

2014 Book Expo America in New York Features Interesting Sidelines

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If you think a books store is just for selling books, think again. Bookstores in India as well as all over the world have morphed into gift stores. While most tend to sell literary items like notebooks and pens, many book shops are featuring items far removed from the publishing industry.

“Boxes of book covers are hot now,” said the owner of Enchanted World of Boxes. He says that they evoke the tradition of collecting rare books that date from the ancient library of Alexandria and extends through the spiraling bookshelves of secret societies of Europe. Inspiration for their collection comes from the libraries of Nostradamus, Gutenberg, the Geographic Society of London, and hidden vaults from Widener Library in Cambridge.

Yet another sideline that I found interesting was from a company called Lito-graphics which creates art from the books you’ve read and loved. Their posters, t-shirts, and tote bags are all created en-

tirely from the text of classic books. Here is the interesting part: From a distance, the artwork illustrates a theme, character, or setting from each book. Move closer and the text becomes fully legible.

There are always companies that exhibit reading lights but this one by Mighty Bright was by far the best and most ingenious. You can bend it to any position and it is really bright. For people who still like ink-on-paper when reading in bed, they will want one of these. (They are great for the traveling reporter in finding the bathroom in the hotel room at 3am.)

Many of the exhibitors remarked that it is no secret that with competition from the first the big-box stores and then Amazon and then e-books that book-only stores are simply not going to survive. However, those that can adapt and sell gifts to book-interested buyers can have an excellent future in the right geographic and demographic sectors.