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Edited version of Band of Innocence Graphic Novel from Robert Agnello Released

January 2010 New York, NY: Robert Agnello, of On The Lamb Productions and Emmy Award Winning Carmen Sandiego music fame, has released an edited version of the graphic novel, "**Band of Innocence.**" Band of Innocence (BOI) was first released in March of 2009. BOI teaches a strong, important message to children and adults alike. Although originally geared toward children, ages 8 and up, it reaches beyond the barriers and draws in adults, as well.

Agnello explains the book, "The characters in the book are innocent of any pre-conceived notions. They don't judge, they act. There is no thought of physical violence since they believe everyone has a story and that that story can be changed. For example, the first episode is about endangered species. They save a baby white gorilla from a mean man who wants to hunt it down. They don't just simply stop him but they change his attitude so that he is forever changed, not just stopped. They realize that they are able to change a person's thinking and therefore change their actions."

Graphic novels are becoming more popular as people are realizing their importance in many aspects.

According to an article posted on the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) website <http://eric.ed.gov>

"After years of fighting for shelf space in libraries and classrooms, graphic novels have finally become an acceptable alternative to their prose-packed counterparts—and kids can't seem to get enough of them. For that matter, neither can grown-ups. In 2006, U.S. consumers dropped an estimated \$330 million on graphic novels and comics, with librarians accounting for about 10 percent, or \$33 million, of those purchases.

Publishers have taken advantage of the format's rock-star status by launching special imprints—such as Toon Books, the new imprint from Raw Comics, published by New Yorker magazine art editor Françoise Mouly and Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Art Spiegelman—that feature developmentally appropriate comics for the pre-K–6 crowd. That means graphic novels are now addressing important personal and social issues like the power of imagination, being true to one's self, the benefits of teamwork, and how to cope with divorce and bullying.

Teachers and librarians are also beginning to realize that these books are perfect for young readers who are making the transition from picture books to text-only titles. And with graphic novels' hypnotic power to pull kids into a story, they're also perfect for promoting recreational or free voluntary reading—one of the most effective ways to increase literacy and create lifelong readers."

The BOI website has also been revamped, where the book and a poster are available for purchase, the BOI song available for download and children can register to become a member of the BOI community. The interactive section of the website is still being developed where children will be able to pick their favorite characters and discuss what they are doing in their community to help the world around them. Each book is delivered with a BOI wristband. Agnello says, "These bracelets signify that these children are now part of "BOI." The bracelets empower children with truth, compassion and the realization that anything can be accomplished if you are positive and in the moment. We want to create a community where kids feel comfortable – where they are able to relate to what is happening in the book. In several different ways, they are able to identify with a character, which in turn will help them with situations they are dealing with in real life."

Taking his idea direct to his audience and presenting it directly to children in New York City public schools, Agnello says it has been very well received and all the children are very excited about it. This is what one fan wrote about the book:

"Dear Robert (aka...author extraordinaire),

Thank you so so so so so (times 3 million) much for Band of Innocence. I read it and thought that it was AMAZING! I gobbled it up in one hour (yes, I kept track...I wanted to be able to say how long it took me to read it to show how interesting it was). I really like the moral of the story. It just makes me want to be a better person, and start my life over as a child child (as in three years old child) and be more "pure" if you will.

Also, I thought that maybe, as a promotional product, there could be the Amulet that Emily wore and the Sword of Truth that she had in the Amulet. I would definitely buy the Amulet, and I'm sure others would buy the Sword of Truth.

Thanks SOOOOO much again for Band of Innocence and I totally look forward to reading the next adventure and seeing more BOI in the future! Good luck and best wishes!"

Band of Innocence is available for purchase from the website <http://www.bandofinnocence.com>, Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble. It will be available in the coming weeks in bookstores, Target and Walmart.

Agnello is scheduled to talk at area New York City bookstores, libraries, and elementary schools in the coming months and is available for media interviews. For media information please see the website, <http://www.bandofinnocence.com>.

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Fact Sheet Band of Innocence

Band of Innocence
By Robert Agnello
Publication Date: February 2009
ISBN: 9780615268958
Number of Pages: 134
Retail availability: February 2009

Three Major Message points in the book:

A story of 7 unique children with an innocence so pure that the Elders of this earth have granted them the power to protect and save this world.

These stories are action packed but provide a message to children and adults that everyone has a story they live by. Even the baddest of the bad. Change that story and a person can be changed from the inside.

The children in this story are full of hope and trust in the goals they set themselves up for. There is no doubt in their minds that they cannot accomplish what they set out to do. They live in the moment and are not worried about the past or the future. Their innocence releases them from any pre-conceived notions towards race or color or hate.

10 questions the author is prepared to answer in an interview

Why did you want to write this book?

I wrote this book to empower children to hold on to their beliefs and dreams. The innocence of a child is so powerful and yet we let it fade so quickly in today's world. Pressures of life seem to make children grow up too quickly. I want to try and tell children it's OK to believe in Santa Claus, in their dreams of being President or a Princess.

What does this story teach?

The story teaches that there are peaceful paths to all problems. The peaceful path is the stronger path. That weakness is in the violent. That a person is the product of his past and if he can let that past go he/she can change their outlook on their present.

Where does the story take place?

The story takes place today. Since this is the first book, I tried to give a history of how The Band of Innocence started. There is a description of who the players are and a little of their background. This could have easily been a 500-page book but I wanted it to be an illustrated novel to capture the essence of the characters and make it easier for children to read it.

Who is this book for?

The book is for anyone who wants to re-capture his or her dreams and hope of a peaceful and compassionate world. I originally was aiming for 8 to 15 year olds but it seems that adults are gaining the benefits of it, too.

What else do you have planned to come out from the book?

We are going to open up a website where kids could start a forum on the characters and what children can do in their lives to make this a better place to live. With the book comes two Band of Innocence bracelets that empower children with truth, compassion and honesty. They will then be part of the Band Of Innocence. We will eventually ask children to do community service and upon providing the community service, these children will receive free gifts. A charm, character or a t-shirt. If you help pets you get a pet charm. We are also in the process of designing t-shirts, clothes, and figures of the characters.

How do the children in the story stay innocent?

They don't. As they approach 15 or 16 they lose some of their innocence. With that they must leave the Band and a whole new Band of Innocence is chosen. The children who leave the Band are forever blessed with some of that innocence but it can never be as they were as a child.

What do the children in the story have to face?

The children face obstacles that they have to manage in a non-violent manner. They understand that people react out of what has happened in their past. They take that into account and each child has a power that can subdue without hurting.

How do the children in the story overcome their fear?

They overcome their fear by teamwork. They are told early on that they are powerful alone but unstoppable together. This message is re-enforced all thru the whole series of Band of Innocence.

How do the children in the story protect and save the world?

The first episode is about endangered species. They save a baby white gorilla from a mean man who wants to hunt it down. They don't just simply stop him but they change his attitude so that he is forever changed. Not just stopped.

Provide a preview of what's next...

Since there are many versions of The Band of Innocence, we are writing the prequel, which takes place during pre-war Germany in 1939. Without giving anything away I want to say that the ending is a complete surprise. It was to me as I was writing it. This series can go on forever. There are always challenges we face and these children with their innocent light, I feel, can help us thru these very difficult times. I want to feel as I did as a child. That hope prevails and my dreams can be realized. I still believe in Santa Claus.



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ROBERT

My name is Robert Agnello and I am the middle son of a poor immigrant family from Sicily. Being the middle child, I was born with a great sense that no one really loved me. I decided to enter show biz. Here is my story. I met Adele, my Emmy, on the set of Carmen Sandiego. She was much prettier than the other Emmys. There was something about her. I then went on to be the Musical Director for "Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego". I've written music for Pete and Pete, Maury Povich, Disney and others. I toured around the world with The Spencer Davis Group and other bands. I have played and toured for 20 years.

PROJECTS



BAND OF INNOCENCE

A story of 7 unique children with an innocence so pure that the Elders of this earth have granted them the power to protect and save this world. Lot's of action and good clean fun. The graphic novel is being illustrated by Louis Manna of DC Comics fame. The book will be completed by February 2009. I'm so excited. We'll be working on the prequel in the spring of 2009.



THE SQUALL AND ORGAN BOY

In this animated series the Squall, who is half man half storm, is the son of Hurricane Ramon and a Canadian cold front. By day he's Sheldon Gruger, confetti disbursement engineer. The world's best. His partner in crime fighting is Roger Gibbons AKA Organ Boy. Born with extreme dyslexia he blew on his thumb instead of sucking on it and turned himself inside out. He uses his organs to fight crime. Criminals fear the call "Be Aware the Squall is Here." So does everyone else.



CLUB TOURS

Stand up comic, musician and storyteller. I combine humor and music and mold it into an extremely dangerous balancing act where one slip up can be devastating-to myself and the audience.

STORYTELLER

Creator of "Feel the Fear and Do It" Motivational Program. I have taken my life lessons to schools around my home to help children realize that nothing is impossible. I teach children and adults that a person is not defined by what he does in life but by what he is in that life. That fearing something doesn't mean that they cannot accomplish that which they fear and that everyone has a fear of something.