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ALERT TOP STORY

BOOKMARKS

Check out this little Tucson bookshop with big heart

Bill Finley Special to the Arizona Daily Star

Nov 25, 2022



Hypatia Luna, left, and her husband, Jesse Adcock, own the Littlest Bookshop on East Fifth Street. The shop specializes in books for children.

Bill Finley

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There are lots of warm and wonderful stories for the children of Arizona during the holidays. **“A Very Hairy Christmas”** by Susan Lowell, for one.

“The Twelve Days of Christmas in Arizona” by Jennifer J. Stewart.

“**’Twas the Night Before Christmas in Arizona**” by Jo Parry.

Well, we have another for the list:

The Littlest Bookshop on East Fifth Street near Rincon High School.

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-

Owners Hypatia Luna and Jesse Adcock opened the store just before Christmas last year. It is one of the few bookshops in America dedicated solely to children’s books. Its popularity has been growing steadily since, and the store was filled with smiling faces at a storytime session there last weekend.

Two of them belonged to Luna and Adcock.

“We were two people who’d never run their own business before, who’d never managed a bookstore before, who just wanted to love going to work every day,” Luna explained. “Now, look at us. We’re still here!”

Attention, parents and grandparents: If you have a child on your shopping list for the coming year-end holidays, the **Littlest Bookshop** offers board books, picture books, chapter books and readers both in English and Spanish. Lots of ’em. Inventory has grown from 1,200 books last Christmas to 4,400 books today, all of them new ... many of them beautiful.

The Littlest Bookshop, 5011 E. Fifth St., may be Tucson’s first-ever store dedicated solely to children’s books. Longtime locals may remember browsing the shelves at Mrs. Tiggy Winkles and the Kids Center, but they were toy stores, too.

This one is wall-to-wall books for kids, with a handful of gift items that connect to books in the inventory.

It is the creation of Adcock, a Tucson native who remembers riding his bike to the old Book Mark bookstore on East Speedway, and Luna — who lived here for 10 years before moving as a teenager.

Interestingly, neither had a background in literature. She was an art history major who became a teacher. He was a business student who had moved into sales and quietly dreamed of owning his own business.

Then, in 2019, they found themselves in a popular all-children's-book bookstore in Redlands, California, called "The Frugal Frigate."

"We were in Southern California for a wedding," Luna recalled, "and somebody suggested we check out The Frugal Frigate. We both love bookstores. Our daughter Inez was very young. So we went in ... and loved it. I said this is where I want to be all the time. This is what I want my life to be, surrounded by books. And Jesse said, 'Let's start a bookstore.'"

When they returned to Tucson, they began researching the ins and outs of the book business. When they mentioned the idea to friends, they were encouraged to get off the fence. In early 2020, they were within days of signing a lease to open "Beanstock Books" at the corner of East Broadway and North Park Avenue.

"When the pandemic happened, everything got put on hold," Adcock said. "We didn't give up on the idea, though. If there was a silver lining, it gave us another year to think things through."

One wrinkle in the original plan: to put the store in a neighborhood rather than an area dedicated to retail. Their current location on Fifth Street is near the area where Adcock grew up. He and Luna now live less than a mile away.

Another update to the business plan: Luna and Adcock decided the inventory would go beyond picture books.

“I’ve always loved picture books,” she confessed. “To me, an art major, a picture book is beautiful; it’s a small work of art.”

As a teacher, she also appreciated how picture books could enhance learning. But the co-owners ultimately decided their audience would be far larger if they would stock books for older kids, too.

One element stayed in the plan throughout: The Littlest Bookshop would offer new books only.

“Tucson already has great used bookstores,” Luna said. “It wasn’t a market that needed to be filled. Besides, you don’t often find good, high-quality children’s books used. Kids are rough on their favorite books. Grandparents write in them. Parents save the best books as keepsakes.”

The Littlest Bookshop had a soft opening late last year, open three to four hours on weekend days only until Christmas Eve. It opened officially on Jan. 1. How does Luna assess the first year?

“There definitely have been some moments when I thought, ‘What are we thinking?’” she said. “Then, someone will come in and tell us how grateful they are, how much the store means to their kids, and it’s very affirming. I guess the shiny newness hasn’t worn off yet. I’m still really excited about this.”

Like all business owners, especially owners of bookstores, Luna and Adcock will have their fingers tightly crossed for the next four weeks.

“The whole retail world revolves around the fourth quarter,” Adcock said. “I don’t know this for sure, but it may be especially important for bookstores and publishers. In adult books, the big releases hit in the fourth quarter. People like to give kids books for the holidays.”

Truth be told, the Littlest Bookshop isn't. It's not even the smallest in Tucson. But if you're shopping for the littlest people in your life, this one may be just the right size for you.

Footnotes

Hoping to help holiday sales at local bookstores, the Tucson Festival of Books has begun releasing the names of authors who will attend the festival March 4-5. The list will be available soon at **TucsonFestivalOfBooks.org**

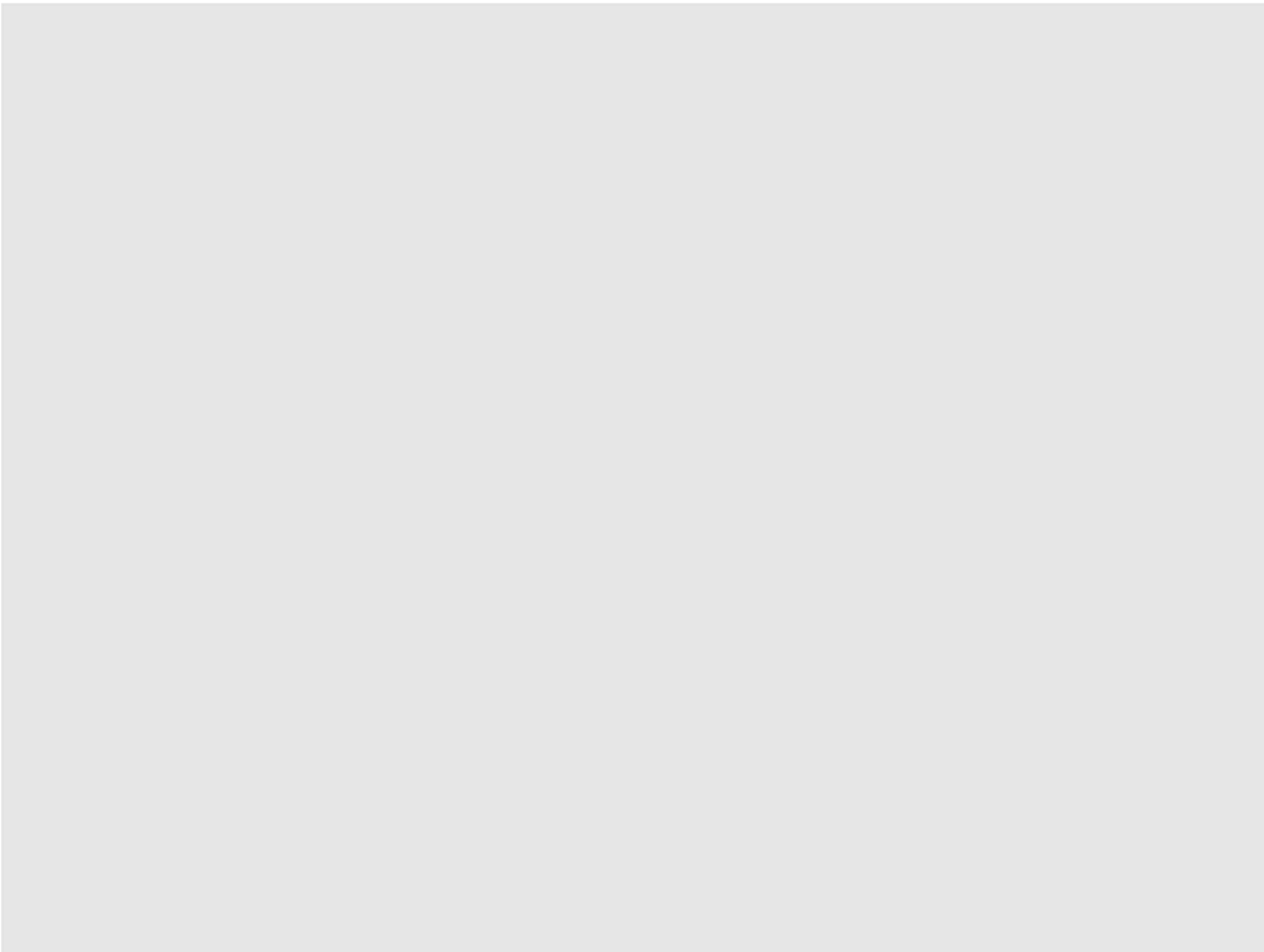
Former National Book Award winner Mark Doty will visit the UA Poetry Center, 1508 E. Helen St., for the annual Tom Sanders Memorial Reading on Dec. 1. The program will begin at 7 p.m. For more information, visit **tucne.ws/1lxz**.

The Martha Cooper Library in midtown Tucson is now closed — temporarily — as workers begin a major renovation project that will double the size of the library. If all goes well, the new and improved facility will re-open in the spring.



Demand for picture books explaining traumatic events such as school shootings has grown dramatically, according to publishers. Experts say these books can help kids process their feelings. Using picture books and puppets, Ian Ellis James, known by his stage name "Electric," works with children on gun violence prevention in New York City. "If I could just use a puppet, if I can write some books, if I can use some songs and then go

out and start with a five year old, six year old... I think I can change behavior, so that's the strategy," James, an Emmy award-winning Sesame Street writer, said. As anxiety and depression rates rise among young Americans experts say demand for resources like children's books dealing with trauma are also increasing.



Interactive map: 13 bookstores for Tucson readers

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Arizona Will Cover the Full Cost to Install Solar with Battery if You Live in {C}

Smart Solar Install



A Triumph Of Napa Valley Winemaking

Stag's Leap Wine Cellars



Tall Button Pocket Trousers

Loft



[Photos] Kari Lake Has A Famous Husband Not Many People Know About

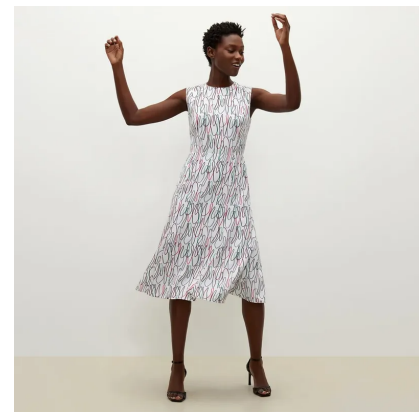
Tommy John Women's Air Brief In Gull Gray Size XXL (18)

Tommy John



[Photos] Kari Lake's Partner Might Look Familiar To You

Sport Pirate



The Jane Dress - Freeform Multi

mmlafleur



Levi's Womens Classic Straight Jean

JCPenney



Bo Derek is 65 and This is Her Today

Livestly