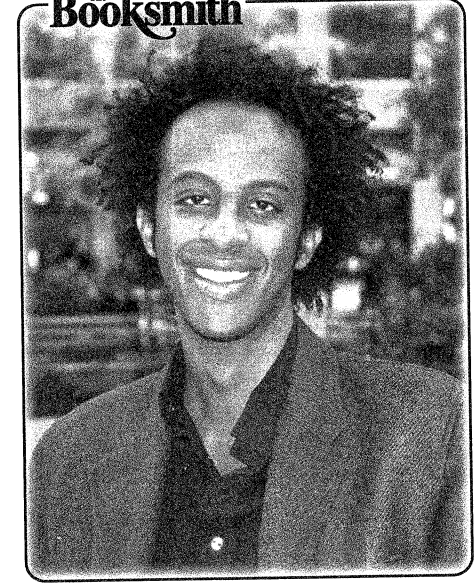
Anne Lamott

The Booksmith



Farhad Manjoo

The Booksmith



Dinaw Mengestu

The Booksmith #1069

— Author Trading Cards —

Alison Bechdel

The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For is the collection Alison Bechdel fans have been waiting for! Gathering material from 11 earlier books, as well as 60 new strips never before published in book form, this new book from the author of the celebrated *Fun Home* chronicles the lives, loves, and politics of Mo, Lois, Sydney, Sparrow, Ginger, Stuart, Clarice, and others. Don't miss this special event an author talk and slideshow with the one-and-only Alison Bechdel.

Monday, November 10, 7:30 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #968

— Author Trading Cards —

Khalil Bendib

In an increasingly Manichean geopolitical world, Khalil Bendib happens to be both "Us" and "Them," American and Muslim, a walking oxymoron - a "Clash of Civilizations" made flesh. He is - by many accounts - the only American political cartoonist with an in-your-face non-Eurocentric perspective. Bendib is a voice of the voiceless. Join us for a discussion and slide show for *Mission Accomplished: Wicked Cartoons by America's Most Wanted Political Cartoonist*.

Thursday, November 8, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #1015

— Author Trading Cards —

Andrew Sean Greer

As he demonstrated in *The Confessions of Max Tivoli*, Andrew Sean Greer can spin a touching narrative based on an intriguing premise. His new book - set in San Francisco in the early 1950's - is *The Story of a Marriage*. "This is a haunting book of breathtaking beauty and restraint. Greer's tone-perfect prose conjures an unforgettable woman who exists both within and somehow above the stifling class, racial and sexual constraints of 1950s America." - Dave Eggers

Thursday, June 12, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #1001

— Author Trading Cards —

Susan Griffin

In *Wrestling with the Angel of Democracy: On Being an American Citizen*, Susan Griffin - poet, feminist, public intellectual - blends history, cultural criticism, and memoir to discover the essence of democracy - the essence of our democracy. From the Declaration of Independence to the war in Iraq, from Thomas Jefferson to Jelly Roll Morton, Griffin reflects upon the rise and fall of the American vision of freedom and equality.

Wednesday April 16, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #932

— Author Trading Cards —

KAUI HART HEMMING

How to explain *The Descendants* — the new novel from San Francisco writer **Kaui Hart Hemmings**. It's *The Lovely Bones* — an odd and heartbreaking coming-of-age story — except that it's much funnier. It's *Prep*, except that in addition to a pitch-perfect portrait of adolescent girls, there's a mom in a coma and a dad bungling his way through parenthood and total catastrophe. It's hilarious, it's tragic, it's a page-turner, and it may well be the best novel out this summer.

Monday, June 18, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

©2007

The Booksmith #947

— Author Trading Cards —

Vincent Lam

Margaret Atwood, upon introducing **Vincent Lam** at the Giller Prize ceremony, said "Direct in style, unsparing though compassionate in observation, subtle in emotion, and occasionally gruesome in humor, *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures* follows four medical students from widely different backgrounds as their stories intertwine, as their illusions shatter, and as the meanings of many lives expand around them." Don't miss this author reading.

Tuesday, September 18, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #996

— Author Trading Cards —

Anne Lamott

Through Anne Lamott's many books (including six novels, a best selling parenting memoir, and a popular guide to writing), the subject the author keeps returning to is faith, her deeply personal - "erratic" at times, she says - journey in Christianity. Her latest book, *Grace (Eventually): Thoughts on Faith*, which is just out in paperback, is her third collection of funny, smart, and prayerful essays-to-live-by.

**** This Booksmith sponsored event will take place at the All Saints Church (1350 Waller St) in San Francisco**

Wednesday, March 26, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #1011

— Author Trading Cards —

Farhad Manjoo

In 2005, Stephen Colbert catapulted the word "truthiness" - the notion of an idea feeling true without any backup evidence - into the public consciousness. Salon.com writer Farhad Manjoo expands upon this concept in *True Enough: Learning to Live in a Post-Fact Society*, a perceptive analysis of the status of truth in the digital age - as well as an exploration of how biases push both liberals and conservatives to interpret news in ways that accord with their personal versions of "reality."

Wednesday, May 14, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #987

— Author Trading Cards —

Dinaw Mengestu

The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears, by Dinaw Mengestu, is a deeply affecting novel about what it means to lose a family and a country - and what it takes to create a new home. "This first novel, by an Ethiopian-American, sings of the immigrant experience, an old American story that people renew every generation, but it sings in an existential key...His straightforward language and his low-key voice combine to make a compelling narrative." - Alan Cheuse

Wednesday, February 13, 7 pm

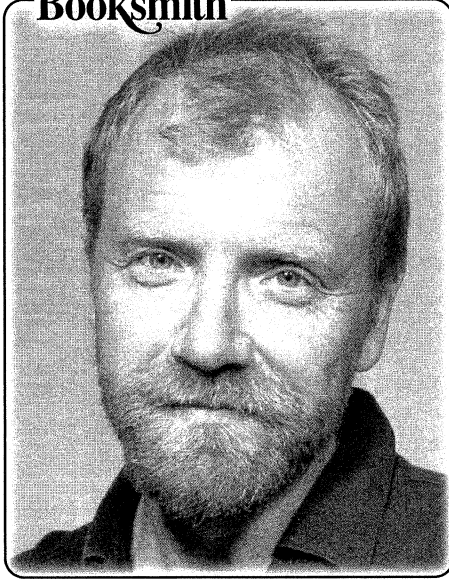
1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith



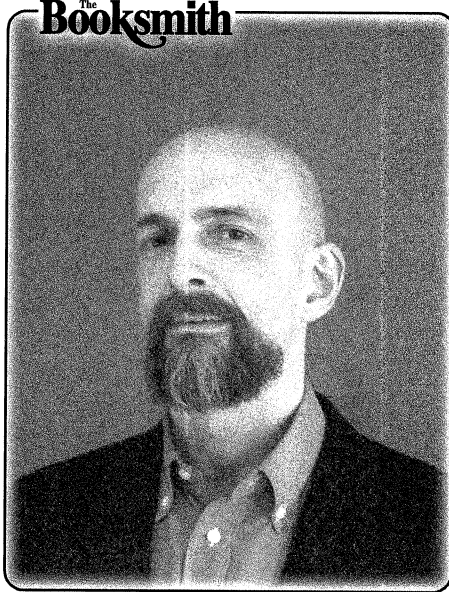
Ann Packer

The Booksmith



George Saunders

The Booksmith



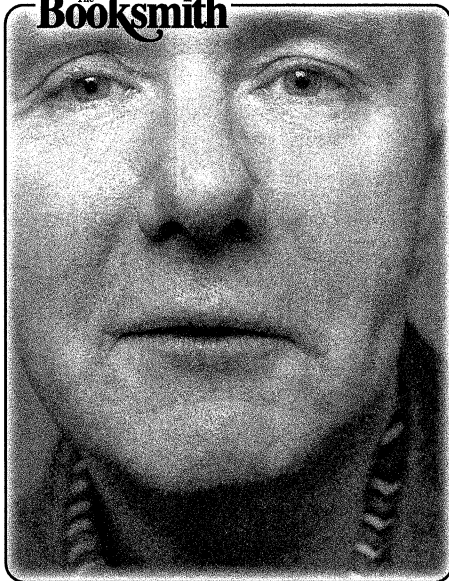
Neal Stephenson

The Booksmith



William T. Vollmann

The Booksmith



Irvine Welsh

The Booksmith #961

— Author Trading Cards —

Ann Packer

Ann Packer's debut novel, *The Dive from Clausen's Pier*, was a Bay Area and nationwide best seller that established her as one of our most gifted chroniclers of the interior lives of women. Now, in her long-awaited second novel, *Songs Without Words*, Packer takes us on a journey into a lifelong friendship pushed to the breaking point. Don't miss this special event.

Tuesday, October 23, 7:30 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #945

— Author Trading Cards —

George Saunders

George Saunders' first foray into nonfiction - *The Braindead Megaphone* - is comprised of sharply observant essays on literature, travel, and politics. Echoing the work of Mark Twain and Kurt Vonnegut, Saunders leads the reader across the rocky political landscape of modern America. The result is a look at the real world brimming with wonderful, marvelous strangeness.

Monday, September 10, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #1040

— Author Trading Cards —

Neal Stephenson

What if we lived in a world where the long-term was taken seriously? *Anathem*, the latest invention by the New York Times best-selling author of *Snow Crash*, *Cryptonomicon* and *The Baroque Cycle*, answers that question with a magnificent new creation: an epic work of great scope, intelligence, and imagination that ushers readers into a recognizable yet strangely inverted world. Join us for a special, multimedia event sponsored by the Long Now Foundation celebrating the release of this new novel.

Tuesday, September 9

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #986

— Author Trading Cards —

William T. Vollmann

William T. Vollmann has investigated humanity's obsession with violence (*Rising Up and Rising Down*), taken a personal look into the hearts and minds of the poor (*Poor People*), and now turns his attentions to America, to our romanticizing of "freedom" and the ways in which we restrict the very liberties we profess to admire. *Riding Toward Everywhere* is the new book from the National Book Award winning author of Europe Central.

Thursday, February 7, 7 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688

The Booksmith #1046

— Author Trading Cards —

Irvine Welsh

In *Crime*, Scottish-born author Irvine Welsh brings his unique brand of literary mayhem to the glitzed-out, drugs-and-danger state of Florida. This just published novel tells the tale of Ray Lennox (a supporting character from the novel *Filth*) who is cast adrift in the Sunshine State and who befriends a young girl in jeopardy. Not all, however, is as it seems. Described by the author as more "an existential thriller than a police procedural crime novel," Welsh's latest is sure to keep readers riveted.

Friday, September 19, 7:30 pm

1644 Haight Street, San Francisco
415 863-8688



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Legacy Business Registry Case Report

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Filing Date: August 22, 2016
Case No.: 2016-010958LBR
Business Name: The Booksmith
Business Address: 1644 Haight Street
Zoning: NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District)/
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1230/011
Applicant: Christin Evans
1644 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed, District 5
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Booksmith is an independent bookstore in the Haight-Ashbury that has served as a literary mecca for neighborhood residents, tourists, and book lovers since 1976. Located on Haight Street between Clayton and Cole Streets, The Booksmith is housed within a one-story commercial building and is well-known for its leading events program that continues to feature prominent figures in the fields of art, journalism, and literature. The business was one of the first bookstores to offer a community Book Swap event, regularly opens its doors to neighbors and community groups for meetings and events, and attracts hundreds each month through its popular fanfiction event, "Shipwreck."

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*
1976
2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, The Booksmith qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. The Booksmith has operated for 40 years.
- ii. The Booksmith has contributed to the Haight-Ashbury community's history and

identity by serving as a neighborhood book store, literary mecca, and venue for high quality literary programming.

- iii. The Booksmith is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define its tradition of bookselling and literary programming.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with the traditions of bookselling and organizing literary events.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. 1644 Haight Street is associated with significant architecture. It is a representative example of a 1920's utilitarian commercial building and is located within the proposed Article 10 Haight-Ashbury Historic Landmark District (added to the Landmark Designation Work Program in August of 2016).

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

Yes. The 1926 structure is considered a "Category A Building" and is located within the California Register-eligible Haight-Ashbury Historic District. It was also identified in the Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Historic Resource Survey (pending approval by the Historic Preservation Commission) as a contributor to a California Register-eligible district.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. *American Bookseller Magazine*, 1998; *Bookselling This Week*, 6/6/1994, "How Much is That Author in the Window?" published by the American Booksellers Association; *SF Gate*, 3/24/2002, "Indy Booksellers Reach Crossroads," by Hillel Italie; *SF Business Times*, 8/17-23/2016, "Duo seeks to turn bookstore decline into fiction," by Sarah Duxbury; *The New York Times*, 12/5/2010, "A Reader's San Francisco," by Gregory Dicum; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/26/2011, "Indie bookstores offer greater sense of community," by Katherine Seligman.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 1644 Haight Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Stock of quality books featuring traditional and emerging literary works
- General interior layout, including window displays and front table displays
- Shelf-talkers (hand written staff book reviews)

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Storefront system, including recessed entryway, terrazzo flooring at entry, vertical and horizontal single pane windows, cornice, and tile and wood siding



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution 786

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Filing Date: August 22, 2016
Case No.: 2016-010958LBR
Business Name: The Booksmith
Business Address: 1644 Haight Street
Zoning: NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District)/
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1230/011
Applicant: Christin Evans
1644 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
Nominated By: Supervisor London Breed, District 5
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

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Information:
415.558.6377

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE BOOKSMITH, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1644 HAIGHT STREET (BLOCK/LOT 1230/011).

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 21, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that The Booksmith qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated in the same location for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for The Booksmith.

Location (if applicable)

- 1644 Haight Street

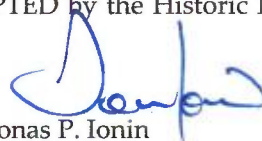
Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Stock of quality books featuring traditional and emerging literary works
- General interior layout, including window displays and front table displays
- Shelf-talkers (hand written staff book reviews)
- Storefront system, including recessed entryway, terrazzo flooring at entry, vertical and horizontal single pane windows, cornice, and tile and wood siding

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2016-010958LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on September 21, 2016.


Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Hyland, Johnck, Johns, Pearlman, Matsuda, Wolfram

NOES: None

ABSENT: Hasz

ADOPTED: September 21, 2016