

Crossroads Books celebrates

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Business marks 20th anniversary in Watsonville

By ERIK CHALHOUB
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

WATSONVILLE — When someone walks through the door at Crossroads Books, owner Kelly Pleskunas can immediately relate to them.

Like herself, she knows these customers enjoy reading, because, after all, they are visiting a bookstore.

Crossroads Books, located in

the Crossroads Shopping Center, 1935 Main St., is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.

Pleskunas stresses that the community is what supports the well-being of the store, saying that people come from all over the county to browse the selection that includes books of all shapes, sizes, genres and age levels.

She always tries to remem-

ber customers by their first names, and is quick to ask those who visit if they need help finding anything.

"Every person that comes through my door is a friend," Pleskunas said.

Thanking the "wonderful group of regulars" and all who visit the store, Pleskunas said its her ability to directly interact with customers and provide a

sense of community that separates Crossroads Books from big box stores and online retailers such as Amazon.

"People come in this store and feel comfortable chatting with new people — discussing books, the weather or current events," she said. "Friends run into each other and catch up. There is a sense of neighborhood."

While the brick-and-mortar

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Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Kelly Pleskunas, owner of Crossroads Books, 1935 Main St., said her business is celebrating 20 years.

BOOKS

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bookstore industry has taken a hit in the last decade due to the rise of online retailers, with Capitola Book Cafe being the latest casualty in Santa Cruz County, Pleskunas points to the sense of community that contributes immensely to Crossroads Books' steady business.

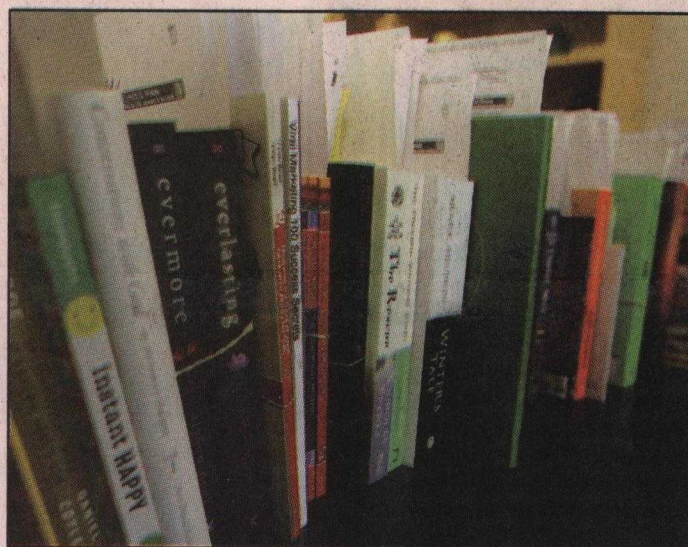
Crossroads Books is not only the lone bookstore in Watsonville, but it is the only one in the south and mid-county areas.

Pleskunas is able to order books overnight, and unlike purchasing online, the store doesn't charge for shipping, which often drives up the price for a book bought on the Internet.

The 2,400-square-foot store features a large selection of children's books, as well as sections for local authors and books written in Spanish, among others.

Cynthia Newberry dropped by Crossroads Books Tuesday to pick up her ordered copy of Alan Bradley's latest novel, "The Weed that Strings the Hangman's Bag."

"I love this bookstore because I like shopping locally," said Newberry, who has been coming to Crossroads Books for the past 15 years. "I can get just about everything I need here. Kelly is so nice and always helpful. And she can get me



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

A long row of books on order from local customers stand on the front counter Tuesday at Crossroads Books.

books faster than Amazon and at the same price or, sometimes, cheaper."

Crossroads Books' staff consists of one employee, Tess Felder, who Pleskunas described as "very knowledgeable and can always find a book or offer up a good suggestion."

She also has one volunteer, Alice Weigel, who has helped for three years call customers and shelves books.

Pleskunas purchased the business in 2010 from Jan and Paula van Waardenberg, a decision she said was driven by her love of books and having worked at the store for a num-

ber of years.

While she was cautious of making large changes to the business, she did decide to offer more gift items and goods made locally.

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Crossroads Books is located at 1935 Main St. in Watsonville. It is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and closed Sunday. For information, call 728-4139 or visit www.watsonvillebooks.com.

Register-Pajaronian reporter Tarmo Hannula contributed to this report.