

BUSINESS

9 TO 5

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Bookstore owner showcases her passion

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

For those looking to spending a summer out on Rainy Lake with some new books, a newly-opened bookstore in International Falls can help you find the perfect page-turner.

Moose and Squirrel Books opened May 27 at 900 Third Street, and owner Alicia Vonderharr said she opened the bookstore to fill a need she saw.

Vonderharr moved from Detroit to International Falls with her husband last May, and she said one of the first things she looks for in a new town is a bookstore. Not seeing one, she said she decided to move forward with opening her own.

At Moose and Squirrel Books, there's a wide range of new and used books available, from hunting, religious, thriller, and science-

fiction, to romance, young adult, and children's books.

"The kids' section is half my space," Vonderharr said. "And there's a range from kids' up to young adult, and I even have a section for tweens."

Right now, Vonderharr said her inventory is about 90 percent used books and 10 percent new books. She's also carrying educational games and teachers' resources, as well as a selection of books from Minnesota authors.

"I've been trying to reach out to local authors, too," Vonderharr said. "There really are a lot of local authors here."

Vonderharr worked in book publishing for about seven years in Detroit, she said, and loves talking about books with people. She's hoping to have a little bit of something for everyone, she said.

"My goal is for people to want to read things," Vonderharr said. "I want to create a cozy, family-friendly environment here."

There are challenges to running a physical bookstore when online book sales and eBooks, which can be read on a variety of tablets, make book buying convenient, Vonderharr said. But local, independent book stores have been thriving, she said.

"A lot of people like the in-person bookstore environment," Vonderharr said. "It's not as fun online, it's not as active."

The benefits of a bookstore like Vonderharr's is the better chance of finding older, or out-of-print books, she said. Also, a younger generation that does everything on a tablet or a computer wants to have a physical book they can read, she said.



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

Moose and Squirrel Books owner Alicia Vonderharr explains where the different sections are located in her bookstore.

"They say, 'I use a computer for everything, I don't want to read on it, too,'" Vonderharr said. "'Give me an actual book,' they say."

To encourage customers to drop off their old books, so they can find a new home, Vonderharr started a rewards program. If a customer buys or drops off 20 books, they can receive 20 percent

off their next purchase, she said.

With most of her inventory being used books, Vonderharr said she's priced books appropriately to the condition they're in. Even the new books are usually priced \$1-\$2 below the sticker price, she said.

"When I'm pricing the books, I just think, 'What

would I want to pay for this?'" Vonderharr said.

Combining her work experience in publishing with her passion for books, Vonderharr said the response she's gotten so far from customers has been positive.

"I just love talking about books with people," Vonderharr said. "I just love it."

DEED releases graduate degree tool

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has released a new data tool students can use to determine employment and wage outcomes from different programs of study.

The Graduate Employment Outcomes tool is designed to help students make informed choices about the fields of study that offer the best opportunities for jobs and wages. The program could also be used by educators to line up post-secondary program options with labor market demand and policymakers can use it to identify sectors of the economy that have an oversupply or undersupply of workers.

"The Graduate Employment Outcomes tool will give students a clearer picture of the Minnesota labor market and what fields of study offer favorable career opportunities," DEED Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben said. "At the same time, planners can use the tool to develop training and educational programs that fit employer needs."

The tool, part of a collaborative effort with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, was developed using data involving students who graduated from post-secondary programs in Minnesota between July 2009 and June 2011. Those students were tracked using Minnesota unemployment insurance records, in order to find out how many were working and how much they were making in the first and second years after graduation.

"The Graduate Employment Outcomes tool is a result of a groundbreaking



Katie Clark Sieben



Larry Pogemiller

effort by state agencies to link data across sectors," Larry Pogemiller, commissioner of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, said. "Students now have a much clearer picture of where the jobs are, and what fields of study provide the best earning potential."

The tool allows users to sort employment and wage outcomes by region, degree awarded, institution type

and major field of study. The data will be updated each year with each new graduation class.

For example, the tool shows that of the 1,696 students who graduated from an engineering program in Minnesota in the 2010-2011 school year, 64 percent of them were employed in Minnesota, including part-timers, in the second year after graduation, earning an annual median wage of \$60,459.

In general, programs with an occupational or technical focus had stronger wage and employment outcomes than programs in creative or general disciplines, such as visual arts, journalism, leisure and hospitality, humanities and some social sciences.

Realty business adds summer intern

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

A new face has joined the Island View Realty team for the summer, as he learns the ropes of the real estate business.

Jake Piekarski, 2014 graduate of Falls High School, is joining the Island View staff as a paid intern for the summer, owner Jordan Pearson said. Piekarski's interest in real estate and business management led to Pearson creating an internship position for him, he said.

"After a few conversations with Jake I realized he would be an asset

to Island View Realty and created an internship position for him," Pearson said.

Piekarski will support the agents and office manager, Pearson said, and help market the business and its properties through Internet advertising. He will also learn the home listing and selling process.

"He will not be a licensed agent, so he will



Jake Piekarski

not be active with listings and sales," Pearson said. "However, he can learn from me and the agents all the ins and outs of our job."

Pearson said he noticed Piekarski's work ethic while Piekarski worked at a local grocery store, and was highly recommended by one of his teachers at FHS, Marva Fairchild.

"I am providing this internship to him to help educate him on what agents do, and what all goes into working independently," Pearson said. "I think he will be a good fit at Island View Realty."

SET
UP A
BOOTH!

We invite you to be
a Part of the

BE IN
THE
PARADE!

4th of JULY CELEBRATION!

BOOTHS

If you wish to have a booth in Smokey Bear Park the afternoon of July 3 and all day July 4, please contact:
**Becky Roeder
Rotary Club
218-341-0880**
and remit a fee of:
\$100 per booth for non-profit organization
\$175 per booth for individuals and businesses \$25 Arts & Crafts table
(Fee covers the event and must be paid in advance)

MAIN
PARADE

If you wish to have a float, vehicle or marching unit in the July 4th Main Parade, please contact:
**Kevin Adee
283-2035
or
218-244-0684**

KIDDIE
PARADE

If you wish to be in the Kiddies' Parade, please contact:
**Nancy Rognerud
Rotary Club
Call 218-324-2543**
Prizes for every child that participates.
Entries are welcome on July 4th.

CHILDREN'S
KARAOKE

July 3rd at 4:00 p.m.
Bandshell
Ages 11 years & under
12-16 years
If you wish to participate in Karaoke please contact:
**John Streiff
King of the Road
218-324-0216**
1st, 2nd & 3rd place prizes in both age brackets.

2014 BRONCO
5K RUN/WALK
AND
KIDS FUN RUN

Thursday, July 4th
8:00 a.m. - 5K Run/Walk
Cost \$20
9:00 a.m. - Kids Run
FREE
Falls High School Track
If you wish to participate please call:
**Jen Erickson
218-324-0221**
Registration forms available at:
www.northlandrunner.com
Community Ed Office



2014 July 4th Celebration and Parade Theme:

Honoring our Iraq and
Afghanistan Veterans on the 200th
Anniversary of the writing of the Star Spangled Banner
International Falls July 4th Commission



I WANT YOUR
Unwanted or broken
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283-4701 324 3rd St., Int'l Falls
Celebrating 30 Years!