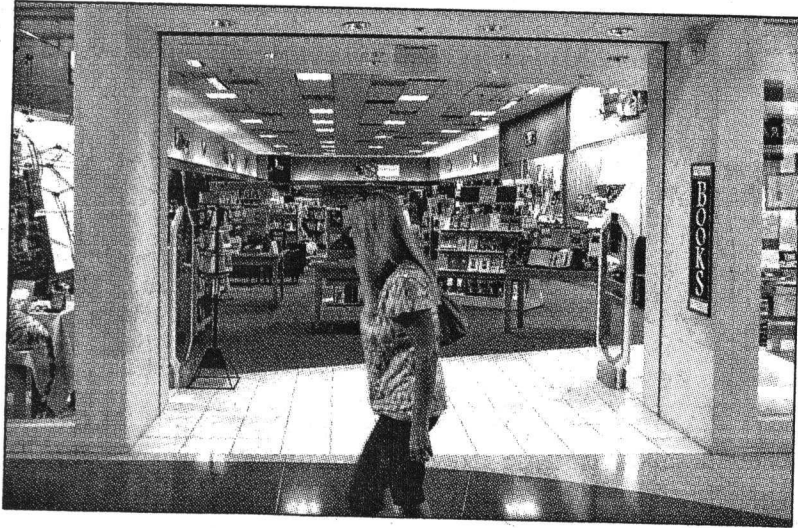


Employees of formers Border Express staffing new bookstore



Inklings has opened in the space formally rented by Borders near the Sears anchor store at the Capitola Mall.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Inklings Books and Things opened Nov. 1 in Capitola Mall

By CATHY KELLY
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CAPITOLA — The story of seven employees of Borders Express could have ended sadly, when the store closed last year. But the sequel has become a hopeful tale.

The employees think of one another as family, and one employee last year likened the impending closing to becoming an orphaned child separated from her siblings.

But a friend of one of the employees overheard talk of the closure and had an idea. Her dad, who owns Thinker Toys stores in Monterey, Carmel and Morgan Hill, had always been interested in owning a bookstore but didn't know the industry.

But the employees knew all about it, and were dying to stay together and continue working at a bookstore, former store manager Dorothy Monroe said.

So a match was made, resulting in a new independent bookstore at Capitola Mall that is staffed by the same seven people who worked at Borders Express. Inkling's Books and Things opened Nov. 1.

"Thinker Toys funded it and we put it together and run it," said Monroe, who now manages the new store. "We have a lot of control that we didn't have before. It's exciting, and a dream come true for most of us. And the alternative would have been unthinkable."

All the employees work at book-

stores because they love it, she said. And they now have the freedom to order the books they know local people want and have organized book clubs, games nights and visits by authors.

They have a fair amount of toys and games and puzzles in store too, including an adventure card game called Worra created by two local brothers.

Assistant manager Jax Dunn acknowledged that online book retailers have made things tough for bookstores, but she said business has been improving month by month.

And they are considering steps to compete with Amazon such as offer-

SEE BOOKS ON B2

BOOKS

Continued from B1

ing to order books and ship them to customers' homes.

"And as we continue building a customer base, we realize that people value our opinions and want to support us," she said.

Dunn went to help a customer, who wanted a fun novel to read on an upcoming vaca-

tion. Another was looking for a story book for a toddler in that enamored with dinosaurs phase.

Inklings offers personal touches like exhibits from local artists, staff recommendations and best sellers from an independent bookstores list.

Mark Phillips, who owns the bookstore with John Horner, said the opportunity "just kind of came along."

"They've done a great job,"

he said. "And I think there will always be a need for bookstores. We may expand to other spots on the peninsula if we get the model down."

Leslie Corwell was shopping in the store on a recent day, with her boyfriend, who is into graphic novels.

"It's great," she said. "You are definitely more likely here to get exactly what you want." Monroe is just happy to be there.

"I come in every day and

talk about things I love with people I love," she said. "It's such a gratifying moment when a customer comes in and says that was a great book; I want another one."

"I love to do that; I love to find the hidden gems."

Reach Inklings at 474-3700 or at www.facebook.com/inklingsbooks.

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