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## **BLACKIE—THE BELOVED SWAY-BACKED HORSE AND TIBURON, CALIFORNIA’S MOST FAMOUS CITIZEN, IS IMMORTALIZED IN NEW ILLUSTRATED CHILDREN’S BOOK**

*“The word quickly spread ‘bout the new horse in town  
And from all ‘round the county young kids headed down  
To the pasture where Blackie could always be found  
Standing still, like a rock, on the same patch of ground.”*

**--Excerpt from BLACKIE: The Horse Who Stood Still**

In the beautiful Marin County, California town of Tiburon, there once lived a horse named Blackie who spent his life standing absolutely still. Several generations of local children would visit Blackie’s pasture bringing him apples, carrots and sugar cubes. But mostly they came to watch a horse that barely moved a muscle. After a life as a champion rodeo horse (standing still while his cowboy roped a steer), and a bona fide tourist attraction at Yosemite National Park (not moving a muscle while tourists photographed the ranger who rode him), Blackie’s swaybacked form also became a symbol of an environmental crusade to limit the encroaching development of one of the Bay Area’s most beautiful cities.

The life and times of this stubbornly motionless equine hero is delightfully told in **BLACKIE: The Horse Who Stood Still** (Welcome Books; \$18.95; September 29, 2006), a touching biography-in-verse by Christopher Cerf and magically illustrated with 45 full-color illustrations by Paige Peterson.

In 1965 while Blackie stood serenely in his pasture, the road to Tiburon was expanded to four lanes and rerouted partially through a section of the pasture. The entire citizenry was in an uproar over this threat to the rural splendor of the town, and their favorite horse. The “Committee to Save the Sway-Backed Horse Pasture” was formed. Blackie’s pasture was saved, and the horse was on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony dedicating the new boulevard. When he died a year later in 1966 (after 28 years in that small town), Blackie’s eulogy appeared in all the San Francisco Bay Area newspapers, and he was buried with much solemnity in his beloved pasture attended by many of the town’s children. Three years later the lure of Blackie’s story still had considerable power—*Good Housekeeping* magazine, wrote a story about his life, reporting on the quarters and dimes collected from as far away as Massachusetts from schoolchildren to pay for his memorial. Today a statue of Blackie with his famous sway-backed form stands in the exact same place where he stood motionless for all those years. Residents are likely to give directions to visitors—“Take the first turn to the left after you pass the swaybacked horse.” There is a Blackie Street. Tiburon also features a Blackie Brigade, a children’s group dedicated to environmental causes.

**BLACKIE** is destined to be a new children’s classic in the mold of Munro Leaf’s *Ferdinand the Bull* and Dr. Seuss’s *The Lorax*, and it is sure to appeal to adults and children alike. Christopher Cerf and Paige Peterson magically recapture the story of this most unlikely of heroes.

#### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

On Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, the town of Tiburon will play host to a special event honoring Blackie and marking the publication of **BLACKIE: The Horse Who Stood Still**, while raising funds to support to local library. From 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in Blackie’s Pasture, families can join the fun with a petting zoo, pony rides, a cupcake walk, relay races, pin-the-tail-on-Blackie, food and live entertainment, including Chris Cerf at the piano.

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**Christopher Cerf** is an author, composer-lyricist, record and television producer, editor, and co-founder and president of the educational television production company, Sirius Thinking Ltd. Cerf has played a pivotal role in the creation and production of the *Sesame*

*Street* television program, most notably as a regular contributor of music and lyrics, and as the producer of many of its music albums. In the process, he has won two Grammy Awards and three Emmy Awards for songwriting and music production.

**Paige Peterson** is a noted New York-based artist who grew up in Belvedere, California (her mother was once the Mayor) and as a child, knew Blackie well, visiting him regularly in his pasture. In 2003 she was selected for membership in the prestigious Guild Hall Academy of the Arts. She has appeared on *Oprah* and has designed and styled segments for *Good Morning America*.

**Christopher Cerf and Paige Peterson are available for interview.**

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ILLUSTRATOR: Paige Peterson

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