



February 2023

Spotlight



Featured Illustrator

PAULA WALLACE

www.paulawallacefineart.com
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Upcoming Events

Virtual New York Conference 2023, February 25

Shop Talk March 1, 7pm-8pm CST

Regional Meeting, March 12, 4pm-5pm CST

Meet & Pitch, March 23, 6pm-7:30pm CST

[Explore All Regional Virtual Events](#)

New Nebraska Logo

Shoutout to Co-IC Sheli Petersen for her meadowlark design for our new Nebraska chapter logo! Noted for its joyous song, the western meadowlark was designated Nebraska's state bird in 1929. We think it's a wonderful representation of our chapter, too!



A Word from Our Regional Team



Alison Pearce Stevens
Regional Advisor

With so many books coming out every month, how can you possibly support all the authors you know and love? It can be overwhelming—and expensive! But there are some easy ways to lend support without having to go out and buy every book.

See if your library has it; if they don't, request that they get it. Libraries want input from their patrons, so they know their collections provide books that will be checked out and read. That doesn't mean every request will be filled, but if it is, this is a great way to get the title into the library system, boost sales for the author (libraries often buy multiple copies), and increase awareness of the book and author/illustrator.

Once you've had a chance to read the book, leave a review. If you go online and do a search for how to write a book review, you'll get detailed instructions on all the things you need to include. That's great if you want to make a name for yourself as a book reviewer, but you don't need to write an essay to let others know you loved a book. Let's be honest, most of us don't have the time to write—or read—lots of long reviews. Aim for two sentences that give a brief overview of what the book is about and what you enjoyed about it. Brevity is key—use good word choice to get your point across succinctly.

A note about ratings: If you read a book and honestly don't feel you can give it at least three stars, don't review it—at least, not if you hope to have other people reviewing your books one day. If you leave a scathing review of someone else's book, it's probably going to come back to haunt you when your own book comes out. And you don't want to talk up a title you didn't like.

Post your review to Goodreads. Then **copy and paste** and post it to Amazon. You can do this even if you didn't buy the book from Amazon. This cross-posting is important: Amazon uses heuristics that determine whether books are suggested to customers. If a book doesn't have enough reviews, it doesn't get that extra attention. But if we all take a minute to post a quick review, we can help our favorite books reach a larger audience.

One last thing: It's never too late to review a book!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Alison".



Agent's View



Jazmia Young
Curtis Brown Ltd.

Jazmia Young is an associate agent at Curtis Brown Ltd. She received her bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in Creative Writing at the City College of New York and is a graduate of their Publishing Certificate Program. She is actively building her list and is interested in representing children's books from picture books through YA. She wants to focus on middle grade fiction with the goal of amplifying underrepresented voices and experiences. Jazmia particularly loves stories with friendship ties, complicated family dynamics, and grief or loss. Being a New York native, anything based in the great NYC has her heart. Jazmia is also the Administrative Assistant of the Association of American Literary Agents.

Picture Books

Jazmia is looking for well-written stories that explore deep emotions like in *Remembering Ethan*. She also enjoys culturally enriched voices and dreamy lyrical prose.

Middle Grade

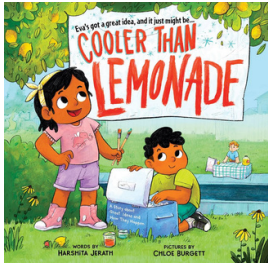
Jazmia gravitates toward voice and the ability to capture the complexity of emotions as in *King and the Dragonflies*. Stories that make your heart clench like *The Thing About Jellyfish* will forever be at the top of her list. Most importantly, give her little black girls saving the world!

Young Adult

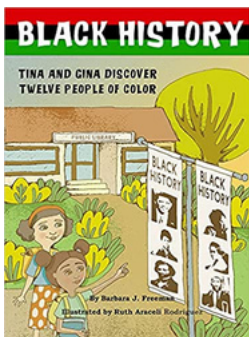
With YA, Jazmia is looking for works that amplify LGBTQ voices while exploring what it means to fall in love for the first time, like in *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. She also looks for immigration stories that open your eyes as in *The Book of Unknown Americans*, and she's a sucker for rom-coms that represent international identities such as in *Made in Korea*.

To query Jazmia, send an email to jky@cbltd.com with the word QUERY in the subject line. Paste the first 10 pages of your manuscript in the body of the email after your query letter and mention you're a member of SCBWI Nebraska.

Let's Celebrate



It's a party! Join Chloe Burgett at Elleinad Books in Lincoln for the launch of her upcoming release, *Cooler than Lemonade*, written by Harshita Jerath! On Saturday, March 11th, Chloe will be signing books & reading, and attendees will be coloring and tasting Kulfi (Indian ice cream). Sounds like delicious fun, Chloe! The book is up for preorder on Chloe's website, www.chloebartistry.com, and she will be signing them at the launch.



The University of Nebraska's Multicultural and Diversity Department honors Barbara J. Freeman as their guest host for the month of February. Barbara will read her own children's books to the preschoolers enrolled at the University of Nebraska Child Care Center. Barbara's newest book, *Black History*, just received finalist status in the 2022 Book of the Year Awards in the categories Juvenile and Non-Fiction History. Congratulations for these incredible honors, Barbara!



Illustration by Sheli Petersen

Volunteer Openings



Get Involved!



Our Nebraska chapter has become a vibrant SCBWI region thanks to our volunteers. Like all regions, we run on volunteer power – even our leaders. It takes volunteers of all skills to run the events, communications, and tech so we can help boost the careers of our members. If you'd like to get involved, we have a few positions coming open at the end of May 2023. Volunteering your talents, efforts, and time is a wonderful way to give back and to meet others who are pursuing author/illustrator careers. You'll also receive free membership to SCBWI as long as you hold your position.

PAL Liaison

The Published Author & Illustrator Liaison organizes events and opportunities that support the needs of published authors and illustrators in our region. This position is best for someone who enjoys coordinating people and events that will aid in developing author/illustrator careers. You will actively help promote and lift up Nebraska members, which is as rewarding as it gets!

Social Media Coordinator

Are you always on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook? Why not enjoy social media while helping the careers of Nebraska authors and illustrators? As our chapter Social Media Coordinator, you'll post region-related content and share posts of relevance to our members. You get to share news from our members, promote SCBWI events, and interact with kid lit authors and illustrators. This position is as fun as it sounds!

Newsletter Coordinator

The Newsletter Coordinator puts together our regional bi-monthly *Prairie Song* newsletter. You'll coordinate assignments, edit content, write a few short articles, and put together the final edition in Canva. The person best suited for this has previous Canva experience, enjoys writing and editing, and can work independently. If you like knowing what's going on in your region, this position is for you!

If you are interested in supporting our Nebraska chapter as a volunteer or would like more information, contact Alison at nebraska-ra@scbwi.org. Our chapter needs you!

Coming Attractions

February and March start a cycle of grants, awards, conferences, and workshops. Spring is around the corner, so grab your supplies and gear up for an active season!

February 25: [Virtual New York SCBWI Conference](#) - We are thrilled that SCBWI continues to offer a virtual option for the SCBWI Conference. There will be Creative Labs immersive craft sessions, a marketing plan pitch-fest, blockbuster keynotes, and—the highlight for many—the Golden Kite Awards presentation.

February 25: [Marketing Boot Camp](#) - If you don't plan to attend the virtual conference day, this is an excellent alternative. Hosted by the Austin, Texas chapter of SCBWI, the Marketing Boot Camp has a stellar lineup of faculty to help you develop a marketing plan, pitch speaking engagements and school visits, explore BookTok as a social media option, learn how to produce your own promo materials and much more. This is an impressive day of action-oriented workshops that will be sure to bring you more publicity!

March 1: March kicks off a large slate of award and grant opportunities through SCBWI starting with the Work in Progress Award, Don Freeman Grant, and the Karen Cushman Late Bloomer Awards. More than a dozen grants and awards are available between March and June. Bookmark the [Awards Schedule webpage](#) and check it March 1 so you don't miss any opportunities!

March 4: [The Evolution of LGBTQIA+ Representation in Picture Books](#) - The Long Island Library Pride Alliance explores the past and present of LGBTQIA+ in picture books with three notable advocates in the New York library system.



Maximizing Your Membership

Did you know SCBWI puts out a Reading List every month of the year? Each month, books written or illustrated by SCBWI members are featured based on a theme. February's theme is "Celebrating Black History."

On February's list, you will find books by Black authors and illustrators that celebrate the achievements by people of African descent along with books that feature a Black character or characters.



Artwork by NaShanta Fletcher

A few of this month's books include *Black Girl Rising* by Brynne Barnes and illustrated by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, *Sir Fig Newton and the Science of Persistence* by Sonja Thomas, and *Black was the Ink* by Michelle Coles and illustrated by Justin Johnson.

There's no better way to select a new book for the young reader in your life than by visiting this list every month while also supporting your SCBWI colleagues!

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!)

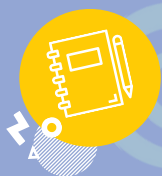


Illustration Submission

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

Creating Author Bios

We welcomed artist, author, and illustrator Linda Stephen to Shop Talk to help us in crafting an author bio. An author bio should be at-the-ready for introductions, press releases, workshop descriptions, book jackets, and our own websites.

Linda recommends starting off by writing down all critical information. Then, it's time to revise and cut until you get it to 100 words or less, perfect for a variety of uses.

Bios are usually requested by a host organization or media outlet to slip into an article or newsletter announcement and make it easy for others to introduce you and your work. Creating one yourself highlights the information you deem important.

Things to consider:

- Write your bio in the third person.
- Start with a general description including your full name, whether you are an author, illustrator, or both, awards or grants you've received, etc.
- What does the audience need to know about you? Teaching experience, education, the number of books you have published, where you live?
- Include one link toward the end (social media, website, or email address).
- Create several versions and adapt each to the audience it's intended for. A bio to request a school visit will be a little different than for an introduction at a big conference.

Each participant in Shop Talk received Linda's help in creating a nearly-polished 100-word bio! Thank you Linda for such a hands-on and engaging session. Check out this article for more ideas: <http://www.eevijones.com/chibu-courses/>

Upcoming Shop Talks, 7pm-8pm CST:

March 1 - Using enneagrams to flesh out your characters

March 29 (moved up a week due to Passover) - The big "R": Revision

May 3 - Researching agents

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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 Milliom, 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



Shop Talk Co-Coordinator
Mary Beth Rice
scbwi.nebraska.shoptalk@gmail.com



Retreat & Social Gatherings Coordinator
Rosalind Reloj
scbwi.nebraska.retreats@gmail.com



Workshop Coordinator
Katie Martens
scbwi.nebraska.workshop@gmail.com

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH



Social Media Coordinator
Parker Adair
scbwi.nebraska.socialmedia@gmail.com



Technical Support
Jennie Gollehon
scbwi.nebraska.webmaster@gmail.com



Published Member Liaison
Shelly Nosbisch
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

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 & Social Gatherings Coordinator
Rosalind Reloj
scbwi.nebraska.retreats@gmail.com



Workshop Coordinator
Katie Martens
scbwi.nebraska.workshop@gmail.com