

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northeast Wisconsin Author and Illustrator Unveil Colorful Children's Picture Book and eBook to Celebrate Chinese New Year and Show Dream Come True

Green Bay, Wisconsin. The Year of the Dragon begins January 23, 2012 with the New Moon. It portends to be a year of good luck and good fortune. Local Author, Barbara (Bielmeier) Nick (Green Bay) and Illustrator, Elaine Stecker (Two Rivers) unveil their second book, *Bella and the Year of the Dragon*, to celebrate the Year of the Dragon and to honor grandfathers. The colorful and dramatic illustrations draw the reader's attention in this classic story about the Chinese Calendar. The electronic version--plain or audio--is available in the Apple iBookstore. Print editions are available in local Green Bay bookstores, amazon.com and cattocreations.com.

Local book signings are scheduled as follows: Saturday January 21 from 3:00 to 8:00 in Menasha at the Chinese Association Spring Festival; Friday January 27 in Green Bay at Bosse's News Stand from 11:00-12:30, in Oconto Falls at St. Anthony's School from 1:30 -2:30 and at Oconto Falls Library from 3:00 to 4:30; Saturday January 28 in Two Rivers at Schroeder's Store from 11:00 to 1:00. Books are available for purchase in Green Bay at The Readers Loft and Bosse's. It is available at Schroeder's in Two Rivers as well as on amazon.com and www.cattocreations.com.

Author, Barbara Nick, describes the "story behind the story": "A hard-copy print version is our dream come true. We released our first book, *Bella the Dragon*, as an early eBook in 2000. It was the Year of the Golden Dragon. When the iPad was launched, the iBookstore was the perfect opportunity to re-release our story with much improved technology. The 2010 version has over 120,000 downloads world-wide with a four-star rating.

We have plans for several stories as part of our "Bella Series". The story of the Chinese Calendar was inspired by a young colleague. During our corporate Diversity and Inclusion week Fall of 2010, I randomly asked a young co-worker to describe the favorite childhood story from her homeland, Taiwan. She described the Great Race and the Lunar Calendar. I was determined to do something with a Bella story in time to celebrate the 2012 Year of the Water Dragon. The result is our 'story within a story' aimed at teaching children about the Chinese culture while demonstrating the need to overcome fear to achieve dreams. Children can watch Bella learn about the animals in the Chinese Calendar as she realizes her dream of flying amid the kites and stars.

"We published an eBook version of *Bella and the Year of the Dragon* in the Apple iBookstore to test-market the book this Summer. Then we published an audio version this Fall. We finalized our illustrations and text, and then worked with the

printer Worzalla, in Stevens Point to print a hardcover edition. The book was released by our company, Catto Creations, LLC, on December 30 2011.

"My long time friend and colleague, Elaine Steckler, is amazing with her colorful, dramatic, and intuitive illustrations. We work together very closely so the reader can "feel the story" through her illustrations. The animals in the story highlight her versatility. Elaine brings life to words through her magical, fluid, and colorful pictures. Elaine's illustrations of Bella with Wind and Sun demonstrate her signature talent of capturing and translating complex concepts and through vivid visuals.

"The person responsible for preparing the publications is my husband, Jay Nick. He does the graphic design and layout, and leverages electronic standards for the eBook versions. Jay stays current on evolving eReader publishing guidelines for devices like iPad, Kindle, and Nook. This allows us to use features and enhancements in newly released technology. Some features we implemented in our publications include: fixed layout children's books, interactive books for Apple iBookstore, read-to-me audio books, and books with embedded video. By understanding the structure of eBooks, Jay leverages the latest eReader features which allows us to be first to market."

Nick continues "Many people think that electronic books will reduce the demand for print versions. That may be true for some books, but I think there is a difference with Children's picture books. We have found that our electronic version create demand and enhance the reading experience for young and old alike. For example, we released the iBook Version of the original *Bella the Dragon* in July of 2010 and have over 120,000 downloads world-wide. Readers have asked us for a print edition. The reach via electronic media has allowed us to test interest prior to investing in print versions. Our audio versions are intended to compliment the print editions and offer an alternative reading experience. Our grandkids in Arizona love the idea of hearing grandma read their bedtime story—Jay makes it happen."

Nick concludes, "We are an unlikely three-some, but we are lucky that we have different talents and skills. We wanted to celebrate the Year of the Dragon with a story that is hopeful and optimistic---we could all use a little optimism to day!"

About the author: Barbara Nick resides in Green Bay with her Husband. She has 6 children and 7 grandchildren. She has worked for Integrys Energy Group (Wisconsin Public Service) for over 30 years. She founded Catto Creations in 2000 when the Original *Bella the Dragon* was published. Barbara was born in New York City and grew up in Scottsdale Arizona. She has a Communications and Business degree and is certified to teach English as a second language. Her classic stories convey timeless messages with deceptive simplicity and brevity.

About the illustrator: Elaine Steckler resides in Two Rivers with her husband and two sons. Largely self-taught, Elaine attended Fine Arts training at Silver Lake College in Manitowoc, and NWTC in Green Bay. Her artistic accomplishments are many and varied. Her illustrations in the *Bella* books demonstrate her versatile talent and her ability to bring life to words.

About the technical Support. Jay Nick resides in Green Bay with his wife. He is father of 6 and Grandfather to 7. For over 30 years Jay worked as an electrical and computer engineer specializing in evolving and real-time technology in the energy space. Jay prepares the books for publication. He provides the graphic design and layout and leverages electronic standards for the Catto Creations publications. Visit his website at www.jaynick.com.

About Catto Creations, LLC. Catto Creations, LLC is an independent publisher. The focus is on children's books, educational topics, and parenting. The products are designed to enhance the overall reading experience with the intent to enrich life while promoting literacy. The company mission is: Family, Literacy, and Enrichment. The company was founded in 2000 with the original version of the eBook, *Bella the Dragon*. The Bella Series and the *Bella* Trademark are owned by Catto Creations, LLC. *Bella the Dragon*--original version, has over 120,000 downloads in the Apple iBookstore. The company offers books, related retail and activities. Visit the website at www.cattocreations.com.

About the *Bella* Series. The *Bella the Dragon Series* is a collection of classic stories with timeless lessons. The target readers are children ages 4 to 8 and their parents.

Contact:

Barbara Nick, Founder Catto Creations, LLC and Author *Bella* Series
920-494-4237
cattocreations@gmail.com

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