

The Sparta Independent

The Township Journal

The Advertiser-News

The West Milford Messenger

Print Page

UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 8, 2010

New Jersey > Arts & Entertainment

Six years of writing pays off in published novel

PUBLISHED: SEPTEMBER 8, 2010

Hometown author pens coming-of-age book, By Ginny Raue

BYRAM — Nathaniel Hawthorne once wrote, "Easy reading is damn hard writing." Just ask writer Ingrid Anders, daughter of Byram residents Regine and Richard Lombardo, if she agrees with that quote.

Now residing in Washington, D.C., Anders grew up in Byram. She attended Byram Elementary School where it was evident that her literary star was already rising and where her kindergarten teacher dubbed her the "little poetess." She graduated from Lenape Regional High School in 1997.

Anders went on to study at Penn State University, where she earned a B.A. in International Politics. She then received an M.A. in International Policy Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California.

A young woman with a case of wanderlust, Anders has lived and worked in Taiwan and Germany. She speaks fluent German and Mandarin Chinese and has been known to utter a few Italian words, mostly of the cussing variety, however.

She taught English in Taiwan where she enjoyed learning about Chinese culture. In Germany she interned for the German Bundestag — the equivalent of the House of Representatives — and it was there that she observed American travelers and the seed was planted for the central character in her first novel.

Although now a published author, like many writers Anders has a day job. She is currently the China Program Manager at CET Academic Programs in Washington, D.C., an organization that designs and administers student study-abroad programs. Anders' passion for international travel is satisfied through her career and her work also plays a part in her book.

Anders has always been an avid writer. She took as many classes as she could fit in but knew that relying on writing to earn a living could be risky. International politics would provide her with a wage-earning career and take the pressure off bank balance concerns.

"Then you can write what's in your heart," she said.

Previously, she's had short stories and professional articles published — but now we come to meet Kat Vespucci, the star of her first novel, a character born of six years of labor.

Published in Aug. 2009 "Earth to Kat Vespucci" is a coming-of-age story about a conservative New Jersey college student who needs a change of scenery after being dumped by her boyfriend. Being of German descent, her parents push her to discover her roots and she winds up spending her senior year studying in Berlin.

Since Kat had hardly ventured out of the confines of New Jersey, foreign travel was totally alien to her. European customs, classmates from other lands and anti-Americanism are just a few of the bumps in her comic road to self-discovery.

It took Anders one-and-a-half years to complete her first draft of "Earth to Kat Vespucci," writing mostly in three-hour sessions on Sunday evenings. She entered her draft in contests and won honorable mention twice. She was critiqued and wound up re-writing the entire story, changing it to first person, present tense. It's better to laugh with the character than at her, she learned.

An agent she worked with had another suggestion.

"I left some questions unanswered because that's realistic. The agent said this is fiction and should be entertaining. So the ending details changed," Anders said.

Learning to take criticism has been an experience for Anders.



"When it's something you are so happy about and it comes back cut to pieces, you need to take that and make the necessary improvements without being discouraged," she said.

Dedicating six years to the book has been a labor of love. Being a part of someone's day and making them laugh has made the isolation of writing worthwhile. Seeing her book in print, or having people ask for her autograph at a book signing has been the icing on the cake for Anders.

"I've never been happier than that. Even graduations, they were sharing moments. These moments were mine and truly unique," Anders said.

"Earth to Kat Vespucci" has won the "Editor's Choice" and "Reader's Choice" awards from iUniverse and Anders hopes to bring Kat back for further adventures. The novel is available at iUniverse, Amazon and Barnes and Nobel.

To learn more visit <http://www.ingridanders.com>. To get a feel for her sense of humor be sure to view her YouTube clip, "Frequently asked questions by author Ingrid Anders."

Additional source: www.quotesandpoems.com