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## In Praise of Bookshops / Moe's Books, Berkeley, CA

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# In Praise of Bookshops

**Moe's Books** (Berkeley, Calif.)  
by **Tom Leonhardt** (University of Oklahoma)

(Note: This is the second of what will be a continuing series co-authored by **Tom Leonhardt** of the University of Oklahoma and **Jack Walsdorf** of Blackwell's, detailing their experiences visiting little-known and well-known used, rare, and sometimes antiquarian bookshops throughout the United States.)

At last count, there were nine independent book stores on or just off Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley. There is a directory called **45 Berkeley Booksellers: A Directory, 1986-87**, published and distributed by Sarkis Shmavonian Rare Books, 1796 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709. There was a modest \$1 price when it first appeared. It is an attractive 4"x9" booklet, designed and printed by Peter Koch and Associates and includes a map. A couple of the stores are actually in Albany and Oakland but for all intents and purposes, they are still in Berkeley's "proximate districts," as the booklet tells us.

The wealth of booksellers in Berkeley flourish because of the wealth of readers who buy not just for the need for a class or paper but to own that particular text. Many of the bookstores in Berkeley also provide tables, sometimes on the sidewalk, where one can sit with a new purchase and enjoy it while drinking coffee and nibbling on a muffin or

bagel. Perhaps others at a nearby table will argue the existence of God or whether a bird can be free of the chains of the sky.

For a selection of new books and books in German, I prefer **Cody's** but for serendipity I prefer **Moe's Books**. Moe and his store are an institution in Berkeley. They were a mainstay when I studied at Berkeley from 1968-1973, surviving and thriving during the riotous times. Moe's windows were not broken, to my knowledge, nor were Cody's.

Moe's has four floors. I can't give details about what is on each floor but I remember some of what is on each floor. The main thing is to visit Moe's when in Berkeley.

Just inside the door and up a split level are belles lettres, a mixture of mostly used but some new novels, essays, and criticism. I have found **Wright Morris** and **Christopher Morley** there and picked up a copy of **Witold Rybczynski's *The Most Beautiful House in the World***, dust jacket and all, for a mere dollar. In the basement I have found sheet music, fake books, and hits of the 60's for guitar and piano, all at affordable prices. On the third floor there are volumes of history assorted subjects along with foreign language materials. On the fourth floor there is an offering of first editions and fine printers from the



Bay Area.

The floors are wooden and there are lots of posters and notices everywhere. There is enough atmosphere to go around no matter what your taste. You can alternately feel intellectual, beat (as in Jack Kerouac et al.) or hippie.

If you hang around the main entrance where books by local writers are available, you will get to meet and greet **Julia Winograd**, a local poet who was around for People's Park and other causes. Her books are for sale in Moe's and she regularly comes in just long enough to say hello, smile, and blow some soap bubbles your way to make you smile, too, and remind you where you are.

Moe's is on 2476 Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, 94704. Store hours are Sunday—Thursday, 10 a.m. — 11 p.m. and Friday, Saturday, 10 a.m. until midnight. The phone numbers are 510/849-2087; 849-2133. ☺

## Book Pricing Update

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collections take the five-year average as a safe guess. For the coming year, that would be a prediction that prices will increase a little less than 5%. No institution selects a random assortment of titles, however: a divinity school will notice when Theology prices skyrocket, but even a steep rise in the price of Chemistry titles will have little impact on a law library.

1994 marks the second year in a row for very modest price increases. After a 1.8% increase in 1993, the 1.5% increase this year was an unexpected boon. Can a third modest year be on its way? Stay tuned . . . ☺

Average book prices --  
Percentage increase figured on previous year

	June 1989	June 1990	June 1991	June 1992	June 1993	June 1994	5-year Average
All books (%increase)	\$41.84 6.5%	\$43.64 4.3%	\$45.63 4.6%	\$51.32 12.5%	\$52.26 1.8%	\$53.05 1.5%	4.9%
U.S. origin (%increase)	\$35.61 5.9%	\$36.86 3.5%	\$38.32 4.0%	\$42.25 10.3%	\$42.55 0.7%	\$43.82 3.0%	4.3%
U.K. origin (%increase)	\$47.92 13.0%	\$48.79 1.8%	\$52.76 8.1%	\$58.50 10.9%	\$60.39 3.2%	\$57.42 -4.9%	3.8%
Other origin (%increase)	\$62.77 3.0%	\$71.55 14.0%	\$73.86 3.2%	\$82.20 11.3%	\$93.36 13.6%	\$91.63 -1.9%	8.0%