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The Villager

That's all she wrote: B & N to close

By amNY 0 comments Posted on April 17, 2007



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By Kristin Edwards

Large retailers like Barnes & Noble are usually



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considered a threat to smaller businesses and are often blamed for driving them out of business.

In the East Village, however, the bookstore competition will get a little lighter when the Barnes & Nobles at 4 Astor Pl. closes down. The New York Post reported last week the store will be closing at the end of the year.

The Post reported that the company's shares have decreased 10 percent this year following a decrease in revenue.

Last Friday, however, business at the Astor Pl. bookstore looked good. On the ground-floor level, there was a line of shoppers waiting to make purchases at the register, while others perused books on the shelves and display tables. Upstairs, nearly every table in the store's cafe was filled with people drinking coffee and poring over magazines. It was a sharp contrast to the handful of customers at Shakespeare & Co., at 716 Broadway, just around the corner.

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However, not everyone who goes to Barnes & Noble makes a purchase.

Bansi Kachalia, a Pace University senior, said the Barnes & Noble was a great place to “go and hang out while waiting to meet up with someone or to just chill at before you go somewhere else.” She said while she enjoys flipping through the books and magazines, she rarely buys anything.

Mary Ellen Keating, a Barnes & Nobles spokesperson, denied any connection between lower stock prices and the closing of the store.

“This has nothing to do with sales, this is about rent,” she said. “The store is closing because we can’t afford the rent. We wish we could stay, but we can’t.”

With Barnes & Noble closed, the area will be relying on smaller bookstores, including St. Mark’s Book Shop, at 31 Third Ave., and East Village Books, at 99 St. Mark’s Pl., as well as Shakespeare & Co.

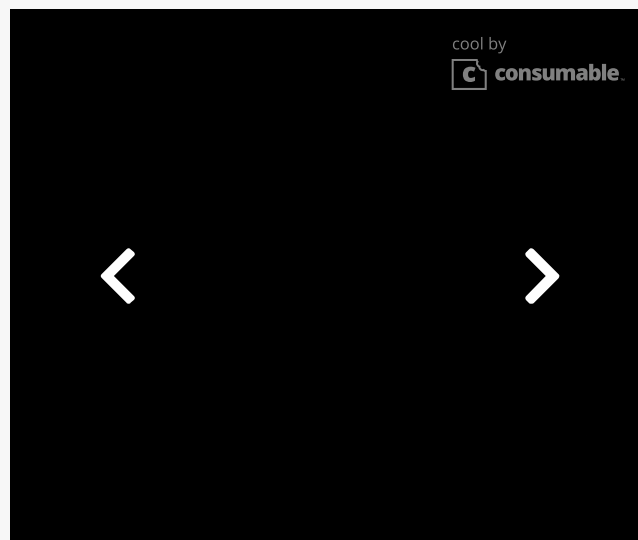



Keith McEvoy, Shakespeare & Co.’s manager, said their store doesn’t face any threat of closing.

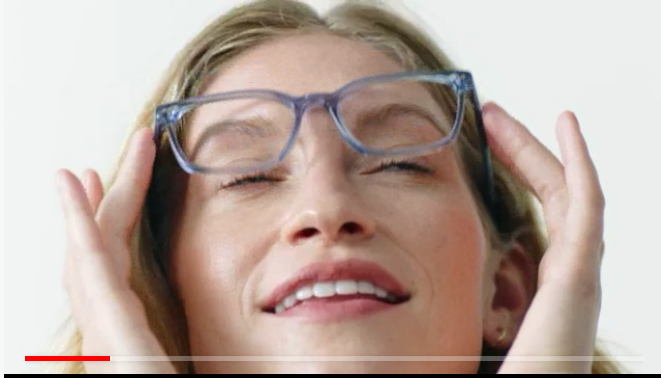
“We’re doing fairly well,” he said. Asked if he though Internet sites like Amazon.com were affecting sales, he said, “It obviously has an effect, and is changing how we do business. But we have a big business in textbooks. People can’t get them immediately online.”


Honi Klein, executive director of the Village Alliance business improvement district, said she had just heard the news about Barnes & Noble.

“I was surprised when I heard it was closing,” Klein said. She said she was unaware of any other businesses on Astor Pl. or St. Mark’s Pl. east of Broadway that had left or were leaving due to high rents.



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