

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

Gordon J. Van De Water

I observe while doing volunteer work at *BASICALLY BOOKS* each week that we serve a large variety of customers, from the very young, to those politely called mature. The majority of our customers are women who are primarily interested in romance, detective, or mystery novels, and the expansive section dealing with religious subject matter. Pre-school children come in with their parents to discover the huge variety of books we have available. Most handle the books carefully, though a small number can cause some damage as their little fingers turn the pages. Older kids sit on the floor as they pull books out to review titles most suited to their age, such as Harry Potter, the Hunger Games, or the Twilight series. Some ladies come in especially to see what cookbooks we may have (and we have many cuisines represented) and others to inspect the various handicraft titles in the ever-changing stock. There is even a section that consists of books published in other languages, primarily Chinese and Japanese. Our male customers typically enjoy viewing those shelves that contain not only novels, but history, philosophy, science fiction, or biography titles.

One demographic group that seems to be lacking in a large number is the teen-ager. Oh, there are a few that find the store, but most are looking for a title that has been assigned by a teacher, and are happy if they find such a copy. Many are disappointed since usually we do not have multiple copies of the same title. Allan Bloom in his book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, (1987) which I bought at *Basically Books*, tells us that there is a definite decline in the reading of books by young people, not only paper books, but even reading eBooks. It appears that some of this decline may be attributed to an educational system where the teacher must follow a course of teaching determined by legislators,

or perhaps the blame can be put on surfing web sites, computer programs, video games, rock or rap music, or movies that garner the attention of the teenager. The printed word has many challenges in today's world.

But we are here to provide reading material for all readers at the store in Diamond Bar Village at 23447 Golden Springs Drive, and also at the store located within the new Diamond Public Library. Our inventory comes from the generosity of the residents of Diamond Bar and the volunteer staff sorts and handles them for you with all proceeds going to the library. Come! – join us to pick up a book by a favorite author or interesting subject matter. Chances are we will have just what you want, and at a fraction of the price other stores might ask.