War of words

Book superstore spells tougher competition

BY TIM CARVELL
STAFF WRITER

From the checkout desk at Metro News bookstore, manager Sue Weiss can see the new Barnes and Noble superstore under construction across Telegraph Road. She is not happy about the view.

The new superstore, Weiss argues, was located across from her store as part of a Barnes and Noble policy of locating superstores next to successful independent bookstores and siphoning away the smaller stores' business.

"The locations prove that they are not in the business of developing new book communities, they are in the business of taking over established book communities," Weiss said. "If they were interested in developing new book communities, they would move into communities where there is a need for bookstores."

This is not the first time Barnes and Noble has been accused of preying upon independent bookstores. Independent bookstores in New York and New England have also accused Barnes and Noble of stealing customers; last November, John Lovejoy, a New England publisher's representative, wrote a column in "Publisher's Weekly" that charged Barnes and Noble with a "predatory" corporate policy.

"(Barnes and Noble tries) quite openly and even flamboyantly to capture the immediate attention and subsequent dollars of a customer base that has been painstakingly cultivated by the existing independent," Lovejoy wrote.

Hoping to coexist

The conflict over the Bloomfield Township store surprised Janis Keramedjian, manager of the new Barnes and Noble. Although she declined to comment on the allegations against her company, Keramedjian added that she believes her store need not pose a threat to Metro News.

"We're excited to be where we are, and we're hoping to coexist," said Keramedjian, who used to manage the Barnes and Noble in Rochester. "In Rochester, we always sent somebody to Metro News when we didn't have something in stock, especially periodicals, and I don't see why we couldn't continue to do so."

No matter what its reason for moving into the area, there is little doubt that Barnes and Noble will have an impact upon the sales at Metro News when it opens in late August or early September. But Weiss said she doubts that the impact will be severe.

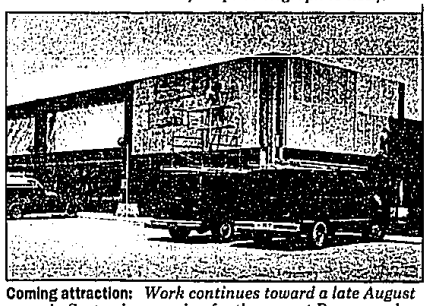
"I think that, initially, it's going to affect us, but when people see what we offer that Barnes and Noble can't, we don't have anything to worry about," Weiss said.

According to Weiss, the list of services offered by Metro News includes an extensive backlist, personal attention, a well-read staff — and the area's largest selection of magazines.

See STORE, 7A

STAFF PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CANTRELL

Waiting game: *Clerk Barbara Rudner bags some books for customer Suzanne Tyner at Metro News Center, a bookstore that's had the corner of Maple/Telegraph to itself.*



Coming attraction: *Work continues toward a late August or early September opening for the newest Barnes and Noble superstore.*

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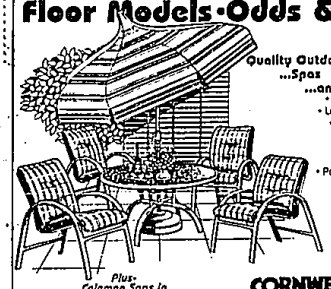

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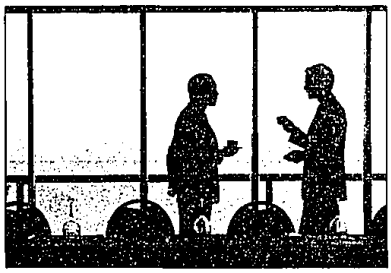

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