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Dear Chicago Bookstores ...

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Chicago's independent bookstores need our support now! Here's how ...

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By **Teme Ring**, Monday at 4:20 pm

Chicago bookstores are open, but not in the usual way! We can't walk through their doors, unfortunately. But we can order new books, rare books, old books and great books. Sign up for each store's newsletter! Some stores offer online events, virtual book clubs, chats with booksellers and personal recommendations. Almost all are offering fast delivery to your door and even blind dates with puzzles and other unique merch! If we act fast, we may get some famous authors re-enacting the dance scene from *The Breakfast Club*. More on that below. Following are ways to support our city's bookstores. They make up the most vibrant literary paradise in the world. Please read on, order, and support to ensure that each of these enchanted places can usher us back through their welcoming doors when these crazy sci-fi times are over.

If I missed anything or you have a Chicagoland bookstore to add, please email me at temewring@gmail.com and I promise to update immediately!

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Extra note: Libro.fm, purveyor of audiobooks, is offering two valuable promotions to benefit an indie store of your choice. Details [here](#).

Thank you to all the booksellers who responded to my questions in the midst of difficult times. They are working long days to keep us happily in books (and puzzles and more).

I asked: What is the best way to support you? Is it by ordering books, other merchandise or a gift card? Is ordering directly through you better than through bookshop.org? Or absolutely anything else?

Here are the answers.

AFRIWARE BOOKS

- Curbside pick-up is available by appointment.
- Order through [AfriWare's site](#) and the store's distributors will expedite your book to your home. Will AfriWare still make money on these sales? Yes! Your support is appreciated.
- If you are looking for a face mask, you can order them from AfriWare. You can also purchase a selection of personal care products and beautiful one-of-a-kind handmade items which will be gathered by a personal shopper and available for curbside pick-up.
- Follow AfriWare on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). The store even has a [YouTube](#) channel!
- Purchasing gift cards now for later use greatly helps the store's current cash flow. Order gift cards [here](#).
- Donations are also appreciated. You can donate [here](#).
- AfriWare's COVID-19 updates [here](#).

THE BOOK CELLAR

- The best way to support The Book Cellar is "by ordering books or gift cards. The purchases that people are making are fantastic.
- We have some [virtual events](#) coming up. Some are ticketed such that they require a book purchase. Those will help us.
- We are part of book shop [[bookshop.org](#)]. I haven't had time to build a beautiful listing yet but I will. We receive a percentage from those sales. The way I see it, every little bit helps."
- The Book Cellar has a new crowdfunding campaign. Please read owner Suzy Takacs' heartfelt statement and contribute [here](#).

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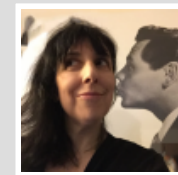
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MEET THE BLOGGER



Teme Ring

I've been a comedy fan since age four when Moe Howard asked me, "What's your name, lil' goil?" Fortuitously somehow by way of

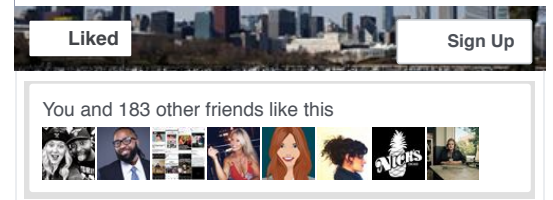
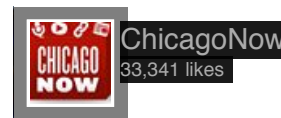
Washington, D.C., Poughkeepsie and Jerusalem, I ended up in Chicago, the comedy Mecca of the world where comedians are kind enough to give me their time and where I was lucky enough to meet the great Dobie Maxwell who introduced me to the scene. You can reach me at: temewring@gmail.com. (Please remember the "w" there in the middle.) I am often very reasonably asked, "How DO you pronounce that?" The spelling is Teme, but it's pronounced Temmy.

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from [The Barbershop: Dennis Byrne, Proprietor](#) by Dennis Byrne

posted today at 12:01 pm

carried by the distributor we work with, and these are currently being shipped to people's homes directly from the distributor's warehouse.

- People can also purchase either an online gift certificate, which can ONLY be used to order things via the website, or an in-store gift certificate, which they can save for the happy time when we re-open the doors.
- We are not doing virtual events right now, but that's something we may initiate if the shutdown lasts for a while.
- We do have a [GoFundMe campaign](#) running right now and we deeply appreciate the donations! Online sales don't have the same profit margin for us as in-store sales, so while we love them, those alone are not enough to keep us going. The [GoFundMe](#) money we have raised so far has been critical to allowing us to retain all our staff.
- At Bookshop, they say their mission is to attract customers who might not already be shopping with an independent bookstore and convert them into a supporter of indies instead of Amazon. But buying direct from the indie stores you decide to support always brings in the most revenue for them."
- Bookends & Beginnings' COVID-19 updates [here](#).

THE BOOK STALL

- "The best way folks can support us is ordering books from our [website](#). We are not working in the store, so we are having books shipped directly from our distributor, and the turn-around time has been quite fast for most books. The other way people can support us is just by following our social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#)."
- The Book Stall's COVID-19 updates [here](#).

THE BOOK TABLE

- "Ordering through our [website](#) is the best way to help us, and gift cards especially help. Bookshop.org sales get us a tiny affiliate fee that is split among hundreds of stores--when ordering direct all proceeds come immediately to us."
- From Teme: I've always love the beautiful Book Table [gift cards](#) and other merch designed by award-winning graphic artist Chris Ware.
- The Book Table will offer curbside service beginning May 1.
- The Book Table's COVID-19 updates [here](#).

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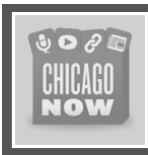
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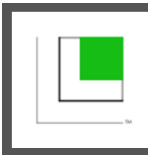
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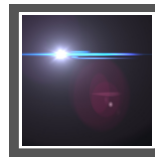
OPEN BOOKS

- **"In what ways is Open Books staying connected to the community?"** Since we are a non-profit that provides reading and writing experiences to Chicago kids that also runs two bookstores, we've had disruptions on both fronts. For the bookstore, [we are still selling books online](#) (with free shipping on orders over \$10) for delivery or contact-less pick up. Our book clubs are meeting virtually over Zoom, and we will soon be launching a blog with recommendations and lists to recreate some of the in store experience online.
- For our literacy programs, we are hosting [Storytime via Facebook live](#), launching a [writing contest](#) for Chicago students, emailing [Daily Writing Sprints](#) to foster creativity, and curating a resource page for families on our website (<https://www.open-books.org/virtual-programs/>).
- Beginning next week, we will be delivering free books to CPS meal distribution sites to allow families to build home libraries and promote independent reading for students during this time. We will also be offering the public a chance to buy books directly for under resourced kids in Chicago from a list curated by our literacy experts, which we will distribute through city and neighborhood partners.
- **What are some ways Open Books is managing shipping and the safety of staff?** We are following all the OSHA/CDC recommendations for businesses during the outbreak, as well as increasing the frequency and depth of our cleaning regimen, including a full terminal cleaning since the last time we were open to the public. We are working with minimal staffing, running split shifts to eliminate any excessive overlap of team members. We are also letting all donated books sit for at least 24 hours before handling. We are also offering free shipping for all online orders of \$10 or more. Books can be purchased at <http://shopwestloop.open-books.org/>.
- **What ways can people support Open Books?** People can support us financially (all donations are tax deductible) at www.open-books.org, [shop our store online](#), or [donate books](#) contact free at our two drop bins (in the alley behind the West Loop store at 651 W. Lake St., or on the corner of Halsted and Superior) or through the donation slot at our Pilsen warehouse (905 W. 19th St.).
- Open Books is working with the Chicago Public Schools Department of Literacy to distribute books to families who are taking advantage of

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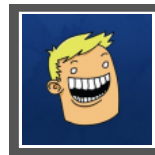


[Hammervision](#)

It's like the couch potato version of Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

- [Movie Review: Extraction](#)

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PILSEN COMMUNITY BOOKS

- "The best way to support us is through online orders at www.pilsencommunitybooks.com. We are offering contactless curbside pickup and home delivery for a fee. Folks can also donate to our collaborative book drive with the [Liberation Library](#) on our website, which is a great way to not only support the store but get books into the hands of young folks who have been incarcerated.
- It's definitely better for folks to order directly through us than through bookshop.org, but we'll take the sales however they come! Folks can also buy audiobooks through us on our libro.fm page."
- Pilsen Community Books has [virtual events](#) to attend!
- Follow Pilsen Community Books on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) for favorite picks or email or DM for personal recommendations.
- You can find COVID-19 updates [here](#).

ROSCOE BOOKS

- "The best way people can support us is [online](#) book orders and gift cards."
- Roscoe Books is offering \$1 shipping.
- From Roscoe Book's Facebook page: "Libro.fm [is] running an amazing promotion right now: when you start a membership with code SHOPBOOKSTORESNOW, you'll get two audiobooks for the price of one, and 100% of your payment will go to RoscoeBooks! <https://libro.fm/>"
- Roscoe Books' COVID-19 updates [here](#).

UNABRIDGED BOOKSTORE

- "Ordering books and gift cards from [our website](#) is the best way to support us right now. We are not on bookshop.org and we are not doing any crowdfunding campaigns as of now."
- Unabridged Bookstore's COVID-19 updates [here](#).

UNCHARTED BOOKS

Uncharted Books kindly allowed me to reprint from its Facebook page. It's very fun to read. Note: last week I wore my Uncharted Books t-shirt to a doctor's appointment and learned that my doctor is a fan of the store. My shirt featured the store's stunningly beautiful Director of Marketing and Phone Operator [Ramona](#). You can get your shirt [here](#).

From Uncharted Books' Facebook:

"Looking for cool ways to support your local bookstore? Yay ur the best, here's a round up of all of our online options, all available on our square

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- order [new books](#) from us! Operators (Ramona herself) are standing by to offer you the book recs of your wildest dreams in the DMs, just ask
- order a mystery pack of our used books for [a reading surprise](#) or check out our tantalizing collection of [rare books](#)
- browse our threadless site and pick up some of our very cool merch! We have mugs, shirts, and totes @ unchartedbooks.threadless.com
- if none of these are speaking to you, you can always pick up a [gift card](#) to use back when we're back in the physical world
- Sharing our posts on social media and hassling your parents to order their quarantine-reads from us instead of Am*zon is a huge help too!
- not in a position to shell out dollars for book related luxuries? You have all our love, we're a pro-loitering bookstore and always will be"
- From Teme: take the Uncharted Books' quiz: [Which Iconic Bookstore Are You?](#)
- Uncharted Books COVID-19 updates [here](#).

VOLUMES BOOKCAFE

- "All things help. [Go fund me](#) is helpful for the larger picture but if people want books they can order books."
- You can buy books, gift cards and go on a blind date with a puzzle [here](#)!
- Follow Volumes on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).
- Virtual storytimes and book clubs on Facebook!
- And that GoFundMe? It just got a major superstar endorsement. Rebecca Makkai got 27 literary stars to agree to recreate the dance scene ("We Are Not Alone") in [The Breakfast Club](#) if the fundraiser reaches \$ 60,000. Molly Ringwald [tweeted](#) about it! Donate [here](#).
- Volumes' COVID-19 updates [here](#).

WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST

- "The best way to support W&CF is through ordering a book or gift card to our online store through womenandchildrenfirst.com! Our bookseller H. Melt is working from home to update our website with curated lists like [Kids Recommendations](#) [Feminist Favorites](#) and [Local Authors](#) to help make our website better reflect what it's like to browse the displays you once found in our physical space. We also recommend browsing our individual [Staff Picks](#) pages and donating to [Chicago Books to Women in Prison](#).
- Many of our events are transitioning to virtual space. Folks can sign up for our [newsletter](#) to learn about more upcoming events!
- We have a non-profit arm called the [Women's Voices Fund](#) that makes all of our events and programming possible. A donation to that fund is deeply appreciated!
- Our small team also loves getting virtual love from our customers. We miss all of you so much! When folks post photos on Instagram of their

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about what they're
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- We hope to have some fun new ways to shop soon--mystery bundles, etc."
- Women & Children First also has a list of [comfort reads for anxious times](#).
- COVID-19 updates [here](#).

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