

PROGRESS 2007

The Book Vault: your community of independent readers

OSKALOOSA — The Book Vault is Oskaloosa's locally-owned, independent bookstore.

Located on the historic square in Oskaloosa, the store is in the old Oskaloosa Savings Bank building. Inside the beautifully renovated building, you'll not only find a terrific variety of books, from literature, to self-help books, as well as one of their specialties: cookbooks.

You'll also find an exciting array of gifts, everything from book bags, book lights, greeting cards and hands-on toys for kids, to tasty treats like chocolates from VanVeen Chocolates in Pella, and preserves from Robert Rothschild Farm.

Owner Nancy Simpson says she'd always wanted to open a bookstore and when she was approached about the possibility, she jumped at the chance.

"As with every former librarian, it had always been my dream to have a book store. And so when I was approached with the opportunity, I accepted it," said Simpson.

"I've always found the fact that Oskaloosa couldn't keep a bookstore very long very frustrating, because to me, a bookstore serves as one of the hearts of the community, and I thought there should be one," she continued.

Simpson's dream came true when the store opened in December of 2005.

Store manager Lisa Baudoin says that there are many things that make Book Vault unique.

"What sets us apart is our knowledge of books and the personal service that we provide. It is fun to come in to Book Vault because it is an experience. It's a place that you want to be," says Baudoin.

Part of the reason the store is a place that people like to be is the atmosphere. They've got tables, comfy chairs and restful lighting



photo provided

Browse books and gifts while enjoying Book Vault's historic charm.

throughout to make it a great space to linger over a favorite title.

The Book Vault also contains something you might not expect to see in a book store — a test kitchen, where guest chefs can demonstrate different recipes from their collection of cookbooks.

A third floor open space can host readings and other group activities.

Another thing that sets The Book Vault apart is their staff, consisting of Carmen Williams, Mindy Beers, Jane Funni, Tasha Swink and Vonda Swink — a group of friendly, interested book lovers — the kind you can only find in an independent bookstore.

Baudoin says that being an independent bookstore is very important.

"An independent bookstore is run by, operated by, and owned by people in your community who can respond to regional and local needs and whims. Bookstores offer a place to grow readers and I think it's important for a community to have a book store to nurture readers, to grow literacy and to grow community connections," explained Baudoin.

The Book Vault is located at 105 S. Market St., on the west side of the square, next to Smokey Row, in Oskaloosa. Store hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m. You can reach The Book Vault by phone at (641) 676-1777 and their Web site is at www.bookvault.org.

Sisters Restaurant: Good ole home-style cooking

OSKALOOSA — Sisters Restaurant in Oskaloosa offers a full-size menu featuring authentic home-style cooking from recipes owner Dorothy Swim says have been handed down from one generation to the next. While some of the recipes come from Swim's mom and grandmother, others come from her employees.

"We use some of our favorites here," Swim said. "Some of the recipes that I use have been handed down year after year after year."

Swim, who retired from Pella Corp in 2001 after 35 years, opened Sisters Restaurant in Eddyville with her sister, Bev Yahnke, in 2003. After two years in Eddyville, Bev got out of the business and Swim brought it to Oskaloosa in January 2006.

Sisters Restaurant is open seven days a week, with breakfast, lunch and dinner served anytime of the day. Daily lunch and dinner specials are served which include a full, all-you-can-

eat homemade salad bar.

The menu at Sisters offers appetizers, like egg rolls, hot wings and super nachos; entrees, from sirloin to prime rib, pork chops, seafood and chicken; sandwiches, like tuna salad, hot beef, BLT, club, tenderloin and hamburgers; pizza; from veggie to taco to create your own; a kids menu, with all the little one's favorites; and breakfast, featuring omelets, waffles and biscuits and gravy.

Swim said she uses nothing but the best ingredients in her food — and it's worth it.

"I've always said that I will not ever sacrifice the quality of the food," Swim said. "I definitely think my food is the best in town. I really do."

When asked why she does what she does, Swim replied it's all for the customer.

"I love people. I love to make people happy," she said. "I want people to rave about our food. I want them

to continue to come back. I want them to become regulars."

Swim described her food as the highest quality possible and is what people in a hurry would cook for themselves at home if they had the time to do it.

Every Sunday from 9 to 2 p.m., Sisters features a breakfast buffet. Also on Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sisters has a lunch special.

Sisters Restaurant is open Monday through Thursday, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The telephone number is (641) 676-1627.

Swim also opened Sisters Lounge in November 2006 next to the restaurant. She said lounge patrons can order food from the restaurant and restaurant patrons can order beverages from the lounge.

She said Sisters Lounge features live entertainment on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Speak your mind on the community forum at oskaloosa.com

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