



## Book series teaches children about environmental awareness

Michele Cempaka - Denpasar, Bali

A trilingual environmental series called *Clean Bali* will be introduced soon to schools throughout the island. The series is the brainchild of Michael Rock and architect Margaretha Widiyanto, who came up with the concept during a project in Amed, East Bali.

There, they saw how filthy the beaches were and discovered an empty plot that was being used as a plastic dump. This got them thinking about how they could raise people's awareness about the correct way of disposing plastic.

Michael talked to Margiyono, who also was on the Amed project, about creating an environmental logo with which children could identify, and would immediately relate to cleaning up the beach. So Margiyono created three

Maggie was inspired by the drawings and came up with a story that teaches children why it is harmful to throw away plastic on the beach. Margaretha translated the story into Bahasa Indonesia and sent it to Margiyono, who sent back the completed illustrations so they could turn *Penyu dan Lumba-lumba* (Turtle and Dolphin) into a book.

Bapak Made Taro, who is very active in teaching children about the environment at schools throughout Bali, provided the Balinese-language translation.

Two other books have been planned for the *Clean Bali* series. Book Two will feature the seagull from Book One as she flies out to the river and meets a kingfisher. Together, the feathered friends discover trash floating down the river and into the ocean. In Book Three, the story continues with the animals finding trash in rice fields and on mountains.

"We want to educate

people in other areas that you can't treat plastic in the same way as you would banana or palm leaves. Our goal is to introduce the concept of the *pemulung* - 'the junk man' who goes around on a motorbike or bicycle with two giant bags and picks up plastic bottles and cardboard boxes, and brings them to the recycling center where he receives money for them," said Margaretha.

Historically, many villagers in Indonesia hated the "junk man", because he came onto their property and took things he thought were junk without asking. People became very angry, because they felt he invaded their privacy.

"We want to support the *pemulung*, because this system is actually helping us," said Margaretha.

The *Clean Bali* series has already met with a great deal of support. The Jakarta-based Metropolitan Retail Mart has helped with funding in association with Yayasan Pancaran Harapan Baru, an

organization for children, education and wellbeing. They also will help with distribution to schools throughout Indonesia. In Bali, the books will be printed in three languages, but in the rest of Indonesia the books will be in Bahasa Indonesia and English only - with plans to include the regional language or dialect.

So far, Margaretha and her team have been able to collect enough funds to distribute 3,000 books for free to primary schools throughout Bali, concentrating on coastal areas. By the end of the series, their goal is to cover 300-500 schools.

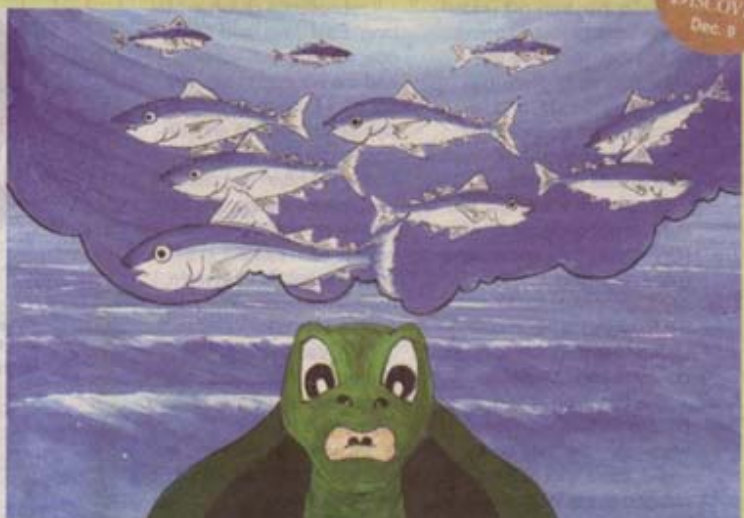
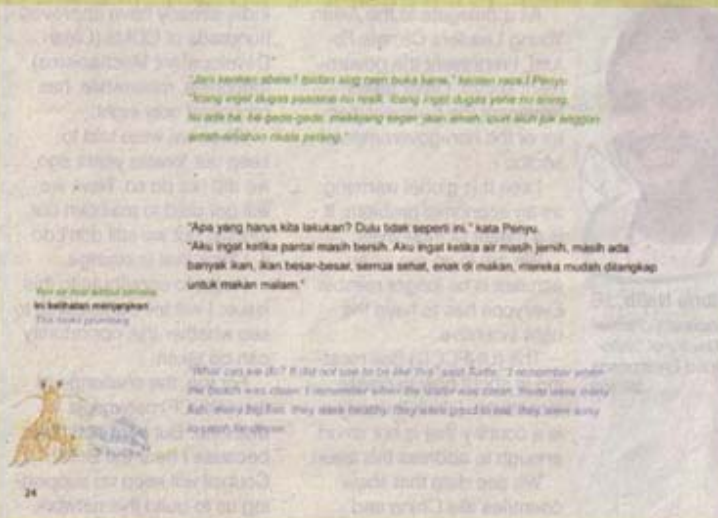
"We feel that we need to make it clear to the children about respecting the environment they live in," said Margaretha.

By educating the children, they in turn will spread their knowledge and eventually affect a shift in consciousness throughout the country about the benefits of caring for our environment.

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animal characters; a turtle, a dolphin and a seagull.

"The illustrations were so beautiful that we decided to take them to Maggie Dunkle, who is a well-known Australian children's writer, to see if she could come up with a story," said Margaretha.



For the review, look in **DISCOVER** Dec. 8