

## Alexander McCall Smith's Quirky Detective Series Starring Precious Ramotswe Captivates Readers



Alexander McCall Smith

**E**very so often, a special book or series comes along that creates an exciting buzz in our stores. It's one of the joys of bookselling to handsell an extraordinary title and watch the euphoria grow. Recently, that kind of enthusiasm has been building around Alexander McCall Smith and *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, his quirky detective series set in Botswana, Africa.

In 2002, Anchor Books released McCall Smith's first three books in the series about Precious Ramotswe, a feisty private detective from Botswana. The *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* was followed by *Tears of the Giraffe* and *Morality for Beautiful Girls*. Tied together by a gentle pace, a principled tone and a memorable main character, the series has proven extremely popular. This spring Pantheon will release *The Kalahari Typing School For Men*, the fourth book in the series and the first in hardcover.

The author of more than 50 books, McCall Smith is a Scotsman who was born and reared in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia), just north of Botswana. He attended the University of Edinburgh and later taught at the Universities of Swaziland and Botswana. Currently, he is back at the University of Edinburgh as a professor of medical law. He spoke with *Community* from his home in Scotland.

**The character of Detective Precious Ramotswe is a wonderful, unique character. Is she based on someone you knew in Botswana?**

She's a mixture of influences and people, although there is one particular person who gave me the idea of writing about her. I was staying with friends in a village outside of Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, and while going for a walk with my hostess we came upon a splendid lady in a red dress who was what we call of "traditional build." This Botswana lady wanted to give my hostess a chicken for lunch. We went into her yard and there was a chicken run, and she chased this chicken round-and-round with a tremendous smile on her face. The odds were uneven, and she eventually caught it, immediately wrung its neck and presented it to us with a great smile. And I thought what an enterprising, rather impressive woman. And so she was the point at which I thought, well, maybe I should write about one of these very competent, careful Botswana ladies. And then Precious Ramotswe sort of walked into my mind.

**Many mystery and suspense novels today involve more sensational and violent crimes. But your books have been described as gentle, addressing questions of morality and right-versus-wrong. Was that tone a conscious decision on your part?**

Yes. I don't particularly like this sort of violent, distressing, confrontational tone of a lot of crime concerns. I think people want something gentler, where they treat one another with courtesy and so on. And why not cater to that? I don't like the cynical, hard-bitten nature of many contemporary novels, so that is deliberate. These are gentle books.

*Interview continued on page three*

# OUTLOOK

photo by Shel Secunda Photography



Steve Riggio, Chief Executive Officer of Barnes & Noble, Inc.

## The Measure of Our Success

**I**t has been over a decade since we launched our superstores and over five years since we opened up for business online. How are we doing?

### Recent News:

According to the Fall 2002 Equi Trend brand study by Harris Interactive, Barnes & Noble bookstores ranked number one in quality among retail brands (Home Depot was second and Borders was fifth).

Barnes & Noble.com practically tied for first as the top e-commerce site, according to the University of Michigan Customer Satisfaction Survey.

There are many measures of and dimensions to customer satisfaction, but surely these surveys point to the fact that we are doing something right. I believe that these surveys principally reflect how well we perform on the *demand side of the business*, namely, having the books our customers ask for in our stores or are searching for on Barnes & Noble.com. Putting the book in the customer's hand remains the foundation of great customer service in a bookstore.

Maintaining our market leadership, however, is going to require us to build on that foundation by becoming more dynamic merchants: meeting the needs of the demand business will not be enough to fuel growth in comparable-store sales,

which is the principal measure of success in the retail business. We have to build the *impulse side of the business*. In other words, we have to *convert more browsers to buyers*.

This need has much to do with the evolution of the Internet as a pervasive channel not just for sales, but for the *distribution* of intellectual property – often for free. The Internet is affecting the demand side of our business, just as it is affecting every aspect of our society. It is fast becoming a primary information resource, reaching into territory previously served by books.

We cannot ignore this growing trend. We must recognize that there is a paradigm shift in information access. We must act by transforming our stores with a range of bookselling and merchandise initiatives that complement the Internet, as well as offer attractive alternatives, turning more browsers into buyers.

Recent changes to our storefronts, including more prominent display of discounted bestsellers, a feature table for bargain book *former* bestsellers, and our new storefront table of impulse-oriented backlist titles, are the first steps.

SparkNotes is an incredible success both in print and online, and as you will see in this issue, continues to offer new study guides in a variety of formats in new categories. We are about to launch an exciting new series of books, Barnes & Noble Classics, the world's greatest books at affordable prices, which will be featured in the next issue of *Community*. The books will be in every kind of format – hardcover, trade paperback, mass-market paperback, and as e-books. Prices will range from \$3.95 to \$9.95. Over the next few months, we will be introducing more such initiatives, many centered around titles published by Barnes & Noble and Sterling Publishing. The new initiatives at Sterling will also be in our summer issue.

While we must maintain, indeed, build our competence in the demand area of the business, I believe the great opportunity for sales growth lies in becoming more dynamic merchants, offering our customers more of what they want at prices they're willing to pay. We have already proven we can do so in our cafés, where a range of initiatives, including many new products, has fueled sales growth. With your support and hard work, the new initiatives in our core book business will be equally successful. I am confident we can energize our core book business, which is, after all, where we all began and what we know best. ☺

### My current reading:

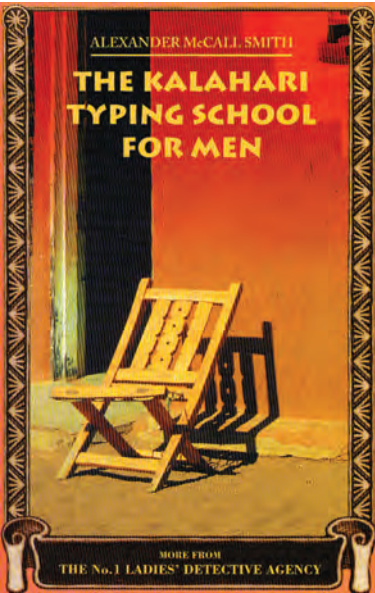
**The First World War**  
by John Keegan

**The Wandering Hill**  
by Larry McMurtry



The jackets and titles of your books are original and unique. Where do they come from?

The artwork from *Ladies' Detective Agency* and *Kalahari Typing School* come from a wonderful book called *Painted Houses of Botswana* by photographer Sandy Grant. The jacket for *Giraffe* is from a Mozambique stamp of the 1930s, and its title comes from a design used in traditional Botswana basket-weaving; the baskets have little brown tear drops down their sides. "Tears of the giraffe" is such a lovely expression that I thought I'd use it. The cover art for *Morality* is from a painting I had seen in the London apartment of my former agent. I thought it was a fabulous picture and eventually got the artist's permission to use it for the third novel. You could say all of the books' titles are a bit quirky.



The *Kalahari Typing School For Men* is the fourth book in The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series.

I have been so touched by the response the books have received in the United States. I think people in the U.S. are open-minded to such things and seem to be rather interested in the new. They're so used to getting a negative picture of Africa – of bleakness and awfulness and all the problems – that they've seized on the idea of an Africa where other things happen that are comfortable and nice. I'm delighted that there's been interest in old, traditional African morality, view of things and courtesies. Those seem to have gone down very well.

What makes your books so different? Characters and setting, or something more?

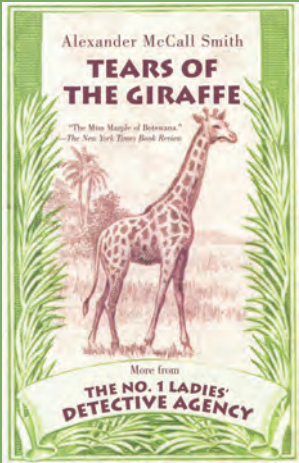
I suppose one would say that the books are in a very unusual setting for many readers. They're in Botswana, a place one doesn't hear a great deal about, but which is a remarkable country. These are books about the quiet moments in people's lives, but with a bit of attention to the humorous possibilities. There are funny things going on all the time. And I suppose people would say that my vision of life is a little bit quirky and that's fine. These books are very unusual and they're not mainstream, but then people seem to like that.

Interview conducted by Mark Levine, Mystery Buyer.

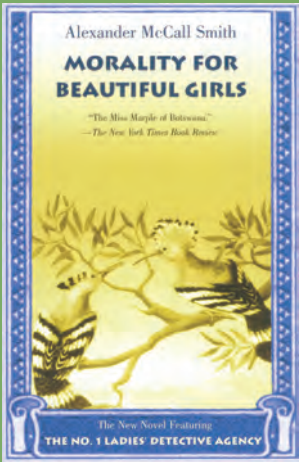
Alexander McCall Smith's No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency Series



*THE NO. 1 LADIES' DETECTIVE AGENCY*  
The first novel in the series tells the story of the cunning and engaging detective Precious Ramotswe, who is drawn to her profession to "help people with problems in their lives." She sets up shop in a small storefront in Gaborone, Botswana, and soon is hired to track down a missing husband, uncover a con man, follow a wayward daughter and find a missing eleven-year-old boy.

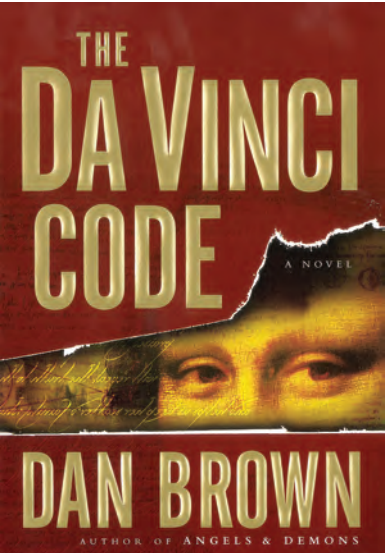


*TEARS OF THE GIRAFFE*  
Precious' adventures continue when she is hired to track a wayward wife, reveal an unscrupulous maid and search for an American man who disappeared into the plains years ago. Meanwhile, she is preparing to marry the good Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni, to promote her talented secretary, Mma Makutsi, and then suddenly finds herself the caretaker of two foster children.



*MORALITY FOR BEAUTIFUL GIRLS*  
This time, Precious investigates the alleged poisoning of the brother of an important government man, while Mma Makutsi gets her first case: determining the moral character of the four finalists of the Miss Beauty and Integrity Contest. It's not all fun however, as The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency is having money problems, and Mr. Matekoni suffers from unexplained depression.

*THE KALAHARI TYPING SCHOOL FOR MEN*  
Now in her late thirties, Precious finds herself with a home, two adopted children, a nice fiancé and many satisfied clients. Of course, problems soon arise, as her son gets involved in the deaths of hoopoe birds in the garden. Meanwhile, Mma Makutsi wants a husband but can't find one, and also needs help to open the Kalahari Typing School for Men, while Precious must deal with a new rival detective agency.



Did You Know?

Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* begins in the Louvre when an elderly curator is found dead in a gallery – his body left in a bizarre configuration amid mind-boggling clues and codes. Harvard professor and renowned symbologist Robert Langdon is possibly the only person who can decipher it all. With the help of young French cryptographer Sophie Neveu, he works through a myriad of messages and puzzles that eventually lead to an extraordinary, unimaginable conclusion.

Dan Brown hangs upside-down to help solve plot challenges. He says it helps shift his entire perspective.

The Da Vinci Code is based on fact — on actual paintings, locations, documents and organizations.

Dramatic evidence may be in Da Vinci's paintings themselves. In fact, many scholars believe he intentionally included in his work clues to a powerful secret that remains protected to this day by a clandestine brotherhood to which he belonged.

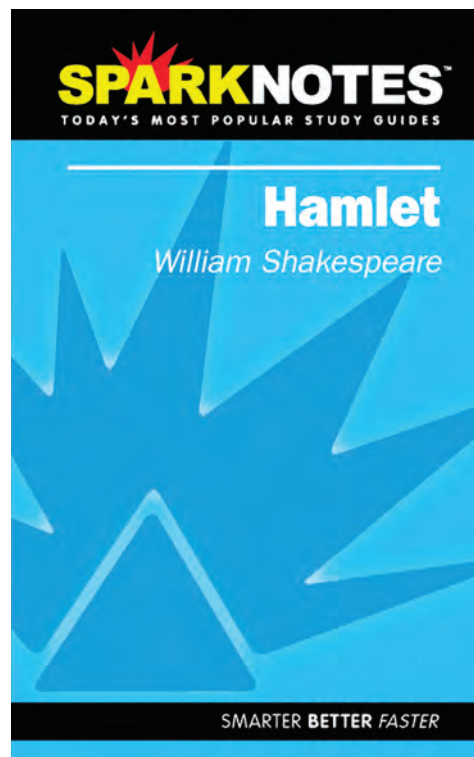
The Divine Proportion works out.



# smarter, better, faster SPARKNOTES LEADS IN EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The success of SparkNotes is phenomenal! In just a few years, SparkNotes has become the leading resource for educational materials, both online and in print. In March 1999, four Harvard seniors created SparkNotes.com, a Web site offering free study guides to students, parents, teachers, and general-interest readers. "I was the first employee hired by SparkNotes in April 1999," says **Justin Kestler**, still on the team as Editorial Director. "We were students and recent graduates writing for other students. We knew what they needed to know to succeed in school because we had just gone through the same experiences ourselves. Our aim was to make the educational process not only more fun and efficient, but also more rewarding."

Word of mouth spread quickly, and SparkNotes.com became a hit from practically its first day online. Today, the site is the world's largest and most popular stand-alone educational Web site, with more than five million registered users. The site's main attraction is the comprehensive study guide collection, which offers more than 1,000 free study guides on everything from literature to chemistry to computer science. Shortly after Barnes & Noble acquired the company in 2001,



SparkNotes' guide to *Hamlet*...

SparkNotes began converting its top literature study-guides titles into print publications. "From the beginning, SparkNotes set out to redefine and dominate the study-guide market, both on the Web and in print," says Justin. "Barnes & Noble was the only possible acquirer for SparkNotes that recognized and valued that combined vision, and in turn helped make it happen."

Previously, Barnes & Noble offered CliffsNotes and Monarch Notes. "The license for Monarch was about to end, and we were in the process of starting our own series of notes when the opportunity to buy SparkNotes came up," says **Alan Kahn**, President of the Barnes & Noble Publishing Group. "The extensive experience of our buyers and booksellers, along with the sales-tracking data from our many years of bookselling, have given us the unique ability to build this business most profitably, and we have. Sales of SparkNotes titles have exceeded our expectations."

Barnes & Noble let the Monarch license expire, and in February 2002, 50 SparkNotes titles went on sale in our stores, selling alongside CliffsNotes. "We outperformed them title by title by some 40 percent," says **Robert Riger**, Associate Publisher of SparkNotes. CliffsNotes were removed in June 2002, and another 100 SparkNotes titles were published in August. "We are now selling at a rate that exceeds the prior year's Cliffs sales in units and dollars, even though ours are one dollar less per book."

Barnes & Noble stores now carry 171 SparkNotes literature titles. Top sellers include guides to *Hamlet*, *The Great Gatsby*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and such recent books as *Snow Falling on Cedars* and *Angela's Ashes*. Each SparkNotes guide contains a plot overview, a note on the author, a guide to characters and themes, a chapter-by-chapter analysis and discussion, as well as key facts, study questions, a quiz, and suggestions for further reading.

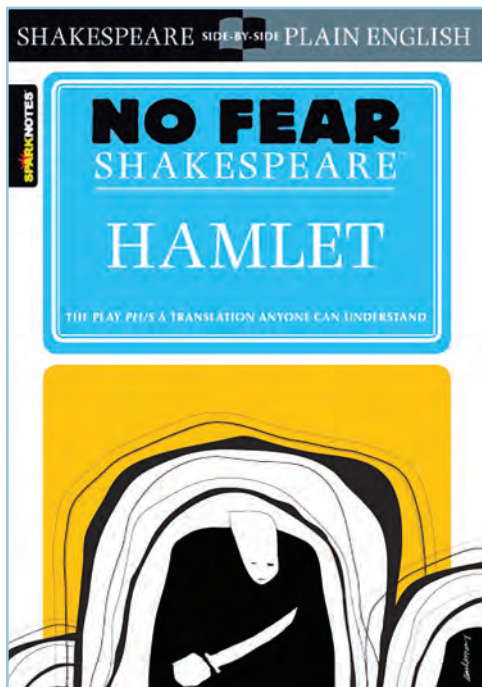
What do authors think of SparkNotes? Frank McCourt said in *Esquire* that the SparkNotes guide to *Angela's Ashes* is "very intelligent." And in the same article, Jeffrey Eugenides said that the guide to *The Virgin Suicides* is "intelligently written, staggeringly comprehensive, and thoughtfully composed.... I think SparkNotes are extremely well done, smart, diligent, informative, [and] flattering." And what do our



SparkNotes SAT & PSAT, a leading title in the Test Prep study guide series.



# Testimonials



...and the "No Fear Shakespeare" *Hamlet* edition.

stores think? "They're one of our top-selling lines of books," says Elsie Colwell, Assistant Store Manager at Store 2847 in Houston, TX — a comment echoed by other Barnes & Noble store managers.

"We intend to be the online and print destination for educational materials," says Dan Weiss, Publisher and Managing Director of SparkNotes. "We've found that our customers want our content in

a variety of formats. Even as we offer our guides for free on our Web site, our print and downloadable PDF sales have been consistently strong. As we expand our publishing plan, Barnes & Noble stores will be selling print titles in a number of different categories."

One of the new categories now in stores is SparkNotes Test Prep, a set of ten study guides for exams such as ACT, SAT, and SAT II. Other SparkNotes categories that we will sell by summer include:

**SparkCharts** - laminated quick-reference review sheets (already on sale in 300 of our stores).

**SparkNotes Outlines** - for high school and college courses in such subjects as economics, physics, chemistry, biology and American history.

**A Reader's Companion** - 12 study/reading guides for book clubs and the general public for such recent works as *White Teeth*, *The Lovely Bones* and *The Corrections*.

**Library of Great Authors** - a series of biographical guides to great authors and their most important works, from Dostoevsky to J. K. Rowling.

**No Fear Shakespeare** - featuring the text of the original Shakespeare play on the left and a translation into modern American English on the right, making the play more accessible to students and the general public.

SparkNotes, already so popular on the Web, has rapidly become a top-selling line of books in our stores. The multi-channel strategy that works so well for Barnes & Noble, Inc. and Barnes & Noble.com is working just as well for SparkNotes.com and SparkNotes in print.

Written by David Kuryk, Director of Editorial Services.

"Your notes are just that: study notes, not replacement notes; and they are quick, to the point, well-explained and cross-referenced. I will probably be recommending them to my students as study helps because of these qualities. Every SparkNotes book is worth much more than the very reasonable price paid for its purchase."

— Andrew M., English teacher

"I am doing a horticulture course at a small school in an isolated town in the southwest of Tasmania. I stumbled upon you quite by accident and now you have changed my life. I am going to pass this site on to my teacher; it's just what we've been searching for."

— Meghan J.

"My professors love your site. They use it themselves, calling SparkNotes.com the best reference on practically any subject on the Internet."

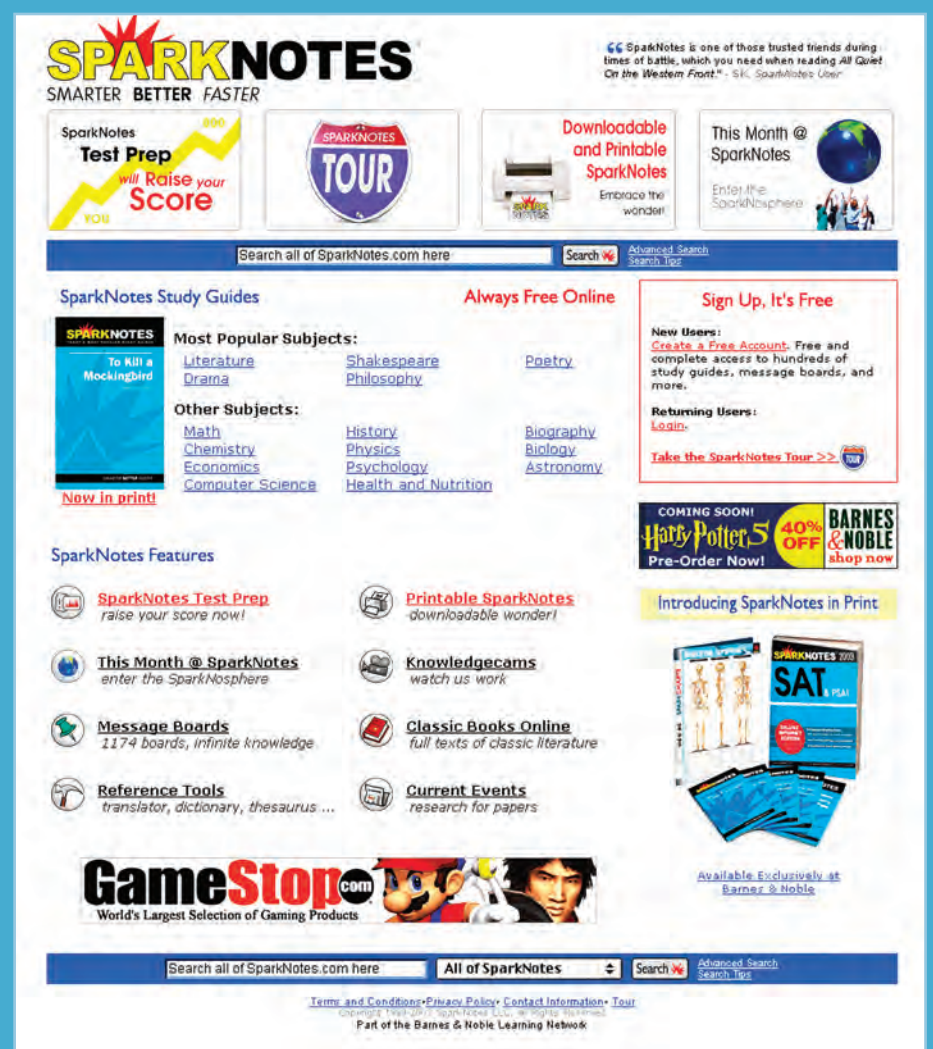
— Richard W.

"I belong to a library book club and find SparkNotes invaluable to help us navigate novels. The questions you provide are provoking and spark a lot of dialog among our members. Keep up the great work!"

— Stefani D.

"I'm writing to tell you that SparkNotes.com is simply the BEST informational site on the Internet today."

— Christopher B.



The SparkNotes.com homepage



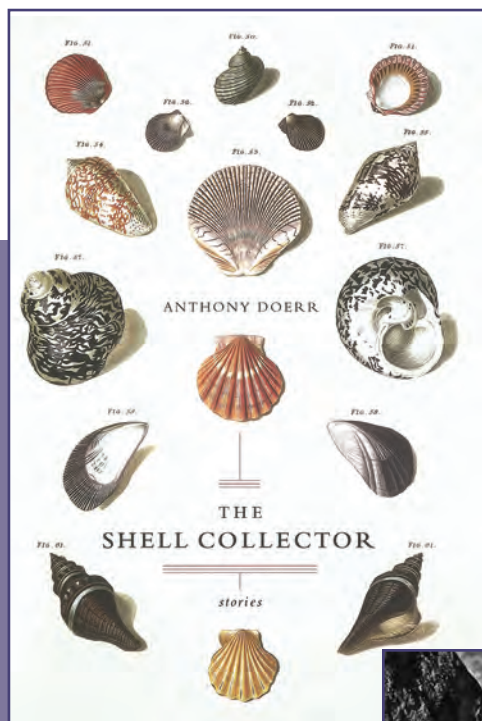
# 2002 D

## Short Story Col

"H"e's the poster child for the Discover program." That's how Jill Lamar, Manager and Editor of the Discover Great New Writers program, describes Anthony Doerr, whose debut effort, *The Shell Collector*, won the 2002 Discover Award for fiction. In eight different tales, the 29-year-old Doerr explores the bittersweet relationship between man and nature. "It's exciting to see a writer so young and talented be recognized," says Jill. And it's the first time a short story collection has earned the Discover Award. In the title story, a blind, reclusive shell collector accidentally discovers the cure for a fatal disease in the deadly sting of a cone shell. In "The Hunter's Wife," a Montana hunter's beliefs are challenged by his psychically gifted wife. The stories range from Africa to Eastern Europe to the suburbs of Ohio, and are inhabited by unforgettable characters.

The Discover Award for nonfiction went to journalist Dina Temple-Raston for *A Death in Texas*, a chilling account of the 1998 murder of James Byrd, Jr. in Jasper, TX and its social and political repercussions. From the initial investigation to the sentencing of the killers, Temple-Raston covers all the events and reactions surrounding the horrific hate crime. "This book is a call to action," says Jill. "You can't help being profoundly moved and disturbed by what is described."

Taking second place for fiction was Julie Otsuka's spare but powerful novel *When the Emperor Was Divine*, detailing the



*The Shell Collector* by Anthony Doerr

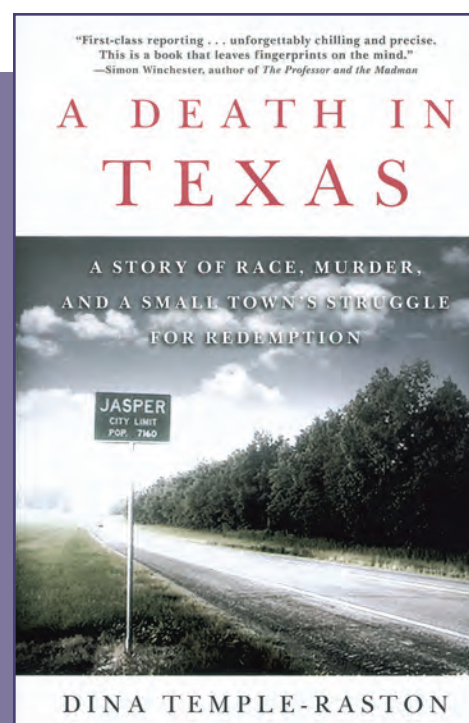
### Fiction Winner

#### *The Shell Collector*



photo by Hal Eastman

Anthony Doerr's *The Shell Collector* is the first short story collection to be awarded the Discover Great New Writers Award.



*A Death in Texas* by Dina Temple-Raston

### Nonfiction Winner

#### *A Death in Texas*



photo by Ralph Aiswang

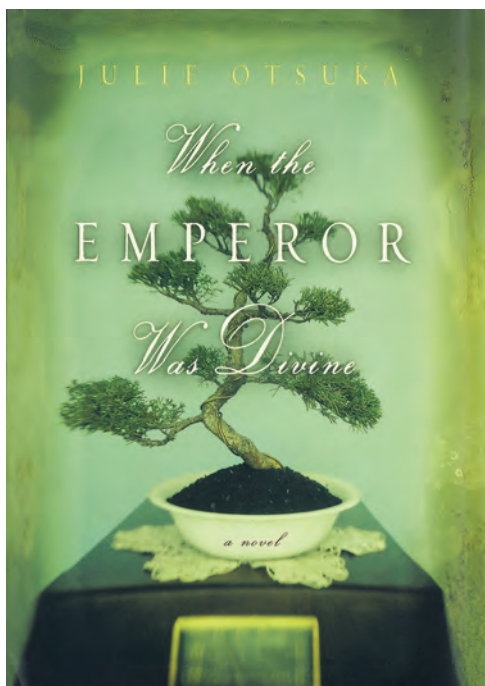
Journalist Dina Temple-Raston has written a chilling account of the 1998 murder of James Byrd, Jr.



# Discover Award Winners

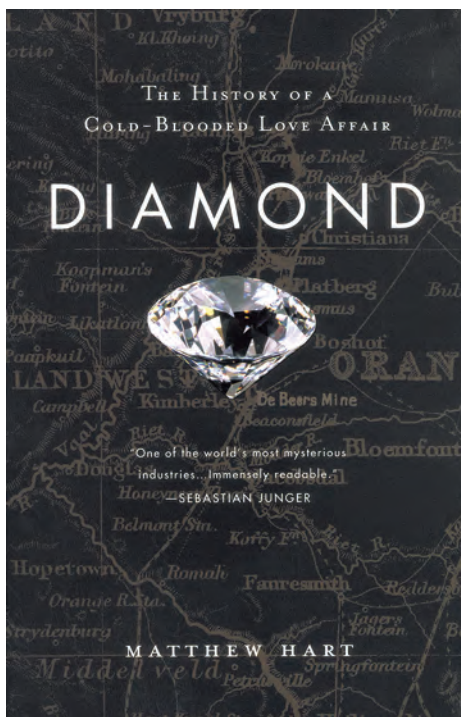
## Collection Named Fiction Winner for the First Time

### 2nd Place, Fiction



*When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka

### 2nd Place, Nonfiction



*Diamond* by Matthew Hart

internment of a Japanese-American family during World War II. *Diamond*, by Matthew Hart, an absorbing account of the history and global politics surrounding the world's most precious gems, placed second for nonfiction. The two second-place finalists were awarded \$2,500.

Alice Sebold's bestselling fiction debut, *The Lovely Bones*, took third place for fiction. Readers and critics alike have been captivated by Sebold's story of a 14-year-old rape and murder victim who watches from "heaven" as her family grapples with grief over her loss. Third place for nonfiction went to *Local Wonders*, Ted Kooser's thoroughly charming collection of essays about life in and around his home in the "Bohemian Alps" (the hills of eastern Nebraska). Both third-place finalists received \$1,000.

Jurists for fiction this year included Tony Earley (*Jim the Boy*), Colum McCann (*Dancer*), and Anita Shreve (*Sea Glass*). Nonfiction jurists were Natalie Angier (*Woman: An Intimate Geography*), Verlyn Klinkenborg (*The Rural Life*), and Susan Orlean (*The Orchid Thief*). Along with their prize money of \$10,000, both first-place Discover Award winners will enjoy marketing and advertising support from Barnes & Noble for the remainder of the year, ensuring visibility in stores and on bn.com. All six Discover Award finalists were honored at a ceremony at Store 2675 in New York City in March.

The Discover program kicked off the 2003 reading season with two exciting changes. First, readership for the program has been extended beyond the New York area in an effort to include a select group of booksellers across the country. And second, beginning with this summer's reading, submissions to the Discover program will include teen fiction for the first time.

The success of the Discover program continues far beyond Barnes & Noble, and several of our "discovered" writers were tapped for major literary awards and other notoriety in 2002. Adam Haslett's short story collection *You Are Not a Stranger Here* was named a National Book Award Finalist and a *Today Show* Book Club selection. Paulette Jiles's *Enemy Women* and Noelle Howey's *Dress Codes* were both featured on *Good Morning America's* Read This Book Club; and Yann Martel won the 2002 Man Booker Prize for his novel, *Life of Pi*.

Now in its thirteenth year, the Discover Great New Writers program continues to provide an unparalleled opportunity for talented new authors to meet an eager reading public. Who have you discovered lately? ●

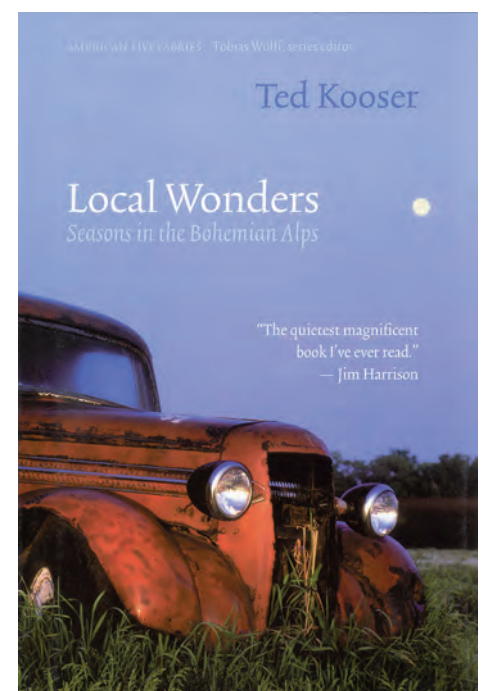
Written by Sandhya Kolachina, Internal Communications Coordinator.

### 3rd Place, Fiction



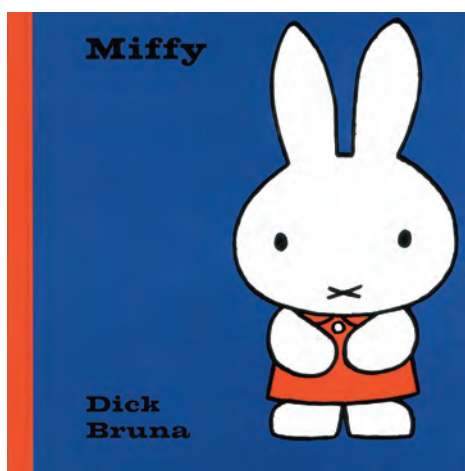
*The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold

### 3rd Place, Nonfiction



*Local Wonders* by Ted Kooser





In this celebrated first story, Miffy arrives with much fanfare at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bunny.

# The Miffy Extravaganza

**Books & Merchandise Offered Exclusively In Our Stores**

Many booksellers are familiar with Miffy, the little Dutch rabbit featured in books by Dick Bruna. This spring, Miffy, her family and friends are coming to America through an exclusive licensing agreement with Barnes & Noble that promises to bring retail stardom to the European bunny. We'll be the only retailer selling Miffy books in our stores and on bn.com in 2003.

The Miffy extravaganza started in February when Barnes & Noble Children's Departments began featuring various exclusive books and merchandise: 15 popular Miffy titles, plushes, sidewalk chalk, jigsaw puzzles, jewelry boxes, twisting cans, lace-up sewing cards and card games. In addition, costumed Miffy characters will visit stores and preside over new store openings. And the Miffy mania isn't confined to books and merchandise. This month, Nickelodeon's *Noggin* will present a new half-hour program featuring Miffy and friends.

Boris and Barbara Bear (loosely based on the author and his wife), Poppy Pig, Snuffy the Dog and Miffy's best friend Melanie have also been popular in Europe, Japan and Australia since they hit the scene in 1956. The Miffy series has sold more than 80 million books and has been translated into 40 languages.

"I had a pet bunny when I was young," Bruna recalls. The idea for the character came later while he watched a rabbit come into his garden. "As I made up bedtime stories for my children, the subject became a rabbit who had



Dick Bruna created Miffy in 1956.


photo by Ferry Andre de la Porte

many adventures." It was then that Bruna began drawing rabbits.

Bruna thinks the worldwide popularity of the Miffy series is due to the style of his drawing: single fluid lines, cut-out shapes and bold colors, all inspired by Matisse. "I prefer to use primary colors — red, yellow and blue — and have added green, brown and grey to my palette because I needed these colors for my stories," he says. "For example; green for grass, brown for bears and grey for elephants."

"Miffy's adventures with her friends and family resonate with children worldwide because they reflect my experiences with my children and grandchildren," says Bruna. "For example, *Miffy in the Tent* was made after I saw my granddaughter playing in a little yellow tent in our garden in the summer." In fact, each title deals with a universal theme in children's lives such as going to school, celebrating a birthday or riding a bicycle.

Perhaps the key to Miffy's staying power is simplicity. By reducing images to their essence, they become like pictograms, easily remembered and recognized in any culture. And the books' bright colors grab the attention of even the youngest children, while the characters' open and honest approach to life mirrors their audience's worldview and creates a strong bond between reader and book.

"We're delighted to be the ambassador for the world-renowned Miffy and Friends," says **Josalyn Moran**, Director of Children's Books. "The bright colors, cheerful rhythms and adorable characters will delight preschoolers around the country." 

*Written by Josalyn Moran, Director of Children's Books.*



Various exclusive Barnes & Noble Miffy merchandise.



# BARNES & NOBLE.com's Meet the WRITERS

bringing authors to life

With a roster featuring more than 300 authors — from literary icons Charles Dickens and Virginia Woolf to current bestsellers Michael Cunningham and Alice Sebold — Barnes & Noble.com's Meet the Writers program points the spotlight where books begin: on writers.

"Our customers are always looking for more information about their favorite writers, along with recommendations on what to read next," says **Brenda Marsh**, Vice President of Content for Barnes & Noble.com. "Meet the Writers offers both, allowing readers really to get to know authors — and find their books — in one convenient place."

Since its launch in June 2002, the program has received phenomenal feedback from both customers and authors. Each featured writer's page is filled with informative and entertaining content, including a chronological list of published works, a biography and recommendations on which books to read first. They also include links to writers' official web sites, and suggestions about similar or related authors.

Meet the Writers also contains a lot of fun facts. For example, did you know that Anne Rice's real name is Howard Allen O'Brien, or that Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket) was voted Class Clown, Best Actor, Chatterbox, and Teacher's Pet in high school?

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the program is the fact that the authors actually participate. Our exclusive Meet the Writers questionnaire enables writers to share information about themselves with readers, revealing their own best-loved books, pastimes, inspirations and other facts. Fans can learn everything from Scott Turow's favorite movies (*Unforgiven*, *The Godfather*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Usual Suspects*), to Michael Cunningham's taste in music (Mozart's *Requiem* and Beck).

The newest feature of Meet the Writers is exclusive audio and video interviews. Users can listen to a clip of Robert Jordan refusing to give away the plot to his final book ("Not even my editor knows — and she's my wife!"), or sit in on a panel discussion with authors and watch them work crowds at Barnes & Noble store events. In fact, authors have provided some memorable moments: "I used to say when I was younger that with the power of a story, I could seduce any man," said Isabel Allende, author of *Daughter of Fortune*. "Now I am more modest." And Jamie Oliver, author of *The Naked Chef*, advises readers not to cook naked at home. "A possible health and safety hazard," he said.

For readers who must meet their favorites in person, Meet the Writers also includes links to Barnes & Noble store event listings that provide information about authors' appearances. They may also sign up for free Writer Alerts, e-mails that provide information about the latest releases from selected authors.

Meet the Writers is fully integrated throughout Barnes & Noble.com with links to product, search and merchandising pages so that customers can always find the feature they want. "Nowhere on the Web are writers showcased with such care and detail," says **Kevin Ryan**, Vice President for Content Development. "And our readers and authors are responding to that."

*Written by Amanda Reid, Features Editor for Barnes & Noble.com, who never fails to get a little starstruck everytime she "Meets the Writers."*



Barnes & Noble.com's Meet the Writers features biographies, interview excerpts and much more.



The Newcomers feature in Meet the Writers.

Alice Sebold, author of *The Lovely Bones*, is featured in Meet the Writers.



# Springbooks

CRM **Jennifer Phillips** at Store 2578 in Brookfield, WI recommends *How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon?*, the follow-up to *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?* by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague. “Kids learn what not to do when they’re sick, and also what to do to get well, all while being entertained with the rhyming story and hilarious illustrations,” says Jennifer. “I think it will be one of the most important books of the year,” says Buyer **Sessalee Hensley** about *The Book of Salt* by Monique Truong. The novel deals with the lives of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas as seen from the unusual perspective of their Vietnamese cook.

The Discover Great New Writers Book Club at Store 2976 in Montgomeryville, PA plans to celebrate Daylight Savings Time in April by reading *A Sideways Look at Time* by Jay Griffiths. **Maddie Hjulstrom**, CRM and book group leader, says “What makes this book intriguing is realizing how differently we perceive time depending on our culture, gender and circumstances.”

**Amanda Schilling**, who buys Libros En Español, has high words of praise for *La Multitud Errante*, a moving novella about war refugees forced to become nomads. This all-too-contemporary fiction is by Columbian author Laura Restrepo.

ASM **Renee Q. Brown** at Store 1893 in Jenkintown, PA recommends *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson to both history buffs and true crime

readers. It’s a vivid, true account of two visionary men whose fates were linked by the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893. The architect Daniel Burnham (who designed the Flatiron Building in New York City) battled against the clock to build the Fair, nicknamed the “White City” for its majestic splendor. Meanwhile, serial killer Dr. Henry Holmes used the fair to lure victims to his World’s Fair Hotel, which became a palace of horror where he murdered and mutilated as many as 200 people.

Buyer **Tim Flannigan** nominates Elaine Pagels’ *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*. Tim believes that Pagels’ deeply personal view of the ancient Gnostic gospel will receive strong media attention.

Everyone at Store 2994 in Palmdale, CA is talking about *The Seduction of Water*, Carol Goodman’s story of a daughter in search of her mother’s secrets. “It’s an Irish fairytale that weaves through unsettling discoveries surrounding the storyteller’s death,” says SM **Pam Early**. “The novel is an intriguing, enthralling page turner.”

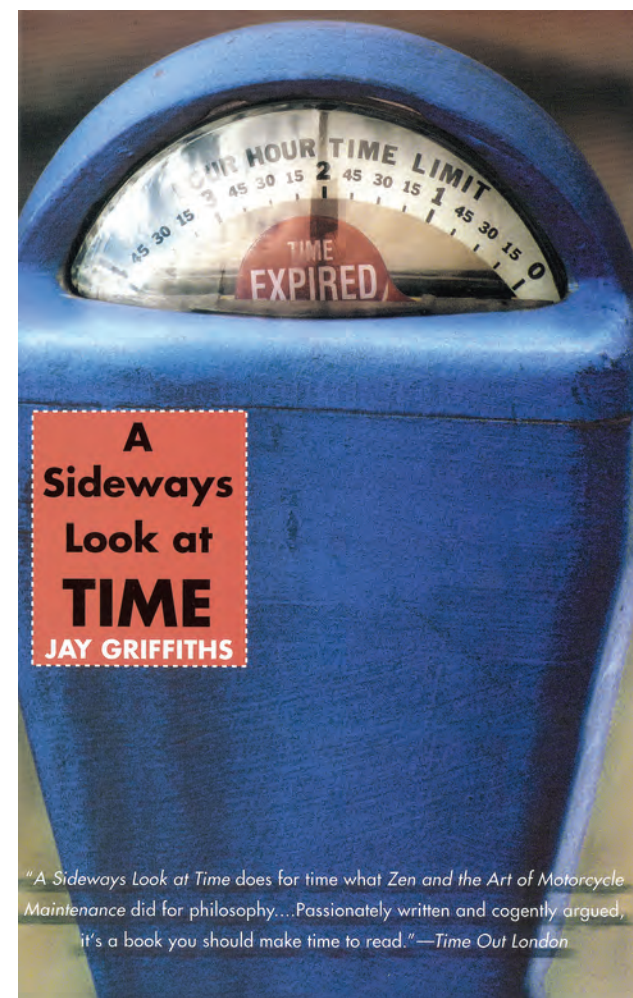
Buyer **Sharon Bosley** votes for Simon Winchester’s *Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded* about the 1883 volcanic eruption which killed 36,000 people. Winchester also wrote *The Map That Changed the World* and *The Professor and the Madman*. “The latest book is an unforgettable read,” Sharon reports.

Buyer **Tommy Dreiling** recommends Lois Sherr Dubin’s *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment*. “It’s a thoroughly beautiful and completely affordable book,” says Tommy. In fact, the paperback pictorial is priced at just \$29.95.

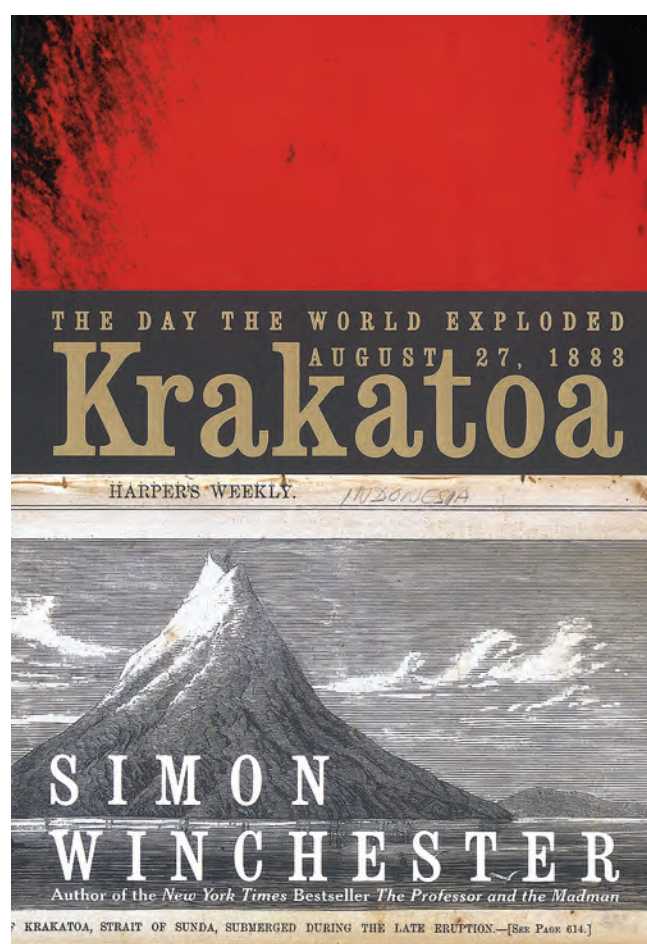
*Emperor: The Gates of Rome* by Conn Iggulden is the choice of **Bruce Filbeck**, Head Cashier at Store 2696 in Port Huron, MI. It’s a story speculating on the life of Julius Caesar’s childhood through teen years. “One hazard of writing fiction about historical characters is that the reader knows the ultimate fate of the protagonist, so surprise endings are difficult,” says Bruce. “But Iggulden succeeds at this. He crafts the main and sub-plots in sufficient detail to make them captivating.”

Buyer **Lynne Widli** recommends *Lily Dale: The True Story of the Town That Talks to the Dead* by Christine Wicker, a story about a village in upstate New York where psychics and mediums thrive. “I’m not the only person who found this wonderful book fascinating,” says Lynne. “The Discover group named it one of their spring selections.”

**Mandy Dunlap**, CRM at Store 2717 in Huntsville, AL recommends *The Angel By My Side* by local resident and author Mike Lingenfelter. It’s a moving story about the relationship between the writer and Dakota, the golden retriever that saved his life. “It really makes you believe in miracles and the healing power that a faithful friend can have on a life,” says Mandy. 🐾



“A Sideways Look at Time does for time what Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance did for philosophy....Passionately written and cogently argued, it’s a book you should make time to read.”—*Time Out London*



*Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded* by Simon Winchester



# our communities

**South Burlington, VT** – Store 2776 recently formed a partnership with The Traveling Storyteller, a Vermont-based theater troupe, to create and present original musical puppet plays. Designed to complement our Close the Book on Hate campaign, the plays will be performed through May and include *The Elves and the Shoemaker*, *Susan's Friend* and *The Hill Family*. "These events have provided a forum to share Close the Book materials with customers, and to inform area teachers about Barnes & Noble's involvement in literacy and education," says CRM **Nance Nahmias**.

**Yonkers, NY** – The Yonkers Early Childhood Initiative, sponsored by the Mayor's office, recently designated Store 2889 as a Family Friendly Business. According to CRM **Eric Payne**, the store received the honor for fulfilling three important criteria: making it easy for families to use the store, helping booksellers balance family and work, and supporting community events and programs. In 2002, the store hosted a young poets' night for students from PS 95 in the Bronx (which was attended by more than 140 parents, students and teachers) and a musical storytime emceed by pianist John Sciallo, which gave children the opportunity to come on stage and "compose" their own music. The store also received a Mayoral Citation and a certificate of recognition from the City Council of Yonkers for its active role in the community.

**Vernon Hills, IL** – Store 2695 is partnering with local corporations like W.W. Grainger, Inc. of Lake Forest and CDW of Vernon Hills to provide books for at-risk students. CRM **Monica Del Angel** works regularly with local companies to underwrite the store's Literacy Partnership Program, which enables low-income students in Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lake County to select and "purchase" books during a group visit. Since the program's inception a year ago, more than 200 students — who might otherwise never own books — have been selected to participate in the program. During the 2002 holiday period, booksellers at Store 2695 volunteered to gift wrap at the store with Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteers to raise additional money for the program.

**Reno, NV** – Store 2938

## The Giving Season

'T'was just before Christmas and all through the store  
Booksellers were finding out what the holidays are for  
After two months of planning the stage was now set  
For many special dreams and wishes to be met.

With Store Manager **David Sweet** at the wheel  
The staff of booksellers helped prove Santa is real  
Working together, they helped spread some joy  
To an entire school of less privileged girls and boys.

While all the best plans were carefully laid  
Many donations were happily made  
Every bookseller gave at least five bucks  
And shopping they went to load up their trucks.

Two-hundred twenty-eight books in front of us we see  
Wrapped by Managers **Kym Bushmire** and **Cari Parsley**  
Each and every student received a book to treasure  
A gift from Barnes & Noble, our pleasure.

The community pulled together, the donations did flow  
From food to juice to trees with fake snow  
The school gym would be the place to be  
For a party for the students and their families.

All hearts involved grew three sizes that day  
To prove yet again if there's a will, there's a way  
And a lesson was learned by 2938 that season  
A way will be found when giving is the reason.

## Bookseller Highlights

**Durham, NC** – Parade lover and CRM at Store 2631, **Pamela Pease** combined whimsical artwork with the magic of pop-up engineering to create *Macy's On Parade! A Pop-Up Book for Children of All Ages*, published in October 2002 by Paintbox Press. The project began in November 2000 as Pam watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade™ and began to imagine the whole spectacle as a three-dimensional book. After seeing her preliminary concepts, Macy's gave permission to proceed. Designed to delight both kids and adults,

*Macy's on Parade!* celebrates all the highlights and pageantry of the beloved parade: marching bands, majestic floats and giant character balloons, all climaxed by Santa's arrival at Macy's Herald Square. Sidebar text on each page offers fascinating behind-the-scene facts and anecdotes for older readers.

### MACY'S ON PARADE!



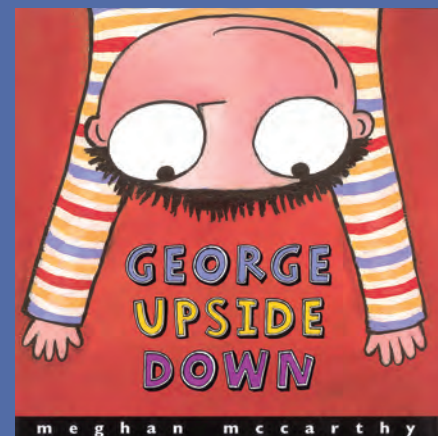
A Pop-Up Book for Children of All Ages  
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
PAMELA PEASE

*Macy's on Parade!* by Store 2631's Pamela Pease.

**Irvine, CA** – A poem by bookseller **Erin Walsh Moncada** at Store 1530 recently won the 2002

*Writer's Digest* Grand Prize. "Love After September Eleventh," a sonnet Erin dedicated to her husband, was chosen from more than 19,000 entries. The prize included \$1,500 and a trip to New York City with a *Writer's Digest* editor to meet editors and agents. Erin, who has an English degree from the University of Washington, is working on her second novel and hopes that the award will open doors to a writing career.

**New York, NY** – **Meghan McCarthy**, Bookseller at Store 2675, makes her "topsy turvy" debut into the world of picture books with *George Upside Down*, published in March by Viking Children's Books. The book combines bright colors and an appealingly quirky story to tell us about George, a little boy who likes to do what many children do — read, watch TV and paint pictures — except he does them upside down!



Meghan McCarthy, bookseller at Store 2675, is *George Upside Down's* writer and illustrator.



## 20 & 25 Year Service Award Winners

During the past holiday season, Barnes & Noble recognized those booksellers who have been continuously employed with Barnes & Noble, Inc. for more than five years. These Service Awards acknowledge their dedication to the company and celebrate their many years of outstanding service and contributions to the craft of book-selling. Approximately 1650 booksellers in our stores and 200 Home Office booksellers received Service Awards. Booksellers were presented with Barnes & Noble pins noting their time of service, which ranged from five to 25 years. Please join us in congratulating these honorees.

### 20 Years

12

<b>Dolores Bangle</b>	<b>2915</b>
<b>Della Burgess</b>	<b>2906</b>
<b>Elsie Colwell</b>	<b>2847</b>
<b>Linda Sue Combs</b>	<b>524</b>
<b>Catherine Cooper</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Fernando Costales</b>	<b>Home Office</b>
<b>Shirley Anne Fletcher</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>Ann Hadel</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Anne Marie Holland</b>	<b>2971</b>
<b>Betty Judson</b>	<b>1934</b>
<b>Joseph Lepore</b>	<b>Home Office</b>
<b>Ruth McKeegan</b>	<b>1960</b>
<b>Don Miller</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Eloy Ortiz</b>	<b>522</b>
<b>Don Vanderstouw</b>	<b>2848</b>
<b>Clark Williams</b>	<b>2690</b>

### 25 Years

<b>Luis Armenta</b>	<b>Home Office</b>
<b>Stephen Aymond</b>	<b>2856</b>
<b>Jeanne Johnson</b>	<b>1506</b>
<b>Lucy Shonyo</b>	<b>MN Regional Office</b>

## 2002 Universal Gift Card Contest Winners

Region	District	Store	City
5	91	1818	New Orleans, LA
6	101	2030	Holmdel, NJ
7	129	2944	Milwaukee, WI
8	142	2774	Costa Mesa, CA
9	119	1982	Fort Worth, TX
10	60	2082	Smithfield, RI
1	26	1685	King of Prussia, PA

**BARNES & NOBLE**  
BOOKSELLERS  
*community*  
Issue 16, Spring 2003

*Community* is published quarterly by Corporate Communications.

**Publisher**  
Mary Ellen Keating

**Managing Editor**  
Nancy Maloney

**Editorial Coordinator**  
Sandhya Kolachina

**Contributors**  
Sessalee Hensley, Sandhya Kolachina, David Kuryk, Mark Levine, Josalyn Moran, Billy MacKay, Amanda Reid, and Steve Riggio

**Editorial Consultant**  
Steve Bolerjack

**Design**  
Mongrel Creative

Story suggestions and contributions are welcome and appreciated; photos and illustrations will be returned. Letters to the Editor are also welcome.

**Please send to:**  
Nancy Maloney  
Barnes & Noble  
122 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10011  
**Email** [communitynewsletter@bn.com](mailto:communitynewsletter@bn.com)  
**Fax** 212.807.6033

## Congratulations Booksellers!

We collected 83,306 books during our 2002 Holiday Book Drive.

# our communities