



## October 2022

## Spotlight



### Featured Illustrator

SHELI PETERSEN

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## Upcoming Events

[Reverse Outlining Workshop](#) - October 22, 9am-12pm CST

[Shop Talk](#) - November 2, 7pm-8pm CST

[Kansas/Missouri Middle of the Map Annual Conference \(Virtual\)](#) - November 3-6

[Illustrator Intensive](#) - November 12, 9:30am-5:30pm CST

[Regional Meeting](#) - November 13, 4pm-5pm CST

[Explore All Regional Virtual Events](#)

## Winter Conference returns (in-person and online)

After a long pandemic-driven switch to online-only events, the Winter Conference returns to New York this year! If you want a deep dive into writing and illustrating, this hybrid event is your opportunity to learn from some of the best in the business – agents, editors, art directors and more. The conference will take place February 11-12, 2023. Not able to travel? An online portion will be available February 25. [Registration opens November 10.](#)

# A Word from Our Regional Team



*Alison Pearce Stevens*  
Regional Advisor

We all know writing for kids isn't easy. We're creating stories for everyone: parents reading to their young children, the children who are listening, emerging readers, and ever more confident readers from that point on. Our writing must grab the attention of our readers and make them want to return – or, for a longer book, keep reading.

By far the most challenging writing I have done is writing fact books. These seem easy – what could be hard about writing a ten-word fact? A lot, it turns out. Ten words leaves out a huge amount of context. You could say “Passengers freed their icebound airplane by giving it a human-powered push.” But that leaves readers wondering why the plane was icebound. Where this happened. And why the passengers had to help.

Filling in the context makes the writing longer: “Passengers rallied to free their icebound airplane by giving it a human-powered push. The landing gear froze when temperatures dipped to minus 62°F (-52°C). More than a dozen passengers left their seats and braved the icy tarmac, pushing on the wings until the aircraft rolled free.” Oh, and we haven't yet noted that this took place in Siberia.

We can cut out that last sentence. The number of passengers involved isn't essential, and we can assume that if the plane was ice-bound, so was the tarmac. It is interesting that they pushed on the wings, not the landing gear, but there's no room to keep that tidbit. We need to keep the location (where), temperature (why), frozen landing gear (what), and that passengers freed the plane (who and how). All in fewer than fifteen words with fun, pithy language to boot.

The process of writing fun facts – which are, hands-down, the most popular kinds of books for elementary school kids – takes a huge amount of time and effort. Plenty of research to begin with, followed by longer descriptions that provide more context, then whittling information into a concise, entertaining final product. Something like this: “When temps in Siberia dipped to minus 62°F and froze their plane's landing gear, passengers had to get out and push!” I'm sure that could still be better – and shorter. Why don't you give it a try?



## Agent's View



Shannon Gallagher has been with the Wernick & Pratt Agency for almost five years after spending more than 12 years in marketing at various adult trade publishers (Rodale, Macmillan, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster, to name a few). She also worked for several years as a book reviewer and copywriter.

One of the main attractions of moving to a children's literary agency was learning about facets of publishing she had not yet explored. She has found that to be truly rewarding: in her current position as Associate Literary Agent, Shannon is able to utilize her marketing experience – getting the right information to the right people at the right time – to better identify, encourage, and promote authors and illustrators in the creation of works that are essential to the development of young minds.

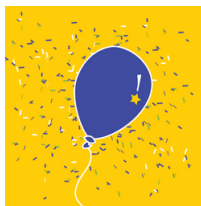
Shannon is actively building her list and is interested in fiction and nonfiction in all categories of children's literature from picture books to young adult. She especially welcomes underrepresented perspectives. She is proud to have brokered a deal for Scott Slater's debut picture book *DOWN THE HOLE* due out in Fall 2023 (only a few months after signing him!). Shannon also assists on all merchandise and theater deals for the agency's clients. Though a newer agent, Shannon is backed by the experienced agents at Wernick & Pratt, which makes this an incredible opportunity for anyone seeking representation.

Wernick & Pratt Agency represents authors and illustrators of children's books in all genres, from picture books through young adult literature and everything in between. While they are dedicated to their established list of clients, they are always looking to find new talent to nurture. They are interested in published and unpublished people who are seriously committed to a long-term career in the children's book industry and the work involved in achieving this.

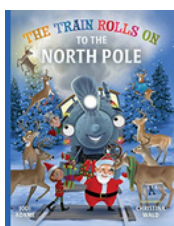
To query Shannon, send an email to [submissions@wernickpratt.com](mailto:submissions@wernickpratt.com) with "SCBWI Nebraska Query for Shannon" in the subject line. Follow the [submission instructions](#) on their website for your query letter and submission materials. Shannon will accept queries until January 15, 2023, and will send a response within two months of receipt.



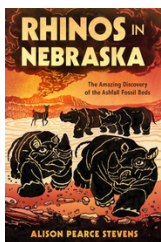
# Let's Celebrate



Allison L Bitz sold a two-book deal to HarperTeen! **THE UNSTOPPABLE BRIDGET BLOOM** is a contemporary realistic novel about a 16-year-old pansexual, fat, musical theatre ingenue who either needs to find a new way to shine or go home to the stifling rural hometown where she's never belonged. Publication is set for May, 2023. Allison's second book is an untitled young adult novel. Congratulations Allison!



Jodi Adams has her second book in **THE TRAIN ROLLS ON** series being released October 18th! **THE TRAIN ROLLS ON TO THE NORTH POLE** is a rhyming picture book that celebrates Christmas and teaches children perseverance and teamwork. We are so excited for you, Jodi!



**RHINOS IN NEBRASKA**, written by Alison Pearce Stevens, won the Nebraska Book Award in three categories: youth book, illustration, and non-fiction: natural history. This is monumental, Alison! As big as a Rhino! Congratulations!



**GEORGE MEETS HIS MATCH**, written by Kristin Ganoung and illustrated by Kathleen Gaden won the Nebraska Book Award for Children's Best Continuing Series! The book was published by Nancy Sharp Wagner's Prairieland Press. What an honor to have three of our SCBWI Nebraska members awarded! We're so proud of all of you!



Chloe Burgett has been sending a monthly newsletter for one whole year now! That's a major milestone, Chloe! Congratulations!

## ★ Allison L. Bitz ★



Allison L. Bitz is a licensed psychologist with her debut YA novel *THE UNSTOPPABLE BRIDGET BLOOM* due out May 2, 2023.

Allison earned her Bachelor of Arts with High Distinction ('05), Master of Arts ('07), and PhD ('12) all at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL– Go Big Red!).

She adores being a therapist, saying “Giving others the gifts of feeling heard, validated, and sometimes challenged – I’m a big fan.”

Bitz's care of others can be felt in the writing of her YA debut, which centers a fat, pansexual teen Broadway hopeful, who has to find a new way to shine when she's not allowed to perform at her new boarding school.

When not writing or connecting with clients, Allison enjoys writing songs, spending time with her family and pets, and chasing down any pastry within 25 miles.

You can learn more about Allison at [www.AllisonLBitz-author.com](http://www.AllisonLBitz-author.com) or follow her on Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok at @AllisonLBitz.



# Coming Attractions

## Nebraska Book Awards

Join us as we celebrate Nebraska's role in children's literature! The Nebraska Book Awards, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB), recognizes and honors books written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or concerning Nebraska.

This is the 23rd annual award celebration, and boy what a year it is for SCBWI Nebraska members! We have numerous members who won an award this year and we can't be more thrilled than to celebrate with them!

Here is a round-up of our chapter members honored with an award for 2022:

- Kristin Ganoung (author), K.E. Gaden (illustrator), and Nancy Sharp Wagner (publisher) for *GEORGE MEETS HIS MATCH* won for Children's Best Continuing Series.
- Alison Pearce Stevens's book *RHINOS IN NEBRASKA: THE AMAZING DISCOVERY OF THE ASHFALL FOSSIL BEDS* won in three categories: Youth Book, Illustration (by Matt Huynh), and Nonfiction Natural History.

The Nebraska Book Awards are open and free to the public and will feature a presentation of the awards and book signings. There will also be a presentation for the Jane Geske Award (honoring an organization that exemplifies exceptional contributions to Nebraska books) and the Mildred Bennett Award (which recognizes a significant contribution to the fostering of literacy in the state).

The ceremony will be held at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln on October 22, 2022 from 2:30pm-6:30pm CST. It would be wonderful to see a great attendance from our chapter!

A CELEBRATION OF  
**Nebraska Books**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
Oct. 22, 2022 • 2:30-6:30pm  
NEBRASKA HISTORY MUSEUM  
131 Centennial Mall North • Lincoln, NE



### JOIN US TO CELEBRATE:

2022 One Book One Nebraska  
*The Bones of Paradise* by Jonis Agee

Nebraska Book Award Winners

Mildred Bennett & Jane Geske Award  
Presentation

2023 One Book One Nebraska Announcement  
Reception and Book Signings

*More Info:*  
[centerforthebook.nebraska.gov](http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov)  
[facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook](https://facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook)

# Maximizing Your Membership

SCBWI's new Impact and Legacy Fun has two opportunities open right now.

The Stephen Fraser Encouragement Fund provides three grants of \$2,000 each to children's book authors, artists, or translators who have traditionally published at least one book. The goal is to combat the reality of rejections, financial hardships, or emotional discouragement many creators face so the grants have no strings attached. Applications close November 15, 2022 and recipients will be notified by mid-January, 2023.

Early career illustrators are encouraged to apply for the Tomie dePaola Professional Development Award, which provides \$3,500 for first place and \$1,500 for second place. The money can be used for supplies, research, learning/travel experiences, child care, or any legitimate expense that allows you to develop or improve your art. Applicants should have published at least one but no more than three books. Applications close November 1, 2022.

The Impact and Legacy Fund has more opportunities for us being developed, so stay tuned for further grants and awards!

## 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](mailto:nebraska-ic2@scbwi.org)

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





# Shop Talk Recap



Written by Ashley Karges

Do You Need a Website? YES! In September's Shop Talk session, Alison Pearce Stevens discussed the necessity of having a website, especially if you are not yet published. A website helps you establish your brand as a creator. You want your site to be the first place someone goes to learn about you. Your website should give visitors a sense of who you are. Do you write funny picture books? Create a Favorite Jokes section. Have a gift for illustrating city landscapes? Feature these on your site. Colors and fonts evoke moods that tailor to your brand.

To get started, you need to register a domain name. Keep it simple. Pick one you can use across social media. If you choose happywriter.com, use @happywriter on social. You can register a domain at places like Go Daddy, Name Cheap, or Google Domains. And set up autorenew!

Find a host for your site. Wix, Weebly, SquareSpace, and WordPress are good options. Once your site is up and running, you might also consider add-ons like Akismet Antispam, Jetpack, and UpdraftPlus to keep your site spam-free and backed-up.

Use images! But be sure you have permission to use them. Always provide attribution. Look for images with Creative Commons or Public Domain licensing.

Any website expenses you incur are tax deductible, so save those receipts for tax time. Take a peek at a few of your fellow Nebraska author and illustrator sites.

[Alison Pearce Stevens](#)  
[Chloe Burgett](#)

[Ashley Karges](#)  
[Mary Beth Rice](#)

[Caroyln Zeisset](#)  
[Sheli Petersen](#)

Would you like to share your website? Post it in our [Facebook group](#) for members to browse!

Upcoming Shop Talks, 7pm-8pm CST:

Nov 2: Using Novelist to find comp titles

Dec 7: Author Websites Continued - Contests, critiques, and other programming experiences.

Bring your favorites to share.

**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



### Regional Advisor

Alison Pearce Stevens  
nebraska-ra@scbwi.org



### Regional Illustrator Co-Coordinator

Sheli Petersen  
nebraska-ic2@scbwi.org



### Regional Illustrator Co-Coordinator

Dianna Carda  
nebraska-ic@scbwi.org

## PROGRAMMING



### Shop Talk Co-Coordinator

Ashley Karges  
scbwi.nebraska.shoptalk@gmail.com



### Shop Talk Co-Coordinator

Mary Beth Rice  
scbwi.nebraska.shoptalk@gmail.com



### Retreat Coordinator

Nancy Sharp Wagner  
scbwi.nebraska.retreats@gmail.com

## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH



### Social Media Coordinator

Parker Adair  
scbwi.nebraska.socialmedia@gmail.com



### Technical Support

Jennie Gollehon  
scbwi.nebraska.webmaster@gmail.com



### Promotional Coordinator

Rosalind Reloj  
scbwi.nebraska.promotion@gmail.com



### Published Member Liaison

Shelly Nobsch  
scbwi.nebraska.pal@gmail.com



### Newsletter Coordinator

Sandy Mickey  
scbwi.nebraska.newsletter@gmail.com



### Critique Group Coordinator

Judith Snyder  
scbwi.nebraska.critiques@gmail.com



### Discussion Board Moderator

Kim Ziemann