

Hawaii's source for real page-turners

By Brandon Bosworth

Despite buzz in the technophile world surrounding the rise of e-books and the decline of traditional printed versions, there are still plenty of people of all ages who relish holding a real, physical book in their hands.

For those dedicated readers savoring the sensation of turning actual pages, BookEnds in Kailua is something of a haven within an Amazon-addled world. As the only independent general-interest bookstore on Oahu, BookEnds has managed to thrive even as larger chain stores (such as Borders) have fallen by the wayside.

In fact, BookEnds rose from the ashes of local chain Honolulu Book Shops. Pat Banning, BookEnds owner and manager, had worked at Honolulu Book Shops for 25 years. When the Kailua store closed in 1998, she knew there was still a demand for these products in the neighborhood. "The Kailua area needed a bookstore," she said.

Banning added that the Windward town values its small businesses and cares about maintaining a sense of commu-



Pat Banning

nity — factors that have contributed to BookEnds' longevity. "I knew the Kailua market was supportive."

In addition to ongoing support from nearby residents, a key part of BookEnds' success has been its employees. "Our real advantage is an extremely knowledgeable staff who enjoy working with people and sharing their enthusiasm for books," shared Banning. "We're here in the store, talking

to people and listening to what they want. I have the best staff you could hope for!"

The store's selection of products is eclectic, ranging from new and used books to Hawaiian CDs and a variety of toys and gifts — including an especially popular collection of Melissa and Doug toys and jungle animals. BookEnds also maintains an extensive inventory of books for children and young adults, providing popular titles such as the Percy Jackson series, the Sisters Grimm, A Series of Unfortunate Events,

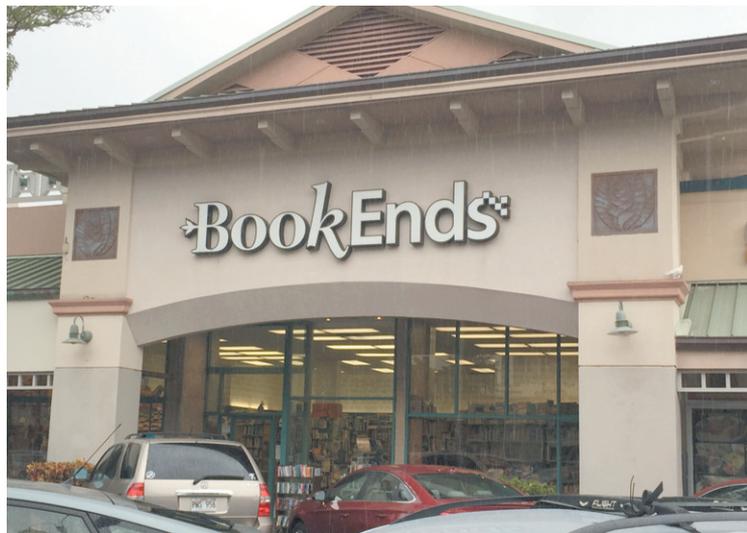
and, of course, Harry Potter.

Banning works to ensure that BookEnds' offerings reflect the interests and tastes of the community. "I was the buyer for Honolulu Book Shops for a long time, building up experience through trial and error and a lifetime of reading," she explained. "I got a fair sense of the market on the island then, but frankly, every neighborhood has its own quirks, and watching and listening to what goes on in the store here is invaluable.

"A small business is able to be faster and more nimble in responding to demand. Being hyper-aware of current events is the single most important factor in deciding what to stock, as readers seem to be singularly curious people," she said.

Looking ahead, Banning would love to add a mezzanine to BookEnds to relieve the store's overfilled shelves. She remains confident that even in this digital age, there will continue to be readers who appreciate what her store has to offer.

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Photos courtesy of BookEnds

The Kailua shop is the island's only independent general-interest bookstore.

Used books start a new chapter

In addition to brand new reads, Kailua shop BookEnds stocks a wide array of used titles. While it is a small local business, the store maintains an impressively large selection of reasonably priced books for customers to choose from.

Many of BookEnds' used works are inexpensive, such as its affordable paperbacks. However, the store also carries rarer, more precious tomes on its shelves.

"Initially, I wasn't really aware of the fine line between used and collectible," said owner and manager Pat Banning. "We waver wildly between great bargains and crazy-expensive first editions and vintage Hawaiiana."

BookEnds is always on the lookout for used titles — collectibles or not — as Banning believes dedicated readers want their books to find a good home when they no longer need them.

► The 411

Name: BookEnds

Address: Kailua Town Center,
600 Kailua Road, Suite 126,
Kailua, HI 96734

Phone: 261-1996

Owner and manager: Pat Banning

Employees: 12

Founded: 1998

Employee benefits: Staff members receive medical,

paid vacations and sick leave.

Noteworthy: BookEnds is home to a Frequent Reader program that offers a 20 percent purchase discount with a full buyer card.