



Children's Books

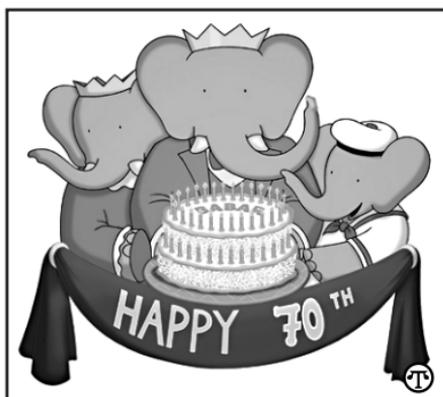
Happy 70th Birthday, Babar!

(NAPSA)—It's said that an elephant never forgets. Perhaps, then, it's not surprising that a beloved pachyderm—celebrating his 70th birthday this year—is so unforgettable.

Babar, the classic character known to generations of children as “king of the elephants,” was created by Jean de Brunhoff. Before publishing the first book (*The Story of Babar*) in 1931, de Brunhoff's wife originally spun tales of a royal couple—Babar and Queen Celeste—as bedtime stories for their children, Laurent and Mathieu. Years later, Laurent continued the family tradition, publishing his first Babar story in 1946.

The original story is the tale of a young elephant whose happy life is shattered by tragedy. Through many hardships and adventures, the bewildered Babar finds the strength to rise above his misfortunes. Babar uses what he has learned to help the elephants and, in return, they make him their king. Next to Mickey, Babar is among the most recognized and beloved children's characters in the world today.

During the past 70 years, more than 30 charming stories of Babar have been translated into 17 languages. Some seven million books are in circulation. There are Babar videos and feature-length movies, and in the U.S., kids can watch the animated Babar TV series on HBO Family at 6 and 11:30 a.m. daily.



Classic children's character is celebrating his 70th birthday.

A number of celebrations are in the works to mark Babar's milestone birthday, including:

- The launch of the Babar.com Web site, where fans can interact with their timeless friend.
- The reissue of popular Babar titles, including *Babar and the Ghost* and *Babar and the Wully-Wully*.
- A holiday performance of *The Travels of Babar—An Adventure in Scales*, an hour-long musical voyage that pairs the visual tale of *The Travels of Babar* with a lively and imaginative classical music score. The performances will begin at Florence Gould Hall in New York City on December 27, 2001.

All these years later, Babar continues to teach children and learn himself. Perhaps the most important lesson is, even in a life full of difficulties; great things are possible if one never gets discouraged.