

For Immediate Release

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## **Balloons Win Big in the Florida Author and Publisher Association President's Book Award**

Mt. Pleasant, SC (October 4, 2013) – *Balloon Trees* by Danna Smith, illustrated by Laurie Allen Klein took home gold at the annual Florida Authors and Publishers convention held in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Traditionally only open to resident Florida authors, this year was the first year that the award recognized authors from across the nation. Established by the association president in 2005 the Florida Authors and Publishers Association have recognized books in 32 categories for their excellence.

*Balloon Trees* shows even the youngest reader how their balloon goes through the process of production. With a little bird as a companion, the full-page spreads guide the reader from tree to store through rhyming text. Sylvan Dell Publishing books always include a For Creative Minds section, where children and parents are able to work through activities and learn fun facts about rubber production.

Danna Smith received excellent reviews for *Pirate Nap* and *Two at the Zoo*, which was featured in Parenting Magazine and is a Raising Readers board book special edition. The inspiration for her most recent book, *Balloon Trees*, came from her husband's line of work running a rubber manufacturing plant. Although his company makes industrial rubber products, Danna chose to follow the creation of a fun product that is near and dear to a child's heart: the balloon. She lives in Northern California with her husband, two grown children, and their cocker spaniel, Peanut. Visit her website at [www.dannasmithbooks.com](http://www.dannasmithbooks.com).

Laurie Allen Klein has been a freelance artist for nearly 25 years. Over the last several years, she has worked as the on-staff artist for a marine park, where she does everything from painting life-size sea animal murals to illustrating children's activity books. As evidenced by the extras included in the art, she has combined her love and fascination with outer space (and science fiction) with children's illustration in both *Solar System Forecast* and *Meet the Planets*. Laurie also illustrated *Furs and Feathers*, *Where Should Turtle Be?*, *Little Skink's Tail*, and *If a Dolphin Were a Fish* for Sylvan Dell. She was the winner of the Outstanding Pennsylvania Author/Illustrator Award from the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association in 2008 and is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Laurie lives in Florida. See more of her artwork at [www.lauriekleinarts.com](http://www.lauriekleinarts.com).

For more information about *Balloon Trees* or to schedule interviews with the author or illustrator contact Heather Williams at (843) 971-6722 or [heatherwilliams@sylvandellpublishing.com](mailto:heatherwilliams@sylvandellpublishing.com).

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### About Sylvan Dell Publishing

Sylvan Dell is on a mission to improve child literacy with science and math through fictional picture books. Using prose and pictures, children are delighted with stories of their favorite animals, planets, or even place. This leads to the exploration of facts and learning activities in each book's *For Creative Minds* pages. Sylvan Dell carefully designs each book to portray accurately the chosen subject. Vetted by experts in that field, and aligned to common core and state standards, each book is an asset to educational programs. Sylvan Dell has grown to include more than 80 authors and illustrators, and honored to have won more than 75 book awards since its inception in 2005.