



Puddle Pond Pals
By Carol Hageman - Media Kit P. 1

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Hi-res photos available on request

A Desert Tortoise Learns How Brave He Can Be in ‘Puddle Pond Pals’

(CHANDLER, ARIZ.) – The word “desert” typically evokes pictures of dry, hot sand and lonely spaces. Yet, the Sonoran Desert experiences monsoon thunderstorms in summer, making it one of the most diverse climates in America – and the perfect home to the desert tortoise, hero of a new children’s book by first-time author Carol Hageman.

Puddle Pond Pals (Story Monsters LLC) skillfully illustrated by Nathaniel P. Jensen, follows Bubby, a desert tortoise, from the moment a young girl lifts him out of a shoebox and sets him down in his special grassy habitat for the first time. The small tortoise is delighted with the patch of grass, cozy burrow and “puddle pond” his owner, Erin (named after Hageman’s daughter), has prepared for him.

The habitat becomes the site for Bubby’s budding friendships with other desert animals. As these unlikely “pals” learn to work together for the benefit of the group, Bubby realizes how brave he can be.

The story is a mix of fiction and true events from the author’s own life. Having grown up on a farm in Vincennes, Indiana, the author spent most of her youth playing and working outside. She said she was always fascinated by the behavior of wildlife.

“Being raised on a farm gave me a greater appreciation and love for nature. I want to kindle some of that same curiosity and wonder in children who read my book,” Hageman said.

Though she left the farm when she married, the love of nature never left her. Hageman applied her gardening skills to learning floral design, eventually opening her own florist shop in Henderson, Kentucky, before she moved to Phoenix in 1989 and discovered the wonders of desert life.

Puddle Pond Pals introduces readers to the language of the landscape. The text highlights such words as “mesquite” and “gecko,” then defines them in a glossary. A curriculum guide and fact sheet will help teachers use *Puddle Pond Pals* as an educational tool.

It’s illegal to capture desert tortoises in the wild in Arizona, so *Puddle Pond Pals* also includes information on how to adopt one.

Puddle Pond Pals (ISBN: [ISBN 978-1-58985-234-1, eISBN: 978-1-58985-235-8], \$14.95 paperback, perfect-bound) is slated for national release on September 15, 2016, and will be available for purchase on September 20, 2016. For more information about *Puddle Pond Pals*, visit siblingcancerbook.com, email info@storymonsters.com or call 480-940-8182.

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Illustrations by Nathaniel P. Jensen

FACT SHEET

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WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT?

Children who learn how to rely on friends and themselves when they're young turn out to be happier adults. *Puddle Pond Pals* tells how Bubby, a young desert tortoise, moves outside his solitary shoebox and into an unfamiliar world, making friends who band together for safety, comfort and companionship. Along the way, Bubby realizes that just as he can trust his friends, he can trust himself, too.

WHAT MAKES THIS BOOK UNIQUE?

Carol Hageman based *Puddle Pond Pals* on a mixture of fiction and the real-life behaviors of animals she observed during a life spent largely outdoors. The story takes place in a geographically unique part of the world, the Sonoran Desert, and the author uses simple yet evocative terms to paint a picture of the American Southwest's unusual flora and fauna. Intending the book to be used as a learning tool, Hageman highlights these terms and defines them in a glossary. She also provides a curriculum guide and fact sheet. "I gained such an appreciation of the outdoors during my childhood," the author said. "I want children today to get curious about places and animals they've never seen. Maybe it will encourage them to go exploring in the outdoors around them."

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THE CREATIVE TEAM

Carol Hageman – Author

Wildlife always fascinated Carol Hageman. She grew up playing outdoors and doing chores on the family farm in Vincennes, Ind., an area frequented by otters, rabbits, squirrels, even a bobcat or two. As an adult in Henderson, Ky., she encountered wildlife again daily: raccoons, foxes, coyotes and deer. When she decided to write the story of a tortoise in *Puddle Pond Pals*, she drew on some of the real-life behaviors she had witnessed. She wanted to pass along her lifelong curiosity and enthusiasm to today's young readers – many of whom may never have seen an animal in the wild. "I realize now how special it was to be raised on a farm. It gave me a greater appreciation and love of nature that I hope other children can experience," she said.

Hageman began learning floral design in Indiana and opened her own florist shop in Kentucky. After the birth of her daughter, Erin – whom the book's main character is named after – the author sold the shop and the family moved to Phoenix. She became a volunteer to a teacher at Erin's school, tutoring second-graders in reading and then helping them write their own "first" books.

Hageman now lives in Tempe, Ariz. After "downsizing," she said she found the time to write *Puddle Pond Pals* and complete the Master Gardener program through the University of Arizona. She plans to specialize in flower gardening, with an emphasis on pollinating blooming plants for birds, bees and butterflies.

Short bio: Inspired by her lifelong love of wildlife and the outdoors, author Carol Hageman has created a book that's enjoyable for children up to and including the second grade to read themselves or for younger children to have read to them. Based loosely on animal behavior Hageman observed in real life, *Puddle Pond Pals* is part adventure, part learning to get along with others and finding one's own strengths. After what she calls "downsizing," she now lives in Tempe, Ariz., as a Master Gardener. This is her first book.

Nathaniel P. Jensen – Illustrator

Nate Jensen (natepjensen.com) is an illustrator, a designer, an animator, a muralist and a fine art oil painter. Having freelanced for 25 years, he has painted buildings as high as 60-feet tall, animated for feature films, and illustrated for newspapers and magazines nationwide. He enjoys playing around with children's book ideas and has created illustrations for more than 20 children's books.

Jensen grew up in Austin, Texas, and now lives "in a small place with the Marquam Forest as my backyard" in Portland, Ore., to be with his sons and explore what he'd like to become. He's recently become a massage therapist and still enjoys yoga, dharma talks, nutrition and cooking, spending time with his sons, running/walking in the woods and simply exploring life.

Conrad J. Storad – Editor

Conrad J. Storad is an award-winning author and editor of more than 50 science and nature books for children and young adults, including *Gator, Gator, Second Grader (Classroom Pet...or Not?)*, the "USA Best Book" *Rattlesnake Rules*, and the ONEBOOKAZ for Kids 2012 selection *Arizona Way Out West & Witty*. He holds an undergraduate degree in mass media communication from the University of Akron and a master's degree in mass communication/science journalism from Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism. He, his wife, Laurie, and their rescue dog, Frankie, share their time between Arizona and Ohio.

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BOOK DESCRIPTIONS

*"Don't be scared, Cotton. I'll share my **burrow** with you. My name is Bubby."*

10 words: A tortoise learns how to trust his friends and himself.

15 words: In the desert, a tortoise named Bubby learns how to trust his friends and himself.

25 words: Children who learn how to rely on friends and themselves become happier adults. Bubby, a desert tortoise in an unfamiliar world, does just that.

50 words: Children who learn how to rely on friends and themselves become happier adults. In *Puddle Pond Pals*, Bubby, a desert tortoise, moves outside his shoebox and into an unfamiliar world, making friends who band together for safety and companionship. Along the way, Bubby learns to trust his friends and himself.

100 words: Children who learn how to rely on friends and themselves when they're young grow up to be happier adults. *Puddle Pond Pals* tells how Bubby, a tortoise in the Sonoran Desert, moves outside his solitary shoebox and into an unfamiliar world, making friends who band together for safety, comfort and companionship. Along the way, Bubby realizes that just as he can trust his friends, he can trust himself, too. First-time author Carol Hageman of Tempe, Ariz., draws on her own experience with wildlife and with second-graders, who she tutored as a school volunteer and helped them write their own "books."

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SUGGESTED MEDIA QUESTIONS

1. You seem to have had the desire to write a children's book in your mind for quite some time. Why now? What changed?
2. In what ways have you seen animals act that are similar to what you describe in your book?
3. You've said that the young girl in the book who owns the turtle, Erin, is based on your daughter, also named Erin. How did you impart a love of animals to her?
4. Did your family ever own a desert tortoise?
5. Tell me about your experience as a school volunteer helping second-graders write their own books
6. What were some of the books you liked to share with your daughter and the schoolchildren you encountered?
7. Why was it important to you to include a glossary of new words, a curriculum guide for teachers and a fact sheet about the desert tortoise?
8. You include information about how to legally adopt a desert tortoise. Are they endangered, and is there a problem with people in Arizona and elsewhere illegally owning them?
9. What do you hope children and families take from your book?
10. Do you have plans to write more books?

