

Contact the Editor

Jo-Ann Greene, 291-2300  
jgreene@lnpnews.com

## A flight of fancy through Amish country

*Merle Good, P. Buckley Moss offer children Reuben's fourth adventure*

BY JO-ANN GREENE  
Sunday News Book Editor  
jgreene@lnpnews.com

**M**erle Good admits he doesn't like heights, but that hasn't stopped him from taking flight in hot-air balloons. "It's exhilarating, it's really incredible," he said.

It's also inspirational, apparently.

Good, a Lancaster County book publisher and authority on Plain life, and P. Buckley Moss, a rural Virginia artist famous for her stylized portrayals of the Amish, have teamed up once again to create an engaging picture book, "Reuben and the Balloon," illustrating a story of an unforgettable day on — and above — the farm.

Balloonists enjoy views of picturesque farmland, and they sometimes soar over Reuben's family farm. He's so fascinated he's apt to forget his chores while he gazes at a "big, floating beauty," Good writes.

Dawdi (his grandfather) understands: "That balloon's a thing of wonder," he tells Reuben. He's even game to race one with his horse and buggy.

Then one day a balloon lands at a neighbor's farm. "Reuben was sure that the calves could wait a little" for their feed, and he runs over to get a close-up look at the balloon decorated with a colorful quilt patch.



**Merle Good and P. Buckley Moss will take a balloon ride with the winners of their book-launch drawing.**

The balloonists offer to take him and two friends aloft. Fortunately, Datt (Dad) gives his permission, and Reuben goes up, up and away to get a new perspective

on the farm and impress his normally stern big sister.

Good, on a balloon ride between Akron and Leola, alighted on an Amish farm, as did the book's balloonists. He too was greeted by a throng of Amish families, and he's seen that happen whenever a balloon lands in a field in Eastern Lancaster County's Amish country, he said.

The boys' impromptu balloon ride? Good made that up.

■"Reuben and the Balloon" is fourth in a series that began with "Reuben and the Fire" and was followed by "Reuben and the Blizzard" and "Reuben and the Quilt." Good noted the well-reviewed series has sold more than 135,000 hardcover and paperback copies since 1993.

The new book has been published in hardcover by Good's Good Books, Intercourse, and is priced at \$16.95.

Moss and Good will launch "Reuben and the Balloon," 5-8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 19, and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 20, at Good's The People's Place Gallery, 3518 Old Philadelphia Pike, Intercourse. The artist and author will sign copies of the new book and show prints of "Balloons Aloft" and "Balloon in Our Orchard," as well as original watercolors, etchings, and limited editions.

They'll also launch themselves and three lucky winners of a hot-air balloon ride into the air Saturday morning to see the farmland as Reuben saw it.

Visitors to the gallery between 4 and 7:55 p.m. Friday may enter an 8 p.m. drawing for the ride. The U.S. Hot Air Balloon Team basket lifts off from Good's Old Country Store parking lot at dawn. ■