chains and independents, and get them to realize that any of the books they’d find at a Barnes & Noble or a Borders can be found at our stores.” The 13 stores involved represent “30,000 square feet of bookstore and 200,000 titles,” Scott maintained. She added that the Omaha booksellers got the idea for the coupon from a group of independents in Minneapolis/St. Paul that offer the 10%-off coupon between stores on an ongoing basis.

The 12 other members of the Omaha Independent Booksellers Association are Baker Square Book Center; the Bookworm; Combs & Comb; Cover to Cover; Kettersons Old Market Bookstore; Kieser’s Book Store; Little Professor Book Center, La Vista; New Realities; the Pegasus Book Center; Star Realm; Travel Stuff; and Village Book & Stationery.

NYC’s Endicott To Close

After 14 years in business, Endicott Booksellers on Manhattan’s Upper West Side will close its doors by Labor Day, according to vice-president and buyer Stuart Bernstein. Bernstein succinctly summed up the main reason for the store’s failure: “Barnes & Noble. From the very first day that [their] store opened, sales dropped and did not come back.” The decrease in sales, he said, ranged from 25% to 50% over two years. Endicott is currently offering its customers 40% off on all merchandise.

After Endicott opened in November 1981 on Columbus Avenue between 81st and 82nd streets, sales rose steadily every year by 5% to 7%, owner Encarnita Quinlan said. But then, in April 1993, the Barnes & Noble superstore arrived on Broadway and 82nd Street, two blocks away. More customer mailings and a new newsletter didn’t stem the erosion. “It seemed like customers would just take the information and buy those books somewhere else at a discount,” Bernstein said.

“We reduced our staff, cut back our hours and tried corporate sales,” Quinlan said. “But American Express and other companies were not interested since there are so many Barnes & Nobles all over. All the customer has to do is buy books is walk across the street.

“There is nothing else I could have done,” she concluded. “There isn’t a single service we don’t offer.” The services she cited include free delivery anywhere in Manhattan, free special ordering, free gift wrapping and involvement in activities sponsored by community organizations such as schools and museums.

“As far as adapting, if we tried to be everything to everybody, we would have no way to compete,” Bernstein said. “None of us here got into the book business to sell Jackie Collins.”

Toadstool’s Cafe Goes Cyber

AESOP’S TABLE, the cafe in the Toadstool Bookshop in Peterborough, N.H., has installed a computer so that customers can connect with Toadstool’s new World Wide Web site, or any other site on the Internet that they wish to browse. The service will cost customers $4.95 for half an hour and $6.95 for an hour. Compucare Business Services, a computer store located in the same building as Toadstool, provided the hardware and obtained the store’s Web site; Compucare will share in the cafe’s proceeds. To commemorate its new service, the cafe is offering CyberChips Cookies and Megabyte Brownies.

The new “cyber cafe” was launched on June 5 when Toadstool, Aesop’s Table and Compucare staff tuned in to a question-and-answer session with House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who was at the ABA show.

“Our hope is that we’ll get additional traffic and sell more books,” said store manager Willard Williams. “Customers can pick up information on our home page about events taking place at our three stores. They’ll also have a chance to find out from the ABA’s BookWeb about new books coming out and book events that they might not have heard about.

“The idea is to stir up interest in the Internet, so that many more people can sell some additional books on the Internet,” he added. “And Compucare may see more sales of modems or computers because people have an environment that’s simple and nontaxing where they can try out the equipment. Everybody is hearing about the Internet, its virtues and drawbacks. Now they can see what it is—and get a cup of coffee, too.”

—STEVE SHERMAN