

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Jennifer Sellars

Phone: 904-471-5376

E-mail: jsellars@sagbooks.com

Pelican Pete Says Reading Counts!

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL (February 20, 2009) —After receiving the Teachers' Choice and Children's Choices Awards, the Adventures of Pelican Pete series is now available in the Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts! literacy programs.

Designed to help children connect with nature, the popular children's books now have online quizzes available through these respective programs to help monitor students' progress and comprehension.

The industry's two leading incentive programs are used in thousands of schools nationwide and work like this: The school's library retains a collection of popular and traditional children's books, each rated by difficulty. The harder to read, the more points received. Quizzes accompany each book, assessing students' knowledge and comprehension. With each quiz passed, points are earned for the student readers, which can be redeemed for prizes like school T-shirts, privileges, or items donated by local businesses.

According to Jim Trelease in his "Read-Aloud Handbook," these incentive programs have gained a lot of support because:

- Students read a significantly larger number of books at all levels as a result of incentives.
- Students tend to choose more complicated books to obtain more points.

- With the increase in usage and demand, the library now contains a larger and newer book collection.
- Students discover favorite authors through their expanded reading time.
- Student reading scores improve.

“The number one reason for using these programs is because they motivate our children to read,” says Laurie Hays, Program Specialist for Elementary Language Arts in St. Johns County.

“Very few children learn to love books by themselves,” says Frances Keiser, author of the celebrated series. “Introducing children to the written word is often a team effort, enlisting parents and teachers aided by proven programs and techniques.

Reading Counts! and Accelerated Reader seem to know which books and techniques work. Our books use rhyme, which not only makes reading fun by incorporating rhythmic structures and patterns, but also helps children learn to read through phonetic awareness—their ability to discern differences among individual sounds—which is fundamental to literacy.”

Frances and her husband, Hugh Keiser, illustrator for the book series, have been working with Florida school districts since 1999, presenting hands-on literary programs that teach children how to care for the environment. Along with fundraising programs, literacy reward programs, and a new Backyard Adventures series, they are currently working on a nonprofit component to their business, which would help schools pay for literacy programs like these.

“Our mission is still what it has always been—to connect children with nature,” says Hugh Keiser. “With the help of Reading Counts! and Accelerated Reader, our

environmental messages will reach thousands more students, reiterating the fact that reading really does count!”

###