

# SIMON AND BARKLEE, INC.

For immediate release, July 26, 2003  
Contact: CW Scherer; 360-730-2360

## **Publisher Targets Dumbed Down Texts**

**What do children know about the world? Why can't they think critically and question?** Catherine Scherer, president and co-creator of a dynamic educational program for elementary ages insists it's because mainstream publishers have dumbed down reading curriculum to such an extent that textbooks have become lifeless and boring. "Quality has gradually given way to political correctness. There is little left for teachers to use to teach critical thinking. Its one of the reasons that reading scores have flat-lined" she says, referring to The Nations Report Card which shows that despite over \$230 billion spent over 40 years, reading achievement scores remain virtually unchanged.



Scherer and her husband have created a high-interest program to challenge the status quo. Simon and Barklee, the globetrotting heroes of the series, are the Scherers' own pets – a canary and a terrier. Together, the intrepid duo travels the world, exploring and discovering differences, delights and problems. "We want kids to know the reality of our global family," she says. "After all, there are six billion people in the world and 95% of them don't live here."

Kids identify with the characters with their distinct personalities and quirky characteristics. They are loveable, funny and brave and like nothing more than to explore the world in all its fascinating diversity. Each book also stars a guide from the subject country who introduces readers to realities of sights, sounds, tastes, language and

traditions. Designed as a language arts program that encourages critical thinking, exploration and discussion, the books are accompanied by activities for students and teachers that extend the stories with an integrated curriculum geared to most states' standards.

Educators across the country are enthusiastic in their reviews.

"We can make a difference here," says Scherer. "Kids and teachers love the stories. They are educationally sound. We have created something new and challenging that has not been watered down."

***Simon and Barklee*** books are available online, from Simon and Barklee, Inc. or from Simon and Barklee sales representatives.

<http://www.simonandbarklee.com>

***Media kits, review copies, and interviews available on request.  
Special feature story inquiries welcome.***

Simon and Barklee, Inc.  
2280 E. Whidbey Shores Rd.  
Langley, WA 98260  
PHONE: 360-730-2360  
FAX 360-730-2355  
E-MAIL: [cwscherer@simonandbarklee.com](mailto:cwscherer@simonandbarklee.com)