

No Porn, Just Books And Zines

By ERIKA ALLEN

The rumble of trains and the beeps of swiping fare cards don't seem to distract shoppers huddled inside a tiny newsstand at the Metropolitan Avenue subway station in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Some customers squat, flipping through literary magazines and novels with titles like "Killing Williamsburg." Others thumb through booklets of photocopied Polaroids. There isn't a daily paper or a gossip magazine in sight, and almost no one looks up when a curious commuter asks, "What is this place?"

This place is the Newsstand, a pop-up shop that has transformed an ordinary subway space into a store for independently published magazines, books, comics and zines. In a digitalized world, it is a small haven for printed media.

Underground, without cell-phone service, people are moved to engage, said Lele Saveri, the Newsstand's manager. "I never get someone on a phone and reading," he said. "They are focused on whatever is in their hands."

The Newsstand is open through July 20 at the Metropolitan Avenue subway station on the L and G lines in Williamsburg, Brooklyn; Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon to 7 p.m.



The Newsstand, open until July 20, carries selections from some of the city's best-known specialty bookshops: magazines and journals from McNally-Jackson in SoHo; zines and photography books from Dashwood Books on the Lower East Side of Manhattan; comics from the Desert Island bookstore in Williamsburg; art books from

Ohwow in Greenwich Village. The stores selected the offerings, a kind of "staff picks" for the tight space.

"I was trying to find a way of supporting that scene without stepping on their toes," Mr. Saveri said of the stores he asked to participate.

The stand has also fielded donations and submissions from lo-

cal artists and recruited them as guest clerks. (Peter Sutherland, an artist and photographer, will work the counter on Wednesday.) Mr. Saveri said he gets batches of zines from new artists daily and has even had commuters drop off bags of novels that they've finished reading.

You won't find Snickers bars or diet soda here, although the



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Left, from left: Eddie Goldblatt, Lele Saveri and Jamie Falkowski man the Newsstand at the Metropolitan Avenue stop in Brooklyn. Above, a zine by Cali Thornhill-Dewitt.

Newsstand does stock snacks. There are little cans of Perrier, bottles of fermented tea and Brooklyn-made treats like Ovenly bacon-fat-roasted peanuts and McClure's potato chips.

Kevin Kearney, a partner and managing director at Alldayeveryday, a marketing and communications agency, approached Mr. Saveri, a photographer, curator and organizer of the city's 8-Ball Zine fair, about creating an alternative newsstand in January. Mr. Kearney said the idea arose from a comment that a partner at Alldayeveryday made as they passed the empty newsstand at the Metropolitan Avenue station: in another life, he said, he would have liked to run a newsstand.

Mr. Kearney contacted the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and though it usually leases spaces by the year, it was

open to a short-term tenant for the newsstand, which had been empty since last August.

"They had an interesting and innovative proposal for how to have an amenity in there for our customers and generate a little revenue for us," said Adam Lisberg, an authority spokesman. The Newsstand, which opened June 15, rents the space and splits profits with the bookstores.

John Felix Peña, 27, said he got off the train a stop early to check out the stand. "You definitely see a lot of art within the subways," he said. "But not anything that you can take home with you."

For his part, Mr. Kearney said it was satisfying to connect people with books and art. But it's also important, he said, "to provide for the woman who came in with her daughter, just looking for more gum."



THE Arts

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A WORD WITH: BETTE MIDLER

The Smoke Has Cleared; Time to Rest

By PATRICK HEALY

Bette Midler wrapped up her Broadway run on Sunday in "I'll Eat You Last," her hit play about the Hollywood agent Sue Mengers, and by Monday she was starting to decompress. Her voice was strained after three months of chain-smoking herbal cigarettes as the nicotine-and-pot-loving Mengers, but otherwise she seemed hardy during a telephone interview about her first role on Broadway in some 40



Bette Midler

years. There was little bitterness, for instance, at the two dozen theater insiders who declined to nominate her for a Tony Award — a decision that was one of the biggest surprises

of the theater season. "I think it's a great group, but it's not my scene," Ms. Midler said of the nominators and other powers that be in the Broadway industry. "I come from another world, and I think they might have felt, 'Oh, she's not really in our world; she's just dropping in for a cameo.' I can't get worked up about it. Besides, I already have a Tony for my Broadway concert in '73. It's one of the most precious things I've won. So, I don't know — it's a different crowd now, and they're four generations removed from when I was performing regularly in theater."

If the nominators didn't embrace her, many critics did, and audiences paid up: "I'll Eat You

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Captivity As a Mirror

Hero Rides Again, With Big Boots to Fill



The Lone Ranger Arnie Hammer as the title character and his horse, Silver, in this film opening on Wednesday nationwide.

Hoping The Songs Lead Him To Freedom

The sweet harmonies of classic spirituals unite the sometimes fractious voices of the young men in "Choir Boy," the ambitious new play by Tarell Alvin McCraney that opened on Tuesday night at City Center in a lively Manhattan Theater Club production. The boys of the Charles R.

CHARLES ISHERWOOD

THEATER REVIEW

Drew Prep School may rarely agree on anything — not even the true value of the songs themselves — but when they raise their voices in unison, they offer a glimpse of a world in which the cruelty that can divide and destroy is dissolved in a graceful, embracing order.

The vivid central character in Mr. McCraney's drama, fluidly directed by Trip Cullman, is Pha-

Spirituals as a map to a life without shame.

rus (Jeremy Pope), a bright-eyed, smart and enthusiastic Drew student whose pride in singing the school anthem at the graduation ceremony is sullied by the gay slurs hissed at him from one of his fellow students in the audience. (The play's title is, I suspect, meant to link playfully the words "choir" and "queer.")

Reprimanded by Headmaster Marrow (Chuck Cooper) for having spoiled his performance when he paused to glare at the heckler, Pharus refuses to divulge the name of the boy who taunted him, maintaining that this would be a breach of the school's honor code. Even under the threat of expulsion — like most of his fellow students, Pharus is there on a scholarship — Pharus insists on behaving "as a

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