



April 2023

Spotlight



Featured Illustrator

BRUCE ARANT
WWW.ARANTCREATIVE.COM

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Upcoming Events

Spring Social April 29, 1pm-3pm

Shop Talk May 3 and May 31, 7pm-8pm

Regional Meeting May 7, 4pm-5pm

Quarterly PAL Meeting May 11, 7:30pm-8:30pm

Story Spinners Write- and Draw-in May 13, 10am-2pm

Portfolio Review Webinar June 15, 7:30pm-8:30pm

Explore All Regional Virtual Events

VOTE FOR THE



Round 2 voting ends April 30th at 5pm PDT

To cast your vote, log on to www.scbwi.org. From your Member Home page, go to the left navigation bar, scroll to the bottom, and click on *Vote in the Crystal Kite Awards*. All of the books in your division appear here.

Let the voting begin!

A Word from Our Regional Team



Sheli Petersen
Regional Illustrators Co-Coordinator

In June, I will step down from my role as SCBWI-Nebraska Co-Illustrators Coordinator and Co-IC Dianna Carda will "take the reigns" as full IC. It's been a pleasure serving with Dianna! Her enthusiasm and fearlessness in learning all the ins and outs of RT duties is amazing, and I know she will provide our chapter with committed, collaborative leadership. I would also like to thank our RA Alison for her inspiring leadership in building our regional community. I'm proud to be a part of that initiative!

I will continue with SCBWI-Nebraska as Webinar Coordinator, while actively participating in regional and national events. As an author-illustrator and educator, one of the things I love best about SCBWI is the generous support and exchange of craft amongst our members. In that spirit of interconnection, I share my visual storytelling process with you.

Step 1 – Research: sketches and photo references

To thoroughly explore a book's subject matter and ensure authenticity in my storytelling, I begin drawing from direct observation and photographic reference. The studies (right) are for my picture book project, *Arnie and Zippy*, based on actual events about a boy who devises a science exhibit, proving that chickens see a range of color and can be trained to pick one color over another.



Step 2 – Character design and interaction

Next, I work on capturing nuanced emotions and believable poses in my principle characters—in this case Arnie and Zippy. After giving Arnie and Zippy their unique personality, I show them interacting with their environment and each other. These fictional images are based on actual chicken behavior. The natural way for chickens to stretch is to stand tippy-toe while flapping their wings. Garden greens are recommended for a balanced diet (bottom right).



A Word from Our Regional Team *continued*



Step 3 – Storyboards

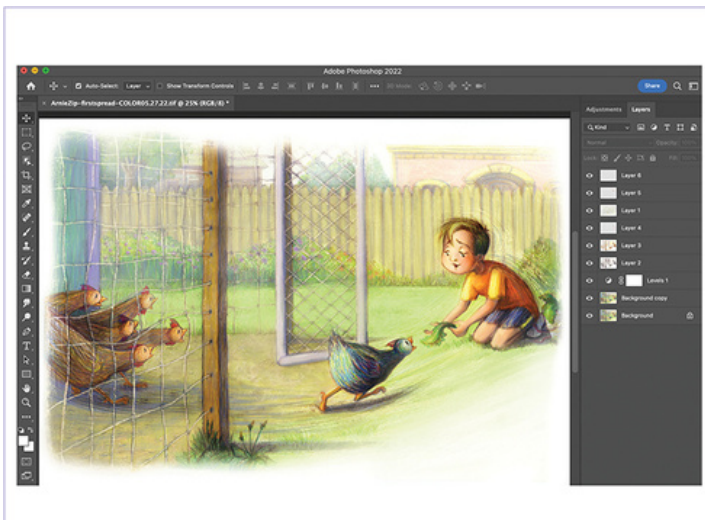
Next, I begin storyboarding a series of rough sketches to map out the basic plot-line and layout of each spread in the book (left).

Step 4 – Color illustrations

After storyboarding, I create 2 – 3 full-color illustrations (using a combination of traditional and digital techniques) of key scenes in the story to establish the mood, style, and lighting of the book (bottom left).

Step 5 – Dummy

Once I have the plot, storyboard sketches, and color illustrations, I place them in a book prototype, or dummy. Then, I add text and read the book out loud to synchronize page turns with the rhythm and flow of the action. As with writing, the dummy goes through several revisions before arriving at the polished narrative, suitable for a publication proposal (below).



Conclusion

I hope my process provides some inspiration for your own creative journey. Please reach out if you would like to "talk shop"—I'm always up for learning and sharing craft! I hope to see you at one or more of our future events, including our June portfolio webinar with Tugeau2 Agents Ethan and Heather Long. Check out our website for details and registration.

Happy creating! —Sheli





Winners of the Indi-500 Challenge



Personal Best

by Kathy Crable, winner of the Indi-500 Writing Challenge

“You running tomorrow?” Lucas asked Hugh.

“Yea. You?”

“Don’t I always?” Lucas replied as he high fived one of the other boys hanging out around the lockers. “I’ll beat all of you fools!”

This was just like Lucas, Hugh thought. Always bragging. If it wasn’t about his new shoes or his mom’s new car or his good grades it was about his latest personal best time on the track.

Hugh tried to hide the smile that crept up on his face. He had been practicing for the race with speed drills and running the course with his older brother. He planned to beat Lucas in the last race of the year.

The next day the runners stretched out and lined up in the shade of the trees at Pioneers Park. The starter’s gun thundered and the racers were in business! As Lucas shot past him, Hugh had to remind himself to stick to his plan. He held on to a comfortable pace past the duck pond and around the playground. He concentrated on the feel of his shoes hitting the pavement. He tried not to think about Lucas being in the lead.

A few more paces and Hugh could feel his legs really begin to unwind. He looked ahead for his landmark so he could be ready. There it was to his left! A few more steps and a few more breaths! Once the old weathered Indian statue came into view on top of the nearby hill, he pushed off on his left foot with the speed and determination he’d been practicing. His lungs and his legs cooperating, he leaned in for his fastest run yet. With his arms pumping strong at his sides and his legs flashing in a wonderful blur of motion, he passed Lucas around the next turn.



Winners of the Indi-500 Challenge

continued



His goal of passing the finish line ahead of Lucas was in sight! But something was wrong. Hugh glanced over his shoulder. Lucas wasn't running. He was limping. Hugh knew how easy it would be to bag the win now that his nemesis was injured but he didn't like the feel of it. It wouldn't be a true win. Without slowing he turned and ran in the wrong direction.

"Lucas! You OK?"

"I twisted my ankle. I don't think I can run on it."

"C'mon," Hugh said. "I can help you." He wondered to himself why he'd want to help the kid who had been aggravating him since kindergarten but he knew it was the right thing to do.

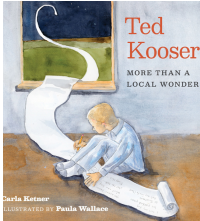
"Thanks," Lucas said, "but you're not going to win the race this way."

"No, but we'll both cross the finish line," Hugh said. Maybe this race was his personal best.



Kiwi Flies by Sheli Petersen, winner of the Indi-500 Illustrating Challenge

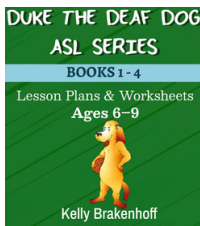
Let's Celebrate



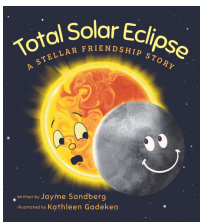
Congratulations to Carla Ketner for her debut picture book, a biography of U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser, being released November 1, 2023 from the University of Nebraska Press. The book is illustrated by Paula Wallace, also an SCBWI member! Many congratulations to you two!



Maya Moves to a New Country is a new picture book being released May 16, 2023 that aims to inspire military children to embrace inevitable changes with hope and courage. Author Pearl Alimo says it's a story of hope, friendship, and adventure. Congratulations Pearl!



Kudos to Kelly Brakenhoff, who published two new *Duke the Deaf Dog* workbooks for teachers, librarians, and parents with lesson plans, worksheets, and coloring pages. The in-print workbook gives teachers a guide to use for lesson plans. The Children's Book Council is featuring them in their April [Hot Off the Press](#) list!



SCBWI Nebraska members Jayme Sandberg and Kathleen Gadeken teamed up on the new picture book *Total Solar Eclipse: A Stellar Friendship Story*. The book teaches kids ages 4-8 how to safely view an eclipse and explore the unexpected ways we shine together. We're so excited for you, Jayme and Kathleen!

Featured Member



Judith Snyder



When Judith Snyder was little, she loved corners—for reading, puppet plays, writing, and building roads for cars and trucks. Even today she gravitates to corners. Road building now happens with her grandson. Judith loved her first career in education and school libraries in Colorado. Now she loves being a writer, storyteller, and ceramic artist.

Before she moved here three years ago, Colorado SCBWI had introduced her to Alison, so Judith had connections to Nebraska authors immediately. She slipped into the Critique Coordinator position that she also held in Colorado.

Judith has published one picture book, *What Do You See?*, three teacher/librarian skills books, and many magazine articles. Even though it's been years since she was published, she sets a good example for never giving up. Her motto: Keep working, keep learning, network, network, revise, revise—and find a critique group—or two.

She now divides her creative time between writing and pottery. She sells ceramics at an annual Omaha garden show, a local café, and a gallery in Cheyenne, WY. Since 1989, she has told oral stories to children. She loves the magical moment when reality falls away and a child is enveloped in her storytelling. In that transformation, literature comes alive. That is her goal in writing for children, too.

<http://judithsnyderwrites.com> or <http://ceramicartbyjudith.com>

Coming Attractions

Graphic Novel Workshop

Are you toying with the idea of writing a graphic novel but unsure how to proceed? Most graphic novel courses are geared toward illustrators, since illustrations carry so much of the story. But some are written by one person and illustrated by another.

The next round of Writing from the Inside Out workshops will provide an opportunity for writers (and illustrators who want to learn the writing side) to learn how to create graphic novels for kids. Led by esteemed author-illustrator Rivkah LaFille, the workshop starts September 9. Details and registration will be available on the website soon.

Fall Retreat

How does a weekend with just you, your WIP, a restful location, and a few of your closest SCBWI friends sound? SCBWI Nebraska is planning a Get Away to Create Retreat at The Leadership Center in Aurora, NE the weekend of October 6-8.

This is an opportunity to gather with other kidlit creatives, focus on your work, and enjoy the beautiful fall weather. There's a pond, a patio, and a fire pit for those chilly evenings after a successful day of work, and you will be able to work alone in your room or in a larger gathering space—whichever best suits you and your writing/illustrating style.

Details to come in the next few weeks. In the meantime, save the date!



Listen NOW
Every Thursday

Maximizing Your Membership

Can't wait for the October retreat? Want a shorter mini-retreat instead? Join us at our first Story Spinners event Saturday, May 13 from 10:00am-2:00pm at Cheri O's coffee shop in Ashland. We hope this will be the first of many meet-ups where we mostly work and occasionally chat.

We have a wonderful room to ourselves above the coffee house—for free! They just ask that we don't bring our own drinks or food. Beverages are between \$2 and \$3 but you are not required to buy anything. And if you want lunch, the food is tasty. Most of our time will be spent working on our individual projects with a few short breaks during the first three-ish hours. Afterwards, we can either do some informal critiques or just talk about our work. Stay for as long as you can or leave when you need to.

Cheri O's
1404 Silver St., Ashland, NE

See you there!

Nebraska Discussion Board

Are you looking for someone to critique your hook, pitch, logline, or query letter?

Search no more!

You will find one or more of your Nebraska Kidlit colleagues to share their expertise.

Post your work on our Nebraska Discussion Board.

[Click here to post.](#) (Log in first!)



Illustration Submission

Would you like for your art to be featured in our future newsletter?

Please send to: Sheli Petersen at nebraska-ic2@scbwi.org

Label file as `firstname_lastname.jpeg`. (no bigger than 8 mb)



Shop Talk Recap



Ashley Karges
Shop Talk Co-Coordinator

Our latest Shop Talk was all about *revision*. Mary Beth Rice led us through an activity called Go Topsy Turvy, as described in Jane Yolen’s book, *Take Joy: A Writer’s Guide to Loving the Craft*. There are many ways you can turn your work upside-down to stimulate new ideas for revision.

- Block out all modifiers and re-read what you have
- Declare war on all adverbs
- Give your main characters a change in gender
- Shift your point of view
- Note how often you have used your character’s senses. Seen through his eyes, heard through her ears, number of times the sense of touch, taste, or smell is mentioned.
- Switch the tense from past to present or present to past
- Turn prose into rhyme or rhyme into prose
- For art, try a bird’s eye or bug’s eye view. Play with colors and black & white. Switch to a new medium or technique.

Try any of these prompts for your next revision. Then, share both versions with a critique partner or group and see what feedback you receive. And remember along the way to “Take Joy” in the creative process!

Upcoming Shop Talks, 7pm-8pm CST:

May 3

May 31* (moved up a week due to summer break)

FOLLOW US AND FIND MORE ON:



Credits: Fall 2021 Texas Woman’s University Community-focused Design Studio

Layout Design: Nely Martinez, McCrae Milton, Simran Prasai | Banner Design: Roshad Bonner, McCrae Milton |

Feature Title Designers: Kelly Milliorn, Edgar Obregon, Susana Pina, Amanda Tritschler-Tucker | Teaser Layout Designer: Roshad Bonner

Art Director: Professor Sheli Petersen

Take Flight With Help From Our Volunteers



LEADERSHIP



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Regional Illustrator Co-Coordinator
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