

BEDTIME STORIES BECOME BOOKS

By Liz Juranek
Current In Carmel

Stories about raccoons that Lorene Burkhart told her young sons 45 years ago have been re-imagined as the "Raccoon Tales" series of children's books.

The books follow the adventures of raccoons Hip, Flip, Skip and Boo. Burkhart's first book, "Hip, Flip, Skip and Boo and Their Friend, Stu" was published in August, and the second, "Hip, Flip, Skip and Boo Go to the Zoo" launched Oct. 27 at the Indianapolis Zoo's ZooBoo.



Lorene Burkhart

Burkhart, a Carmel resident, came up with the stories because her younger son liked for her to make up stories, she said.

"We lived next door to woods, and so I made up stories about raccoons," Burkhart said.

"It stayed in the back of my mind all these years. I talked to my editor about it and she liked the idea. We tested the script with preschool kids, if they liked the sound of it."

Several events for the newest "Raccoon Tales" book are coming up. Burkhart will read and sign books at the Carmel Clay Public Library, Helios, Kits & Kaboodle and 4 Kids Books in November and early December.

The books are being test-marketed in central Indiana. Burkhart said there are plans to expand the test market to the Midwest.

BOOK READINGS/SIGNINGS DATES:

Nov. 10, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Carmel Clay Public Library, 55 4th Ave. S.E.

Nov. 4, 2 p.m., Helios, 220 E. Main St.

Nov. 24, 11 a.m., Kits & Kaboodle, 2442 E. 146th St.

Dec. 4, 10:30 a.m., 4 Kids Books, 2902 W. 86th St., Indianapolis

"We're getting such good feedback," she said. "We have to have proven we have a good product to expand to the national market."

Burkhart also is the author of "An Accidental Pioneer: A Farm Girl's Drive to the Finish ...," her autobiography published in September 2006. The sequel, "Home on the Farm ... If Chickens Could Talk" will come out later this year.

"I'm 73 years old," Burkhart said. "I didn't start writing books until I was 70. You can be just as creative when you're older, perhaps more so because there is not as many distractions. I try to use myself as an example of how to have a good time and be creative when you're 70."

