



# Round Rock Leader



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## Local author looks to foster parent/child reading process

### Winn aims to encourage use of imagination through books

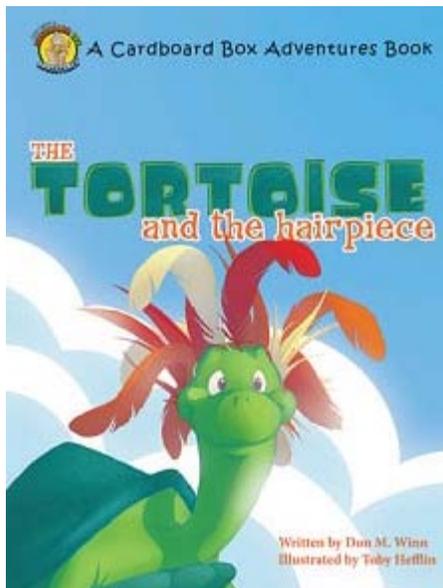
**By ERIC WIND**  
**Special to the Leader**

The cardboard box was a sacred thing to a kid in the 1960s. It may have been a race car, a NASA spacecraft or a pirate's ship. The box has since been replaced with a galactic stock of plastic toys and noisemakers that require less imagination for play.

Under the new generation of attention grabbers, a local author and IT professional created a series of books aimed at encouraging children to use their imaginations, with an emphasis on lap reading with parents.

Don Winn, now 50 and with a grown son, was one of those children in the 1960s who constructed entire worlds inside a cardboard box. Fifteen years ago he wrote poetry and began having ideas for children's books. The stories may help children and parents with a variety of issues facing kids in today's world.

In Winn's series of children's books, collectively called "The Cardboard Box Adventures," he said, "I wanted to come up with some stories using fun characters that would provide an excellent means to open up discussion with parents on topics where a child can be helped."



Round Rock author Don Winn's "Cardboard Box Adventure Book" series is aimed at encouraging interaction between parents and children, as well as inspiring children to use their imagination. "The Tortoise and the Hairpiece" has been released as an interactive book for the iPad.



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Topics, Winn explained, included bullying, peer pressure and teasing. These issues garnered increased attention in the media and prompted President Obama to organize a Conference on Bullying Prevention.

Winn's books target early childhood, but he says he discovered from teachers that older children enjoy his books, too.

"One teacher in Round Rock used 'Higgledy-Piggledy Pigeon' for sixth-graders. The book was motivating the students to handle challenges with reading," Winn said.

"Higgledy-Piggledy Pigeon" follows a pigeon named Hank, who doubts his flying ability because he has no sense of direction. With the help of a teacher, Hank finds a way to counteract his problem and succeeds despite his disability.

Winn did indicate that he has plans to create a series for children in the older elementary to younger middle school range. The new series will stay to the spirit of "The Cardboard Box Adventures," with lessons and educational value, but it contains different storylines. Winn hopes to release the new series next year.

"The Cardboard Box Adventures" series is designed for a lap reading atmosphere, where parents read aloud with their children. The books also contain questions, to encourage an interactive reading experience for the child. Winn remembers when his grandmother would read aloud to him when he was small and he feels parents reading aloud to children will foster a bond between them.

To that end, Winn also reaches out to parents and teachers with a presentation dubbed "Discuss, Understand, Grow". The presentation covers the impacts of lap reading, how to use questions during lap reading sessions and using the stories to help children make proactive decisions.

In addition to Winn's presentations for parents, he also visits schools and speaks with children directly. The schools he has visited include Cottonwood Elementary in Hutto, and Harmony Science Academy in Austin. Winn's agenda for kids include his presentation "Reading More Than Just Words," which aims to help children improve their public speaking abilities through reading and speech techniques.

Winn will give his "How to Write an Animal Fable" presentation at All Things Kids in Georgetown, with a time and date to be determined. His book "The Tortoise and the Hairpiece" has been released as an interactive book for the iPad and he will release his latest book, "Twitch the Squirrel and the Forbidden Bridge," this winter.

## Reader Comments

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*Posted: Sunday, November 06, 2011*

Article comment by: **Anthony James**

I think this book series is wonderful. In a world were children are

glued to electronic devices, it is truly refreshing to see someone who's working toward ideals that we all do well to heed.

*Posted: Wednesday, October 19, 2011*

Article comment by: **Carla London**

Having read all of the books in the Cardboard Box series, I can't say enough what a powerful impact they have on children! Keep the books coming and I'm eagerly looking forward to the older children's series!

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