

Small press finds success in Pittsboro

Chatham County Line recently was sent a copy of *The Big Fun Guide to Tar Heel Country: 135+ Activities for Families in Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, Pittsboro, and Points in Between!*, by Erin Donohue Baldwin, a Chapel Hill native who currently lives in Carrboro. The book was published by Pittsboro-based DRT Press. DRT Press is the home-grown project of Adrienne Bashista, a writer and a librarian who's lived in Chatham County for the 15 years she's been in North Carolina.

Neighbor to Neighbor

The Big Fun Guide to Tar Heel Country is a collection of almost a hundred and fifty activities and destinations in Orange and Chatham counties, and is ideal for parents and grandparents of young children, child care providers, and anyone looking for fun and mostly free activities in the area.

This is the third book for DRT Press, and Bashista has big plans for her D.I.Y. publishing company in the years to come. Here's how she got started, why she decided to publish *The Big Fun Guide to Tar Heel Country*, and what's coming up next:

Why and how did you end up starting a publishing company?

In the summer of 2003 my husband and I were in the process of

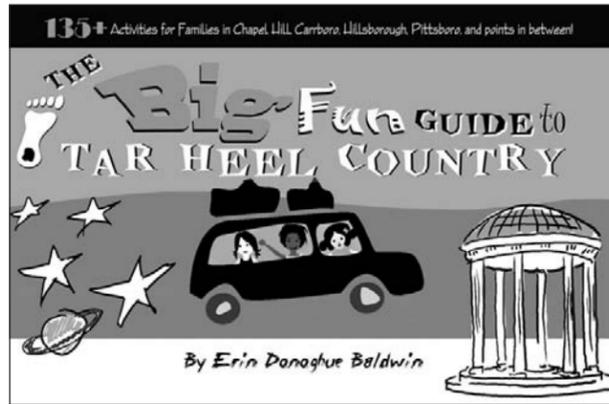
adopting a child from Russia. We already had a little boy, then 4, and I was struggling with how to explain to him what was about to happen to us.

As a children's librarian and an all-around book-lover, my first impulse was to find a picture book on the subject. I found wonderful books on adoption from China, transracial adoption, adoption from foster care, and grandparent adoption. I found books that told us it was okay to be adopted, that it's okay to look different from your parents, and that Adoption Day was a day to be celebrated. But I found no books on adoption from Russia.

That fall, we adopted a little boy, and after that I realized that it wasn't kids like my older son who needed a book – it was the adopted children themselves who needed one. This is how my first book, *When I Met You: A Story of Russian Adoption*, came to be. A couple years later I published *Mishka: An Adoption Tale*, another story based on adoption from Russia or Eastern Europe.

How'd you move from adoption books to a local guide book?

I created *The Big Fun Guide to Tar Heel Country* because I saw a niche that needed to be filled in the local market. As a mother of young children and as a former newcomer to the area, I knew that local parents needed



Author Erin Donohue Baldwin has just published her new book with Pittsboro-based DRT Press.



to know the information Erin's included in the book: things to do with children in Orange and Chatham counties.

When my kids were very small, I got most of my information about things to do from the other moms in my playgroup – a playgroup that formed almost spontaneously through the stay-at-home mom grapevine. But what if you just moved here? What if you don't have a playgroup? What if you work full time and you don't have time to make the kind of connections that will tell you the best playground that both your 3-year-old and 1-year-old can play on at the same time, or something you can do while running errands in Carrboro, or something you and your 5-year-old can do on a rainy Saturday afternoon? You can

always search the Internet, I suppose, but you can't search for something that you don't know exists. That's why I asked Erin to write this book.

What's next for DRT Press?

I have two books coming out next year that focus on adoption. One is an early chapter book called *The Forever Friends Club*, written by two wonderful writers and adoptive moms, and the second is a board book about open adoption. I am very excited about both books.

Production has already started on *The Forever Friends Club* and I'm close to starting on the board book. I have a couple of other ideas I'm playing with, as well. I'd love to do more *Big Fun Guides* for other parts of the state, for example, and I have some entirely unrelated ideas floating around in my head as well. My big problem is finding time to do all of it!

Adrienne Bashista can be reached through the DRT Press website: www.drtpress.com, or by phone at 919.360.7073. You can also read her blog about running a tiny d.i.y. press in a big press world at www.idea-girl.com

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