



BOOKSELLING **THIS** Week

Headlines

Fairy Tale Beginning for New Independent Bookstore

May 20, 2004

On an idyllic late spring evening in an upstate New York river town, a beaming man in a suit invites fellow community members to help celebrate the opening of his new independent bookstore. Each resident whom he calls up happily takes a turn to cut away at the colorful ribbons of red, blue, green, and purple entwined and hung across the front door, as the crowd waiting outside the new store cheers....

It sounds like the happy ending to an old Frank Capra movie, but it was the very real, grand opening of Merritt Bookstore, Volume III, on Wednesday, May 19, in the cozy village of Cold Spring, New York. And the cheerful man leading the opening ceremonies was owner Scott Meyer, who also happens to own two other Merritt Bookstores in the upstate towns of Millbrook and Red Hook in nearby Dutchess County.

A big crowd turned out for the celebration, lining the sidewalk for the ribbon cutting. Exemplifying the spirit of independent booksellers, Meyer invited various residents and business owners of Cold Spring to help him open the store, thereby christening the store as the town's community bookstore.



A large crowd gathered outside Merritt Bookstore, Volume III, for the official ribbon cutting ceremony. Owner Scott Meyer speaks to the group (above center) and is helped by local residents in the ribbon cutting (above)

"When I opened my first bookstore, only one person bought books from me in the beginning ... and that was my mother," Meyer told the crowd during the ribbon cutting, and then invited his Mom up to cut one of the ribbons.



Author Carl Lennertz at the opening.

Meyer also introduced Carl Lennertz, author of *Cursed By a Happy Childhood* (Harmony), to the crowd of people, saying he would be signing books later in the evening -- to which Lennertz quipped, "I'll sign any book!"

When the many ribbons were cut and people filed inside the bookstore, the party continued. The rest of the evening saw shoppers and revelers alike thanking Meyer for ensuring their town had an independent bookstore. The interior of the three-room bookstore maintains the small town feel, with its painted plank flooring and even a garden in the back, out beyond a small children's section.

Meyer told *BTW* that he was happy to have his third store in Cold Spring, and it was especially nice because the town invited him there. When Salmagundi Bookstore closed earlier this year, leaving not only Cold Spring, but all of Putnam County, New York, without a single bookstore, residents of the town called Meyer "and asked me to come here, so I have a welcome feeling here," he said. "It feels great."

The two residents that first called Meyer were Richard and Karen Shea. "I called Scott and told him the bookstore here was closing," Richard Shea explained. "There's nobody better than Scott at running a bookstore -- it feels good. Every town needs a bookstore."

Debbie Silbergleit, who bills herself as "receiver extraordinaire" for Meyer's Millbrook store, said, "I think tonight's opening is great ... I would certainly come here and shop if I didn't already work here!"

Author and Cold Spring resident Eileen Charbonneau (*Waltzing in Ragtime*, Forge) attended the opening and told BTW that the store "was something the town needed -- there's a lot of writers here." She especially was appreciative of the way in which Meyer involves the community.

That was certainly the case last night, as everybody loves a great store with a happy beginning. --[David Grogan](#)



A customer is intrigued by the Book Sense Picks.