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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ECONOMY BOROUGH RESIDENT WRITES GRADUATE THESIS ON CROATIAN IMMIGRANT TO AMBRIDGE—HER GRANDFATHER**

Sue Carr, formerly Nelko, of Economy Borough will graduate magna cum laude from Chatham University on May 21, 2012. The ceremony will be held at the Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall in Oakland. Carr will receive her Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing with a focus on writing for children and adolescents, as well as a certificate to teach creative writing.

Carr’s graduate thesis is a middle-grade historical novel titled “Over the Hills and Far Away,” based on the story of her grandfather’s immigration from Croatia to Ambridge in 1925.

The story centers on young Nick Sovich, her grandfather, whose father left their Croatian village when Nick was just days old in order to avoid the brewing conflict that would become World War I. Soon after, Nick’s mother died of typhus. Nick was subsequently raised by his grandparents and three uncles.

Then, in 1925, when Nick was just eleven years old, his grandfather and teacher took him into the city for a doctor’s visit—one of many for the sick child. However, on the return trip, his teacher put him on the train, telling young Nick to stay put while he and his grandfather went onto the platform for some wine.

The train jerked forward, and Nick never saw them, or his home in Croatia, again.

With the help of papers pinned to his clothes, eleven-year-old Nick made his way from trains to ferries to ships—all the way to America and to the father he never knew.

“It’s a remarkable story, and one my grandfather loved telling,” says Carr. “My thesis director and mentor, Kathy Ayres, told me that it was a lovely story, but to attract today’s young readers, I’d need to throw more boulders at Nico (my main character).”

So Carr added challenges and wicked characters into the novel version. However, she says, “The heart of the story remains the same. And I have a feeling that my grandfather (who passed away last August, just shy of his 98th birthday) would have loved the infusion of drama into his beloved story. His main goal in sharing tales of his life was to preserve them and pass them on so that future generations would understand where they came from and how life used to be. I think he’d be smiling about this project, knowing his story is living on in a whole new way.”

Carr will be reading excerpts from “Over the Hills and Far Away” this Friday, May 18, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Welker Room on Chatham University’s campus.

In addition to raising two children, Olivia (8) and Joshua (4), she is married to David Carr and is currently working as a freelance book editor. She is also revising two additional novels and seeking other freelance work.

For more information about Sue Carr or her novel “Over the Hills and Far Away,” contact her at [livnjooshpress@gmail.com](mailto:livnjooshpress@gmail.com) or visit her Web site at <http://suenelkocarr.blogspot.com>.

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