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local news

## Store closes book on move

More than 300 volunteers assist workers with weekend transition

By Margaret Jackson  
Denver Post Staff Writer



Charlie, the store's lifelike sculpture, reads the paper as teams empty boxes. He sits in the former orchestra pit of the remodeled Lowenstein Theatre; some of the original seating behind him will be set up for patron use. (Denver Post/ Lyn Alweis)

When the Tattered Cover opens its new store in the former Lowenstein Theatre at 9 a.m. today, Lew Cady will be its first customer.

Cady, a Denver adman, said he asked bookstore owner Joyce Meskis months ago if he could be the last person to buy a book at the Cherry Creek bookstore - which closed Saturday - as well as the first to make a purchase at its new store at 2526 E. Colfax Avenue.

His choices? "Beware of Pity" by Stefan Zweig, the last book - alphabetically - on the old store's fiction shelves. And "Graceland" by Chris Abani, the first on the new store's shelves.

"I do a lot of firsts and lasts around town when things open and close," he said. "This is our store. It's one of the things that make Denver the city it is."

More than 300 volunteers joined employees over the weekend to move an estimated 100,000 books from the 48,000-square-foot Cherry Creek space to the 24,000-square-foot new store, about a mile north.

"It feels good to get out here and be a little more physical," said employee Neil Strandberg, who used a hand-controlled forklift to pull a pallet stacked with boxes of books from a truck at the new store. "Walking around with a clipboard, you feel like you're not doing anything."

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Other employees and volunteers put the boxes on dollies and rolled them to the appropriate sections to be unpacked onto shelves.

The flagship Tattered Cover store, a mainstay on East First Avenue in Cherry Creek for two decades, sold its last book - bought by Cady - about 6:20 p.m. Saturday, shortly before employees and volunteers gathered in the basement to await instructions for the move.

"It's difficult leaving," said Meskis, a nationally known independent bookseller. "There are so many memories, but we're looking forward to making more memories in our wonderful new location."

Meskis and the Tattered Cover have been a presence in Cherry Creek since 1971, with its flagship store located at 2955 E. First Ave. for the past two decades. Meskis chose to be part of the Lowenstein Theatre redevelopment after she could not come to terms on renewing her lease on the

#### Advertisement



Cherry Creek building with owner Donald Sturm.

Meskis has opened two other Tattered Cover bookstores in the Denver metro area - in lower downtown in 1994 and Highlands Ranch in 2004.

Workers on Saturday night at the Cherry Creek store labeled each box with its section, subsection and where the books stopped and started alphabetically. Three-quarters of the Cherry Creek store was packed up by the time the last worker left shortly after 11 p.m. Saturday, said employee Linda Millemann, who coordinated the move.

Some boxes were transported that night to the new store.

On Sunday morning, employees and volunteers showed up at 7:30 a.m. at both locations. Three trucks circulated between the two locations throughout the day. In Cherry Creek, workers loaded each truck with six pallets containing 40 boxes of books apiece. Each was then transported and unloaded at the new store.

Early Sunday, one volunteer at the new store suggested that singing "The Alphabet Song" might be helpful before they started work unpacking boxes and putting books on shelves.

There were a few logistical challenges, such as fitting pallets stacked high

with boxes onto the elevator at the new store. But overall, the day's move went smoothly and continued into Sunday evening.

Clockmaker Pat Kraker transported the clocks he made in 1986 for the Cherry Creek store to the Tattered Cover's new location, where he reassembled them.

Kraker said he returned to Denver from a sailing trip in Nova Scotia at 2:30 a.m. Sunday to ensure he was able to help.

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