



April 2024

Spotlight



Featured Illustrator

PAULA WALLACE

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Upcoming Events

[Regional Meeting](#), May 5, 4:00-5:00pm CST

[PAL Meeting](#), May 9, 7:00pm-8:00pm CST

[Shop Talk](#), May 13 @ 7:00-8:00pm CST

[Portfolio Review Day](#), June 8, all day event

[Explore All Regional Virtual Events](#)

WELCOME

Please welcome Jennie Gollehon and Heather Dawn Torres! On May 1st they will be stepping into the role of Co-RA's for the Nebraska Region. Heather & Jennie are excited for the opportunity and looking forward to getting to know all of our amazing Nebraska members.

Be sure to say hello and introduce yourself whether on zoom or at an in-person event.

A Word from Our Regional Team



Dianna Carda
Regional Illustrator Coordinator

Close your eyes and imagine words flowing like a musical score from a pen or the colors of the sunrise soaring from a paintbrush. That's what it has been like serving as the Nebraska Illustrator Coordinator.

Over the last 2 years, I have met, interacted with and gotten to know SO many wonderful people; artists (authors, illustrators, author-illustrators), SCBWI professionals (executive directors and coordinators) and industry professionals (art directors, agents, editors). Each have shown me that teamwork at all levels is what keeps the gears oiled for SCBWI. I've learned so much about our Nebraska Region and SCBWI as a whole.



I have enjoyed attending meetings, workshops, and conferences (both large and small), most recently the Marvelous Midwest Conference in Iowa. Making new friends while serving on the MMW planning committee was a treat. Traveling to NYC for the SCBWI Winter Conference was an unforgettable experience.

And, not to forget my Nebraska critique group members who are always willing to take one more look at a manuscript. If you don't currently have a critique group, get one! They are absolutely invaluable! All it takes is an email to Judith Snyder, our Nebraska Critique Group Coordinator and you'll be on your way.

As the Nebraska IC, the education and experiences I've had have given me a deep appreciation for the dedicated volunteers who are part of SCBWI. This organization gives each and every member a chance for success. I challenge you to get involved and do as much as possible. There is so much to learn and do!



Thank you, Alison Pearce Stevens and Sheli Peterson, for believing in me. Thank you for seeing the skills that I have and allowing me the opportunity to bring those skills to the Nebraska team! Thank you to the Regional Team and fellow members for encouraging me. Thank you for reminding me to just enjoy each little moment on the road to publication. For it can be a long road! I look forward to seeing where else my journey will take me.

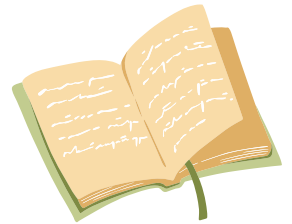
Welcome Jennie Gollehon and Heather Dawn Torres!

--Dianna Carda

What a Marvelous Time at Marvelous Midwest 2024!



GOOD TIMES



friends



Beyond the Book: Crafting and Monetizing Educational Resources for Authors

Kelly Brakenhoff
Author

As authors, we want to extend the life and impact of our books beyond the printed page. I've been down that road with my *Duke the Deaf Dog* series, and this year I'm gearing up for a similar adventure with new chapter books. Here are some tips and tricks I've learned about crafting educational resources (and maybe even make a few dollars along the way).

Identify Your Educational Content

Start by identifying the educational potential of your book. For my Duke series, I crafted digital workbooks that delve into Deaf Culture, Community, and ASL. My chapter book will include discussion questions for kids and expert insights for teachers or parents looking to fill a 30-minute lesson time. Spot those story gems that promise more, and you're on your way!

Navigating Freebies vs. Premium Content

Here's the deal: Freebies like coloring pages are your bait—they hook readers and newsletter subscribers. Those ASL sign and story videos I made with a pro? They're my welcoming beacon on YouTube. But when it comes to the meaty stuff—workbooks, lesson plans—I tag a price on them. They're my bread and butter, offering deep dives into the story's world. Weigh the complexity against the worth, and you'll find your balance.

Bring in the Experts

Collaborating with professionals, such as teachers for lesson plan scripts or experts for end-of-book articles, elevates the quality of your resources. This not only enriches the content but also broadens its appeal, making it a worthwhile investment for your audience.



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Design with Versatility in Mind

When creating resources, aim for versatility. A well-designed worksheet or lesson plan can appeal to both parents and teachers, maximizing its utility. Platforms like Canva can be invaluable for designing visually appealing, professional-quality materials.

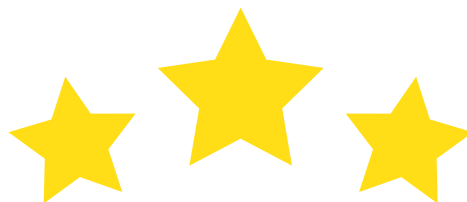
Know Your Audience

Lastly, understanding your audience is crucial. Tailor your resources to meet the needs of parents, teachers, and students alike. Reflect on what would benefit them the most and how your content can serve different purposes.

Educational resources are a unique opportunity to expand our books' horizons and value. By thoughtfully integrating these materials, we enhance our readers' experience and open new avenues for engagement and revenue.

So, reflect on your book's potential, consider your audiences' needs, and choose the right balance between free and paid content. Embrace the role of resource creator; it's a fulfilling extension of your storytelling that resonates with readers long after they've closed the book.

Kelly Brakenhoff is an author of eleven books and an ASL interpreter. She divides her writing energy between two series: cozy mysteries set on a college campus and picture books featuring Duke the Deaf Dog. You can learn more about Kelly's work at: <https://kellybrakenhoff.com/>



Let's Celebrate



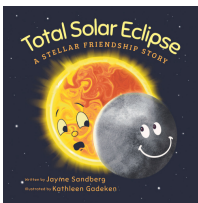
Cougar Clues illustrated by Chloe Burgett released on March 26th! This is Book 3 in the series *A-Z Animal Mysteries* by Ron Roy and Kayla Whaley. Great work, Chloe!



Mary Beth Rice was recently selected as a PB Party Finalist for her picture book manuscript, *RUBY'S SUNSHOWER ROMP*. Author Mindy Alyse Weiss sponsors the contest which includes an Agent/Editor Showcase each spring. Well done, Mary Beth!



Animal Climate Heroes by Alison Pearce Stevens released on March 5th, and has since been featured in a webinar with the World Wildlife Fund and part of an "Incredible MG Nonfiction" panel event with Books of Wonder in NYC. Congratulations, Alison!



The picture book, *Total Solar Eclipse: A Stellar Friendship Story*, by Jayme Sandberg and Kathleen Gadeken hit #1 on the Amazon list of best-selling children's books in astronomy, friendship, and emotions & feelings. We are absolutely thrilled for you, Jayme and Kathleen!



[@chloeb.artistry](https://www.instagram.com/chloeb.artistry)

Cheers for Chloe Burgett who was the winner of the 2024 Marvelous Midwest Art Show with her piece, *Forest Concert*. Way to go, Chloe! To see more of Chloe's art, visit her online at www.chloebartistry.com

Member Spotlight



Rebecca J. Gomez



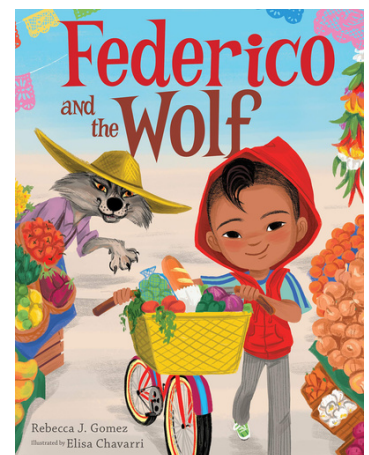
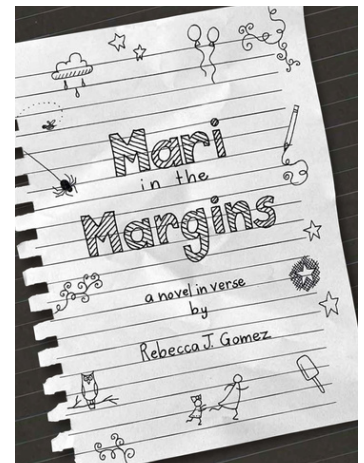
Rebecca J. Gomez has been writing and drawing for as long as she can remember. And, when she's not creating books, she's often reading them. Rebecca writes picture books, poetry, and verse novels. Her first five books are fun, active, rhyming stories, four of which she wrote with her friend, Corey Rosen Schwartz.

Rebecca's first verse novel, which is also her first illustrated book, is titled *Mari in the Margins*, and is coming in May 2024 from Bandersnatch Books! Her book, *Federico and the Wolf* was selected as a 2023 Star of the North Honor Book by the Minnesota Youth Reading Awards Program.

You might find Rebecca now and then in the pages of children's magazines such as *Highlights for Children*, *Pockets*, *Ladybug*, and *Fun for Kidz* magazine. Rebecca also keeps busy with her blog [Read, Discuss, Do](https://www.readdiscussdo.com) which provides simple ideas for parents, caregivers, educators, and librarians to make the most out of reading with kids.

Rebecca enjoys baking, hiking, and spending time with her growing, occasionally chaotic, family. She works from a home office, where she spends too much time daydreaming while gazing out her window. She lives in Omaha.

Visit Rebecca online at: <https://www.rebeccajgomez.com>



Coming Attractions

SPRING PAL MEETING: THURSDAY, MAY 9



We invite all PAL members to join us for our spring meeting on Thursday, May 9th at 7:00pm for a discussion aimed at understanding the language and legalese of standard publishing contracts. You've spent endless nights making your prose powerful, your characters clear, and your spelling, uh...splendiferous? Well, if you're lucky, a publisher will reward you with a document that seems to be absolutely none of those things. A contract.

Our next PAL meeting welcomes SCBWI Nebraska Member (and licensed attorney) Katie Martens as she guides us through what standard contract clauses mean to you and the intellectual property you've worked so hard to create. Details will be emailed directly to all PAL members.

PORTFOLIO REVIEW DAY: SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Artists' agent and RISD professor Judy Sue Goodwin Sturges will provide a 20-minute Zoom critique of each participating illustrator's portfolio. Focus will be hands-on with pointers on playing to your strengths as a visual storyteller for children's publishing. As a follow up to the critique, Judy Sue will offer each illustrator an assignment prompt for further feed-back. The 20-minute critiques will be scheduled throughout our event day. If you want personalized, one-on-one feedback from a top-notch industry agent on the strengths and marketability of your work, then roll up your creative sleeves, because this event is for you! Registration closes on May 31st so don't delay. [Click here](#) to register or for more details.



Maximizing Your Membership

Did you know that the *SCBWI Essential Guide to Publishing for Children* has tips, guidelines, and resources for writers at all stages of their publishing journey? From finding an agent to formatting your manuscript “The Book” is full of invaluable advice and resources for authors, illustrators, and translators of children's books.

Additional resources include an annotated bibliography of reference books for aspiring children's book creators, as well as a current listing of bloggers, reviewers, grants, and awards opportunities.

Members can [download a free PDF](#) of the guide online under the publication tab (must be logged in to access).



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Nebraska Critique Groups

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

Join a critique group today!

Email Judith Snyder, Critique Group Coordinator:
scbwi.nebraska.critiques@gmail.com



Illustration Submission

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

Please send to: Dianna Carda at nebraska-ic@scbwi.org

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



Shop Talk Recap



Mary Beth Rice
Shop Talk Co-Coordinator

Critique Etiquette: The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback

Participating in a critique group is crucial for improving your craft. Being a member of a critique group requires a commitment to the group norms.

The following tips can help you make the most of this valuable experience:

Receiving feedback:

- Have an open mind and an attitude of gratitude.
- Listen attentively and ask questions for clarity.
- Don't take it personally; a critique is about the work, not the writer.
- Note the positive aspects as well as the areas of opportunity.
- Develop a plan for how you will use the feedback to revise and improve the work.
- Give yourself time and distance before revisiting the feedback to identify what resonates.
- Choose which feedback is meaningful and should be acted on. This is YOUR story to tell.

Giving Feedback:

- Be honest, kind, and specific about what is working and what isn't.
- Treat the writer and their work the way that you want to be treated.
- Focus on the key things that jump off the page and on the writer's intent.
- Keep it high level, focusing on things like character, emotion, story arc, and plot.
- Use the Sandwich Method: First, start with a positive, then provide a specific comment about something that could be improved, and lastly finish with another positive comment.

When done well and skillfully, critique partners can be extremely valuable to both parties. Giving good feedback is an art. It takes focus and practice, as well as an understanding of craft, courage, and compassion.

Upcoming Shop Talks, 7pm-8pm CST:

May 13 - Submission Packages

June & July - No Shop Talk. Enjoy 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 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
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Regional Illustrator Coordinator
Dianna Carda
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PROGRAMMING



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Shop Talk Co-Coordinator
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COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH



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Published Member Liaison
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Discussion Board Moderator
Kim Ziemann