



**October 2023**

**Spotlight**



**Featured  
Illustrator**

**LINDA STEPHEN**  
[WWW.LINDASTEPHEN.COM](http://WWW.LINDASTEPHEN.COM)

**Upcoming Events**

Regional Meeting, Oct. 15 & Nov. 12 @ 4:00pm

Shop Talk, Oct. 23 & Nov. 20 @ 7:00pm

Story Spinners, Nov. 4, 10-2pm in Ashland, NE

Middle of the Map Conference, Nov. 3-4, KS/MO

Illustrator Intensive, Nov. 11, 9:30am-5:30pm

[Explore All SCBWI Regional Virtual Events](#)

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**Link to Virtual Events!**

The SCBWI website now features a Regional Virtual Events page where you can stay current on all virtual events being offered by SCBWI regions around the world!

Be sure to bookmark the link below and check it often to find webinars that fit your interests and budget!

[www.scbwi.org/regional-virtual-events](http://www.scbwi.org/regional-virtual-events)

# A Word from Our Regional Team



**Alison Pearce Stevens**  
*Regional Advisor*

I hope you saw the email announcing the end of my tenure as Regional Advisor at the end of April. We're on the lookout for someone to step into the role—and the plan is to have plenty of overlap to make the transition as easy as possible. So what does it mean to be an RA? Here's an overview of what I do and the benefits of holding this position.

In general, I oversee the region and act as liaison between headquarters (HQ) and all of our members. I don't do this alone; each region is run by a Regional Team. Nebraska is on the smaller side, but had 90 members last time I counted, so we currently have one RA and one Illustrator Coordinator, Dianna Carda. She and I meet monthly to talk about regional issues.

Our region has an incredible group of collaborative volunteers who generate event ideas to make SCBWI a great value for all of our members. Dianna and I meet with them once a month to plan upcoming programming. Although I have final say in whether or not we hold an event or send out an announcement, our volunteers are usually the ones on the ground making events happen.

The RA is also in charge of handling the business side of things. I negotiate honorariums with potential faculty and send them written agreements. I review event descriptions drafted by volunteers and set ticket prices, which means I have to estimate how many people will attend an event and figure out how much we will have to pay—and hope we come out even, or even a bit ahead, so we can have other events for free. I manage our treasury, paying expenses associated with events. And I submit reports to HQ twice a year. HQ is incredibly supportive of the Regional Team members. They've always got your back!



@LindaStephenOrigamiArt

# A Word from Our Regional Team *continued*

I typically spend anywhere from 1 to 10 hours a week doing all things SCBWI. When we have a big event coming up, or I'm scheduling a line-up of speakers for regional meetings, it's on the high end. Most weeks are 5 hours or less. It's a volunteer position—you don't get paid—but it comes with a lot of perks! Your membership is free while you're RA and for some time after you step down. You get free admission to conferences and can usually have your travel expenses covered for the big summer and winter conferences. You meet lots of industry professionals—and those encounters can open doors. I've mentioned it before, but I met one of my editors and my agent at conferences because I was an RA working behind the scenes.



@LindaStephenOrigamiArt

It's an incredibly rewarding position. I love being able to connect all of you with industry professionals, best-selling authors, and award-winning illustrators. I have loved watching more and more of our members sign with agents, get book deals, or break into indie publishing. I have definitely reaped the rewards of the RA position, and I'm excited to see someone else get those same opportunities and steer our region in new directions.

If you are a premium (paying) member of the Nebraska region, you will receive an email with details on how to apply this coming week. If you have any additional questions about the role, please feel free to contact me at: [nebraska-ra@scbwi.org](mailto:nebraska-ra@scbwi.org).



# Agent's View



*Jennifer Mattson*  
*Agent, Andrea Brown Literary*

Jennifer Mattson is a Chicago-based agent with boutique children's book agency Andrea Brown Literary. Her career in children's publishing began immediately out of college—including time as an editor (Dutton Children's Books) and a reviewer (*Booklist* magazine).

Jennifer represents all audiences and genres within the children's literature umbrella, from picture book through young adult, and looks for authors or author-illustrators who bring a deep professionalism, an open mind, and a fresh point of view to their work.

Her list primarily focuses on fiction, but she's also open to occasional, impeccably researched nonfiction projects. She's currently especially looking to add more middle grade novelists to her roster, and she has soft spots for mindbending speculative and gripping survival stories of all kinds. But she'll always give more than a passing glance to a slam-dunk of a picture book, especially if the author has a robust set of polished manuscripts waiting in the wings!

To submit to Jennifer, please use this QueryManager link that is specifically for members of the Nebraska region.

[QueryManager.com/JenniferMattson/SCBWI\\_NE\\_Oct\\_23\\_Agents\\_View](https://QueryManager.com/JenniferMattson/SCBWI_NE_Oct_23_Agents_View)

The link will remain valid until April 15, 2024. After that time, anyone is welcome to query Jennifer through her general query link whenever she's open to submissions.

# Let's Celebrate



Stefanie Raszler won a 3-month mentorship with author Linda Skeers through the Nonfiction Ninjas Writing Contest. Nice job, Stefanie!



Paula Ray will host an event on October 27th at the Francie & Finch Bookshop in Lincoln featuring her book, *Max and the Listening Tree*. Good luck, Paula!



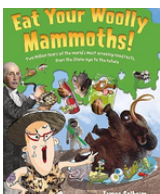
Rebecca J. Gomez's illustrated novel-in-verse, *Mari in the Margins*, was recently acquired by Bandersnatch Books and is scheduled to be published in May 2024. Congrats, Rebecca!



*Etta Extraordinaire* illustrated by Chloe Burgett will release on October 17th. This heart-warming story is sure to be a hit with little divas who need a nudge to perform as big as their dreams. Way to go, Chloe!



Chloe Burgett is certainly on a roll! *Bats in the Castle* released on September 19th. This is Book Two of the series, *A to Z Animal Mysteries* in which young clue hunters become determined to rescue a bat. Keep up the great work, Chloe!



*Eat Your Woolly Mammoths!* written by James Solheim, won the Nebraska Book Award in TWO categories: children's design & children's non-fiction. This is mammoth news, James! Congratulations!



Alison Pearce Stevens' forthcoming middle grade nonfiction book, *Animal Climate Heroes*, has been named a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection. We are thrilled for you, Alison!

# Featured Member



## Jodi Adams



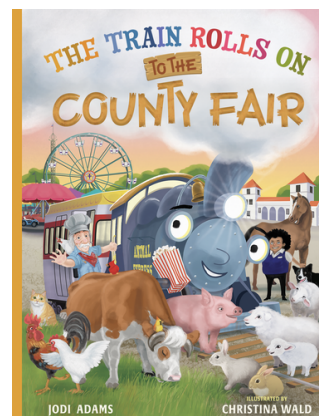
Jodi Adams was a Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) and CSI Field Supervisor for the Douglas County Sheriff's Office in Omaha, NE, for more than seven years before she became a stay-at-home mom and children's book author.

Jodi has always loved reading and writing, but it wasn't until her daughter was born that she rediscovered her love of children's fiction and decided to write and publish stories of her own. In 2020, Jodi created Young At Heart Publishing.

She has since written and self-published two rhyming picture books that teach children about perseverance and teamwork: *The Train Rolls On* and *The Train Rolls On To The North Pole*. A third book in the series, *The Train Rolls On To The County Fair*, is currently being illustrated and is due out in the summer of 2024. Beyond that, Jodi's goal is to continue writing and publishing children's books that portray positive messages and are entertaining for both kids and adults to read.

When she is not reading or writing, Jodi loves to cook and bake (mostly eat!), run, golf, play sand volleyball, and spend time with her family. She grew up in Spencer, IA, but now lives in Omaha, NE, with her husband, Eric, and their two kids, who serve as inspiration for Jodi's stories.

You can find out more about Jodi and her books at [www.jodiadamsauthor.com](http://www.jodiadamsauthor.com).



# Coming Attractions

## MARVELOUS MIDWEST CONFERENCE

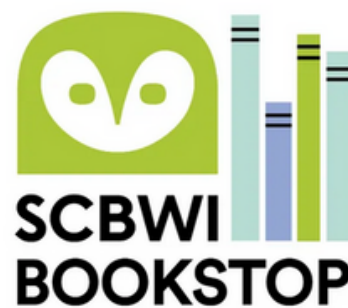
April 12-14

Mark your calendars for the Marvelous Midwest conference coming up April 12-14, 2024 in Davenport, Iowa! Faculty unveils have begun— check your social media channels to find out which incredible industry professionals will be joining us! The event is a joint endeavor of six SCBWI chapters: Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, Wisconsin. The weekend will be jam-packed with amazing events for writers and illustrators at every stage of their creative journey, and we are thrilled to bring a big national-style conference so close to home.

## SCBWI BOOKSTOP 2023

Watch for more details!

Want to get the word out about your book(s) in time for holiday shopping? Sign up for SCBWI Bookstop! Whether you're traditionally or independently published, Bookstop is a great way to get eyes on your work through an online page that gives visitors an inside look at you and your book. More details will be forthcoming on the [SCBWI website](#).



BookStop Coming Soon for 2023!

# Maximizing Your Membership

SCBWI has two awards that are currently open for submissions:

**THE SPARK AWARD** is an annual award that recognizes excellence in children’s publishing for books published through a non-traditional publishing route. The Spark winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize. Additionally, the winner and honor recipients will receive: Spark seals to display on their book, the opportunity to teach a digital workshop about their publishing journey, the chance to be featured in the SCBWI online bookstore and publicized through SCBWI social networking sites. The winners will also get the opportunity to attend any virtual conference of their choice tuition-free. For full submission guidelines & eligibility, please visit the [SCBWI website](#).

**THE NARRATIVE ART AWARD** is given annually to an illustrator who can tell a visual story through sequential images. The prize is an all-expense-paid trip to the SCBWI New York Winter Conference. The winning illustrations will be displayed during the conference. In honor of the 120th anniversary of the first successful flight of an airplane, the 2023 prompt is to create a sequence of three or four drawings that tell a story of experimentation: the trial and error—perhaps the excitement—of invention. For submissions guidelines and criteria, please visit: [Narrative Art Award – SCBWI](#)

## Nebraska Critique Groups

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

**Join a critique group today!**

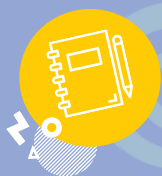
Email Judith Snyder, Critique Coordinator:  
[scbwi.nebraska.critiques@gmail.com](mailto:scbwi.nebraska.critiques@gmail.com)



### 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](mailto: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

## “CHECKLIST FOR A FUN, FAVORABLE & FESTIVE SCHOOL VISIT”

Last month, author Rebecca J. Gomez shared her Top Ten Tips for a great school visit experience. The session concluded with all participants brainstorming ideas for what their own school visit experience could look like.

### Top Ten School Visit Tips & Insights:

- School visit opportunities may come from surprising places.
- Visits can be an opportunity to sell your books, but not always. Make it optional.
- Communicate your expectations for the day but be sure to take care of YOU!
- Consider having lunch with a pre-selected group of students. Kids love having lunch with guest authors and it can be fun!
- Consider giving the school a choice between two presentation options rather than doing a different presentation for each grade level.
- Props are helpful when visiting with any age group.
- Be prepared if kids want to hug you! Respond rather than react.
- Offer varied pricing options depending on size of group (large group vs. small group) and whether you are doing an in-person or online visit.
- Be interactive and encourage the audience to participate, regardless of group size.
- If you are just getting started, volunteer to do a few school visits for free to find out what works for you!

### Upcoming Shop Talks, 7pm-8pm CST:

October 23 - Changing POV in Picture Books

November 20 - Writing Sparkling Dialogue

December 18 - Editing

January 15 - Making Book Trailers

**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**  
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## PROGRAMMING



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## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH



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**Discussion Board Moderator**  
Kim Ziemann