

NOV
2023

SCBWI
SoCal
NEWSLETTER



Cover illustration by Haana Yoo

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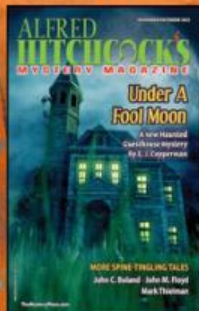




MEMBER NEWS

Logo by Jonathan St. Amant

By Desi St. Amant



Tim Burke has sold his third short story, "STRAYS," to one of the two national adult crime fiction magazines, **ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE**.

Contact:
tim@timburketales.com
Website:
www.timburketales.com

Judy Campbell-Smith's picture book, **ICE CREAM EVERYWHERE: SWEET STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD**, will be published by Sleeping Bear Press in Spring 2024, and it will be illustrated by Lucy Semple.



Debra Green co-authored a middle grade novel that was purchased by Ben Publishing. The book is titled **RULES FOR LIARS**, and it's co-written with April Patten.

website:
www.DebraLGreen.com



The third book of Lily Sparks' YA series, **TEEN KILLERS AT LARGE**, will be published by Crooked Lane Books on October 10th, 2023. This thriller trilogy, which centers on the ethics of AI profiling, has garnered a Kirkus starred review, a nomination for best YA Debut by ITW, was a JLG selection and a Top Ten Pick for Reluctant Readers by YALSA! Website: sparksily.com

IG: @sparks_lily_rose
Twitter: @lilyrora



Chuck Grieb's illustrated novel, *The Goblin Twins*, has been published!

Running for their lives from an evil shaman, *The Goblin Twins*, Bela and Vuto, flee to the far side of the enchanted Thicket. But the shaman has not given up, and the Goblin Twins' escape to the Faerie Garden Clans sparks a confrontation, which could lead to a Goblin-Faerie war.

Readers aged 10 years to 100 would enjoy this book. Including over 100 illustrations, many in full color, *The Goblin Twins* is 166 pages long and printed on high quality paper with a foil stamped hardcover and dust jacket.

The first edition of the book is limited to 1,000 individually numbered copies.

Order your copy today!
<https://atofchuckgrieb.bigcartel.com/product/the-goblin-twins-a-garden-clan-tale>

Instagram and Twitter:
[@chuck_grieb](https://www.instagram.com/chuck_grieb)



Desi St. Amant is the author of the upcoming collaborative middle-grade graphic novel, *Three Bee Honey*. She's been an SCBWI member since 2016. A former high school English teacher, she's taken her passion for writing to advertising and is currently working as a copywriter. You can follow her work and her newsletter at www.desiwrites.com.



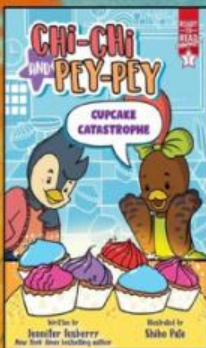
Shiho Pate illustrated **The Rescues Finding Home**, written by Tommy Greenwald and Charlie Greenwald. The book birthday is September 5th, 2023.

Moose and Bear are two scrappy shelter dogs patiently waiting for the right owner to adopt them. They meet, become friends, and one day, Cathy decides to take them both home. Told with humor and heart, *Finding Home* is a tale that champions the importance of family and relays how it feels to belong and to have a place to call home.

Shiho Pate is thrilled to be working on a new picture book: **BABY STEPS**, written by Kimberly Derting and published by Abrams Appleseed. This is a picture book about the complexity of welcoming a new baby home for a slightly older sibling, and it illustrates the sweet burgeoning relationship between siblings.

Publication is scheduled for fall 2024.

@shihopate on IG, Twitter, Threads, TikTok, and Bluesky



Shiho Pate did the artwork for **Chi-Chi and Pey-Pey Cupcake Catastrophe**, and the release date is August 29th, 2023. It is written by Jennifer Fosberry and published by Simon and Schuster.

Best friends Chi-Chi the chicken and Pey-Pey the penguin both want the same cupcake in the second book in this sweet Level 1 Ready-to-Read Graphics series about celebrating differences!



Susie Yi' debut MG graphic novel, **A SKY OF PAPER STARS**, a story of a Korean-American girl who is turning into paper after a wish goes awry, followed by the death of her grandmother, comes out on September 26, 2023, published by Roaring Book Press.

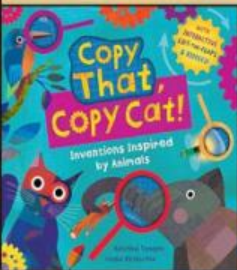


Susi Schaefer has illustrated a picture book titled **GOOD MORNING, I LOVE YOU, VIOLET!** written by Shauna Shapiro. By saying "Good morning, I love you" to herself each day, a young girl changes her negative self-talk and embraces happiness. The book will hit the shelves on October 23rd.

IG: @suschaeferart
Website: <https://www.suschaefer.com/>

Katrina Tangen's picture book is officially getting published! **COPY THAT, COPY CAT!**: Inventions Inspired by Animals is a STEM nonfiction book with riddles about biomimicry. It was illustrated by Giulia Orecchia, and it will be published by Barefoot Books in Sept. 5, 2023.

JuneTwitter and Instagram: @katrinatangen
website: katrinatangen.com

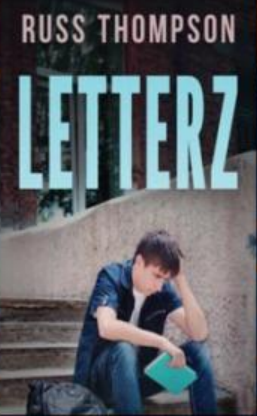


SJ Winkler was honored to be KidLit411's featured illustrator for October 2023!

To celebrate National Adoption Month, **SISTER** - written by Leia M. Johnson and illustrated by SJ Winkler is a touching story about one family's journey from foster care to adoption.

Published by Phoenix Media & Books, this book recently earned a Kirkus Star Review!

Find SJ Winkler online:
[@sjwinklerart](https://www.instagram.com/sjwinklerart), [sjwinklerart.com](https://www.instagram.com/sjwinklerart)



Russ Thompson has a new book out: **LETTERZ** It tells the story of a teen with dyslexia who struggles and finds a way to succeed. It's a hi-low novel for reluctant and struggling teen readers. Visit his website to get your copy today.

Contact:
russthompson95@gmail.com
Website:
www.findingforwardbooks.com



MEET & GREET

LOCAL CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHORS

Saturday, November 18th from 1:00-6:00 pm

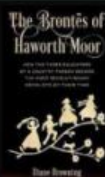


Barnes & Noble Victorville Mall
14400 Bear Valley Rd.
Victorville, CA 92392



Society of
Children's Book
Writers and
Illustrators

Come check out some awesome children's books and meet the authors who wrote them.



Diane Browning



Angela Cerrito



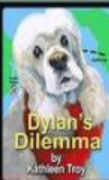
Carlene Griffith



Tootie Nienow



Bronwen Newcott



Kathleen Troy



Cyndi Wojciechowski



Susi Schaefer



Maggie Grinnell



Illustration by Shiho Pate

Thank You, and Welcome!

by Beverly Plass, Regional Advisor SCBWI SoCal

Thanks to Cynthia De La Torre and Shiho Pate!

I know it's a cliché, but it truly takes a village of volunteers to put on all the events, critique groups and meet-ups for our creative members. I'd like to personally thank two outgoing team members for their hours of dedication to our SoCal region.

Cynthia de la Torre has been our Illustrator Coordinator, and more recently, our Co-Assistant Regional Advisor. Over the years, she has supported illustrators and writers alike. She led the bilingual critique group, conducted monthly interviews with authors and illustrators, coordinated the Equity and Inclusion scholarships, and participated internationally with Spanish-English speaking SCBWI leaders. She's supportive, warm and creative. Check out the artwork on her book bag, or on her website [here](#).



Shiho Pate is a powerhouse, illustrating four books that came out this year alone! She still found the time to support her fellow illustrators by hosting monthly meet-ups, inviting guest speakers, creating craft sessions, sharing illustrators' successes on social media, organizing the SoCalendar contest, and helping increase illustrator opportunities at our Fall Conference. You can see all of her books [here](#).



They both complete their terms at the end of December, but plan to continue honing their craft. We hope to see them at our future events.

Welcome to New Regional Team Members!

At the beginning of 2024, we're excited to welcome three new volunteers to our Regional Team: Jodi Rizzotto, Su Moon and Kunj Bhatt.

Jodi Rizzotto, our upcoming new Co-Assistant Regional Advisor, has been a SoCal member and participant in most of our events for seven years. When applying for this position, she said, "I would like writers of every level to feel connected and supported on their writer's journey. SCBWI has been essential to my growth as a writer over the years. Attending conferences, retreats, critique groups, and meet-ups has refined my knowledge of writing craft as well as the business of the publishing world. And it's great to hang out with really nice people."



Su Moon has been active in the SCBWI LA region, but recently moved to Orange County and says she'd like to get more involved. She said, "As Co-Illustrator Coordinator, I'd love to meet and help build a sense of community for SCBWI illustrators and authors; help set up informative workshops, and help support new book launches."



Kunj Bhatt has participated in our meet-ups, Fall Conference and critique groups. She brings experience from setting up a South Asian Art Festival in LA. She said, "I hope to continue to foster community and encourage my peers to keep building their skills to reach their dreams and goals. I know that I am the right fit since I deeply connect with the same dreams and goals. Support systems are key in all aspects of our lives so continuing to be building them through our region is something I strive for. I am dedicated to bringing forth authentic representation, championing creative writing and life-long learning, and children's books."



They each bring talents, ideas and experience to the table, and I look forward to working with all of them to provide a productive and fun 2024 that supports those who create children's books. I'm eternally grateful that Carlene Griffith will continue as Co-Assistant Regional Advisor!



Illustration by Susi Schaefer

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A Librarian's Perspective

by Kelly Powers



Banned Book Week and Why it Matters

As Banned Book Week draws to a close, school librarians are left with mixed feelings. While the week is a great way to draw attention to the cause, the fact that it's still happening in many parts of the country is troubling.

Just a few weeks ago, Florida banned every single book featuring an LGBTQ+ character from K-12 school libraries. It didn't matter if the character was the main character, protagonist's parents, best friend, or even a background character. If they were in, the book was out. Which is essentially telling kids it's not okay to identify as anything other than cis/straight. Mix that with the fact that LGBTQ+ youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers and you have a recipe for disaster.

This is why librarians are on the front lines, fighting for our patrons' right to read across all races, sexualities, genders, religions, and countries. Representation matters because not only does it make those who identify with the protagonist feel less alone, it also creates empathy for those with different worldviews.

Every book in school libraries has to be rigidly vetted through a Collection Development Standard. Most assert that the books are highly reviewed and at grade level with the students the library serves. Are there complex, maybe even controversial subject matters? Yes, of course. Stories like *Fighting Words* by Kimberly Bradley (abuse), *The Night Diary* by Veera Hiranandani (religious division), and *Efrén Divided* by Ernesto Cisneros (immigration) all feature tough subjects that are difficult for students to read, but are also clearly labeled. If these books are chosen by the student, they are chosen for a reason. It is not a librarian's responsibility to force certain books or subject matters on students, and oftentimes, if the student then finds the material too emotionally hard or advanced, they simply return the book unfinished with no judgment or ridicule.

It is our firm belief that understanding that there is more than one way to live, love, pray, and survive is crucial to being a good person in this melting pot we call America. And if done right, we can foster a generation of smart, kind adults who love reading and learning.

¹ Lavietes, Matt. *NBC News*. 12 September 2023. 16 10 2023. <<https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/florida-school-districts-removed-roughly-300-books-last-school-year-rcna104367>>.

² *The Trevor Project*. December 2022. <<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>>.

Kelly Powers has been a member of SCBWI for five years and runs the Orange County YA/MG critique group. She has been a school librarian for over ten years and has authored several articles for the newsletter. When not reading or writing, she likes to garden, cuddle with her pets, and play video games.



KILLER FIRST LINES II



Illustration by Shiho Pate

by Tim Burke

Welcome to the second incarnation of our new column. However, it will only thrive with your support! Email me your favorite, awesome opening line(s) to a book or short story (any age level is okay, from PB to adult) at tim@timburketales.com

We'll include them in future newsletters with credit to you as the contributor. Follow the format of the ones below, and if your email name is something arcane like TweedleBeelzebub6535, please sign your actual name so I can give proper credit to you.

WELL, THAT WAS AWKWARD by Rachel Vail
"You can't just drop a dead sister into the conversation."
—contributed by member Laurie Young

WILDWOOD (Wildwood Chronicles Book 1) by Colin Meloy
"How five crows managed to lift a twenty-pound baby boy into the air was beyond Prue, but that was certainly the least of her worries."
—contributed by member Annelise Wilhelmesen

THE SOUTHERN BOOK CLUB'S GUIDE TO SLAYING VAMPIRES by Grady Hendrix
"This story ends in blood."
—contributed by member Michael Dwyer

BITTERSWEET by Sarah Ockler
"It was the biggest competition night of my life, but all I could think about was the cheetah bra."
—contributed by member Christine Henderson



THE ENORMOUS EGG by Oliver Butterworth
"My name is Nate Twitchell, but I can't help that."
—contributed by member Christine Henderson

HOUSE OF HOLLOW by Krystal Sutherland
"I was ten years old the first time I realized I was strange. Around midnight, a woman dressed in white slipped through my bedroom window and cut off a lock of my hair with sewing scissors."
—contributed by member Heather Buchta

THE LAST GOOD KISS by James Crumley
"When I finally caught up with Abraham Trahearne, he was drinking beer with an alcoholic bulldog named Fireball Roberts in a ramshackle joint just outside of Sonoma, California, drinking the heart right out of a fine spring afternoon."

I MUST BETRAY YOU by Ruta Sepetyš
"Fear arrived at five o'clock."
—contributed by member Lori Polydoros

THE GARDEN OF SECOND CHANCES
by Mona Alvarado Frazier
"I didn't run because I killed him."
—contributed by member Lori Polydoros

TRACKS by Louise Erdrich
"We started dying before the snow, and like the snow, we continued to fall."



Illustration by Jen Swain

A former Regional Advisor for the SoCal chapter of SCBWI, **Tim Burke** writes humorous adventure MG and slightly darker YA. He's also been published in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* and *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*. He grovels on a daily basis before his uber-overlord rescue mutt who thinks his name is "Your Highness," not Wiley.
www.timburketales.com



Written & Illustrated
by S.J. Winkler

Sometimes the best cure for a creative block is to spark something new and unexpected.

This exercise is great for freewriting, generating new story ideas, filling sketchbooks, and portfolio curation.

Writing Challenge:

You will need this page, 3 six-sided dice, and your favorite writing tools.

Roll the dice for each column. Combine your rolled answers in any way to brainstorm/freewrite a new scene.

Illustration Challenge:

You will need this page, 3 six-sided dice, something to draw with, and your sketchbook.

Roll the dice for each column. Combine your rolled answers in any way to create a new illustrated scene.

Beings (3 dice)

03. Inventor
04. Warrior
05. Explorer
06. Detective
07. Immortal
08. Doctor
09. Alien
10. Wizard
11. Guard
12. Royalty
13. Barber
14. Farmer
15. Witch
16. Baker
17. Musician
18. Student

Companions (3 dice)

03. Lizard or Dragon
04. Cat or Pegasus
05. Rabbit or Bat
06. Ram or Chicken
07. Fox or Hedgehog
08. Snake or Spider
09. Wildcat or Wolf
10. Boar or Tortoise
11. Horse or Unicorn
12. Toad or Gnome
13. Monkey or Goblin
14. Deer or Troll
15. Ox or Raven
16. Gryphon or Owl
17. Zebra or Panda
18. Parrot or Pixie

Snacks (3 dice)

03. Pretzel
04. Hot Dog
05. Sandwich
06. Cookies
07. Pizza
08. Fruit
09. Veggies
10. Pasta
11. Nuggets
12. French Fries
13. Ice Cream
14. Burger
15. Cake
16. Crackers
17. Tacos
18. Cake

Action (2 dice)

02. Reading
03. Drawing
04. Sleeping
05. Crawling
06. Whispering
07. Running
08. Walking
09. Climbing
10. Slipping
11. Shouting
12. Screaming

Home (2 dice)

02. Apartment
03. Cottage
04. Townhouse
05. Barn
06. Castle
07. Spaceship
08. Boathouse
09. Hut
10. Mansion
11. Treehouse
12. Hotel

Landscape (2 dice)

02. Farmland
03. City/Suburbia
04. Desert
05. Forest
06. Swamp
07. Alien Planet
08. Tropical
09. Cavernous
10. Oceanside
11. River Valley
12. Volcanic



For my answers, I imagined a young martian guard whispering to his wolf companion while snatching some pasta for their lunch break.



EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATION SESSION

Beings
11. Guard

Companions
09. Wildcat or Wolf

Snacks
10. Pasta

Action
06. Whispering

Home
10. Mansion

Landscape
07. Alien Planet

SJ Winkler loves exploring creative processes. Current degrees include a B.A. in English Language & Literature, a Minor in Creative Writing, and a B.A. in Art Studio. She's also an award winning published illustrator.

Inspired by surrealist and dada parlor games, *The Pink Sphinx Method* uses dice to spark new directions for your fictional worlds. Whether you need a freewriting warmup to destroy writer's block, or a fresh start for a whole new project, *The Pink Sphinx Method* is here to help! Find more exercises [here](#).

Marketing Tips

by Kathleen Troy

Not too long ago I walked by a long queue of people waiting to get into the Apple store to pick up the latest iPhone. The amazing thing was, they were all glued to their current phones. Perfectly good phones, but they had to have the new one.

Illustration by
Samantha LeDuc

In a heartbeat, marketing can make people want something that, only minutes before, they never knew existed. Pretty powerful stuff.

Let's talk about you. You've written the best book ever. How are you going to get it into the hands of your readers? Your first response might be friends and family, but let's face it: unless this group of people is the size of a small city, at some point you will saturate that market.

Okay, how about social media? Not bad, if you have an audience willing to listen to your podcasts or respond to your other social media endeavors.

Consider this. What is your book about? Who is/would be interested in reading it? How will you find your niche and fill it? This is where marketing and networking act in tandem. Perhaps this example will help.



Illustration by
Farida Zaman



I write the Dylan's Dog Squad series, about two twelve-year old boys and an American Cocker Spaniel who do search and rescue. They live in Orange County, California, but the series takes them all over the map: Catalina Island, San Diego Zoo, Oahu and, most recently, Lake Arrowhead. Also, the boys and Dylan know sign language, agility training and do community service work.

When I started to market this series, I asked myself who/what organizations would care about any of this? The key here is to think abundantly. Parsing the description of my series, I focused on the following persons/organizations as my target audiences:



Illustration by Carolyn Le

Twelve-year-old boys
-Readers between ten and twelve years old.
-The ones with buying power: Teachers, librarians, parents, and grandparents.

American Cocker Spaniel
-American Cocker Spaniel clubs, dog breeders.
-Petco, Petsmart, ASPCA.

Orange County, CA, etc.

-Local Barnes and Noble stores and book clubs in the geographic areas where the books take place.
-Libraries: City and county libraries in the geographic areas where the books take place.
-Local events: County fairs, food and wine festivals in the geographic areas where the books take place.

You get the idea.
(I'm very mobile. If someone invites me to speak/volunteer, I will go.)

Middle Grade School Visits

-Discuss the craft of writing: How I come up with an idea, develop a plot.
-In return, I ask for the opportunity to sell my books

High School Visits

-A more in-depth version of a middle grade school visit/greater focus on the craft of writing.
-Marketing: I discuss locations for my books, what kind of trouble the boys and Dylan will get in and out of, and why that has potential reader appeal.
-Business aspect: How I take a book from the computer to the open market.
-The cost of publishing a book and—the all-time favorite—how I am paid.

-Special Interest Groups (in the geographic areas where the books take place)
-Dog training schools.
-Therapy animal groups.
-Schools/venues where American Sign language is utilized.
-Hospitals, retirement homes, etc.
-Scouts (They earn badges for pet responsibility, business, etc.).

Be enthusiastic about your work. If you don't believe in it, no one else will. Be gracious and grateful for all opportunities, large or small. A good impression can go a long way and the world is a big place. The person you meet today may be connected to an opportunity you haven't considered.

And after all this, when you hear new readers say they can't wait to read your book, it will be worth it.

Illustration by Lisa Johnston Hancock

Kathleen Troy is a published author, children's book publisher, movie producer, writer, and law professor at Cypress College, and former Director of Education and Development for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Kathleen is an active member of Sisters in Crime and SCBWI and has won several awards for middle grade and young adult books. Dog training is Kathleen's passion, and she has achieved recognition, most notably for training service dogs for hospice work.

MY EXPERIENCE AS AN ARTIST AND CREATOR AT CONS

BY CHUCK GRIEB

Why have a table at convention? Truth be told, I ask myself that question whenever a convention date is nigh.

Meet and connect with your audience!

Connect with clients, art directors, etc.

Market your personal work and related merchandise.

Do you like people? You'll meet a lot of them!

Time — prepping for shows and managing the related business requires an investment of time.

Cost — shows cost money to attend. Money needs to be invested up front to build inventory. Marketing materials cost. Travel costs.

Do you like people? You'll meet a lot of them!
(Yes, it can be a Pro or a Con — depends on how you answer the first part of the question.)

What does it take?

RESEARCH!

There are a variety of types of shows with differing audiences. Dig in and consider why you're doing it, attend shows and think about what connected with you when you were there. Evaluate the artists' tables and booths. How are they showing and marketing their work?

Ask yourself questions to help in determining how you will approach participating at a show.

1. Who are you and how do you want to present your work and your brand at a show?
2. What do you hope to get out of the experience?

I'll break down what I decided to use to present my work.

For displaying my art and products I use:

~ **ProPanels** — ProPanels are a portable display system. The panels are comprised of metal pipe and a styrofoam core covered with a carpet-like material. They come in a limited variety of colors and sizes; I chose Charcoal Gray and the 38" wide, 7' tall size. Extenders allowing you to raise the panels another 18" or so are also available. I have two extenders and four panels.

~ **Lights** — Lights make a HUGE difference. Many exhibitors don't invest in lights and it shows. Lights allow your booth to stand out from the rest and direct attention to your art. Conventions tend to be poorly lit; bringing your own lights allows you to take control.

~ **Tablecloths, Banners, and Signs** — Tablecloths can be custom-made with your name and art printed onto the material. I use simple white tablecloths to which, using Velcro, I attach a sign I've printed out. Pop-up banners look great but can be expensive. I have two, but rarely use them. Hanging banners can be purchased for much less than pop-ups or tablecloths. I use signs I've printed on my home computer.

~ **Display stands** — I've explored a variety of display items and (for now) have settled on using small wire stands for my books and simple LP record holders made of bass wood and plexiglass that I customized to allow my prints to stand up straighter. Lightweight collapsible, wooden easels are also a useful and easy way to transport display stands.

Remember, you're going to be taking payments. Things to consider:

~ **Bring change for the cash buyers.** Don't use a cash box. Thieves know exactly what a cash box is and will grab it. Instead, use a nondescript bag or satchel of some sort and keep it with you.

~ **Avoid non-whole numbers when pricing** — don't end with a .99 or .50. I prefer \$5 and \$10 increments.

~ **You will need to file for a sellers permit of some sort.** And you will have to pay sales tax — either charge the tax when you sell the piece or you will need to calculate the tax owed based upon your receipts. When exhibiting in different states, you will need to file for sellers permits or their equivalent in each state.

~ **Consider incorporating if you will be doing a lot of shows.** (I have an S-Corp, some people set up an LLC — speak with an accountant or attorney for more specific advice.) You can file as a sole-proprietor, but there are liability concerns.

~ **Point of purchase system.** Cash is great, but most attendees enjoy the flexibility of cards, Venmo, PayPal, Square, etc. Some systems allow you to set up a product list for more efficiency. Avoid using just a stripe reader — you will be held liable if fraud occurs and you use a stripe reader.



Chuck Grieb is an award-winning story artist, illustrator, and animator with past clients including *Disney*, *Nickelodeon*, and *Magic the Gathering*. He also serves as the program director for Animation and Visual Effects at Azusa Pacific University. Chuck has lost himself exploring the world of *The Garden Clan*. Inhabited by a variety of Faerie Clans and Goblin Tribes, the Garden Clan has been expressed in a series of illustrations and stories, the most recent of which is *The Goblin Twins*, an illustrated novel.

TIPS FOR A GREAT EXPERIENCE

CGRIEF

~ **Read the materials provided by the show.** Know what you can and can't do; you don't want to be surprised when you arrive to find that your display violates line-of-sight rules, to learn you can't sell the crafty things you've prepared, can't display certain content, or any other guidelines of which you may not be aware because you didn't read the rules.

~ **Practice your set-up at home.** Tape off the booth space in your living room, garage, driveway, wherever you can, and determine what and how you will fit your materials. Set up your table to see how it will work at home beforehand.

~ **Load in and load out.** I use a foldable wagon and luggage with wheels to transport my ProPanels, display stands, and art to and from my car.

~ **Be a good neighbor** — support the other folks exhibiting with you and be nice.

~ **Help is nice.** Often other artists who want a taste for what exhibiting is like will be willing to assist in exchange for the pass that allows them to access the show floor. If you are successful enough you may even be able to pay for help.

~ **Promote your work on social media** — let people know where you'll be and when.



Grammar Nerd: The Semicolon

by Tim Burke

Here's the easiest way to think of a semicolon—any place you can use a period, you can use a semicolon. Boom. Done. That's it.

Where users get into trouble is . . . a complete sentence must follow the semicolon. With periods, writers can have fragments or even a single word for stylistic purposes as I did above with “Boom,” and “That's it.”

A sentence needs a subject and verb to be complete. Length has nothing to do with completeness.

Examples of complete sentences:

The baffled writer had completely lost himself in the most intimidating of prepositional thicketts.

John won. [John = subject, won = verb]

Incomplete sentences:

After John won. [This subject and verb are part of an incomplete thought—what happened after John won?]

The story in which the baffled writer had completely lost himself in the . . . thicketts.

[What about the story?]

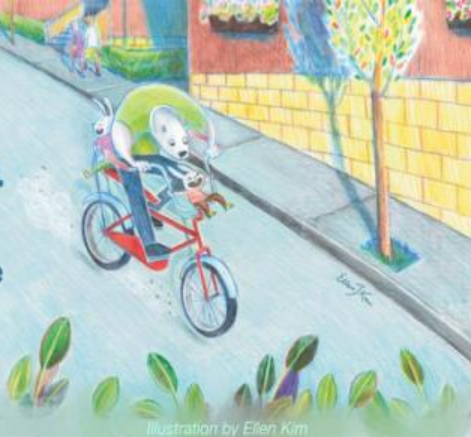


Illustration by Elen Kim

One more aspect to consider is when a semicolon is most effective. From what I've read and observed (and this is a very gray area—certainly not a rule), the two halves of a sentence with a semicolon act like a one-two punch. The part after the semicolon is often short, thus delivering some sizzle.

Examples:

Most of the writers in the room had earned over a million dollars for their last novel; I was not one of them. [“. . . for their last novel; not me” would be wrong since the part after the semicolon is a fragment.]

My husband has four ant farms, plays the drums late at night, and insists on often speaking in a ghastly imitation of a Scottish accent; I had to marry him.

In 1901, there were over ten million African elephants; only 415,000 survive today.

Hope this helps to demystify the semicolon somewhat!



Illustrations by
Farida Zaman

SCBWI



Logo by Kathryn Rammell / kathrynrammell.wordpress.com



2023 FALL HARVEST

**WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS DAY
ORANGE COUNTY BOOK FESTIVAL**





Fall Harvest

Writers and Illustrators Day

by Carlene Griffith



SCBWI'S SoCal chapter hosted a fantastic Fall Harvest Writers and Illustrators Day hybrid conference on October 7, 2023, at Cal State Fullerton. SoCal's Regional Advisor BEV PLASS led this year's event with a team of volunteer committee members, including LORI POLYDOROS, CYNTHIA DE LA TORRE, SHIHO PATE, TIM BURKE, ALEX GRIGG, AND CARLENE GRIFFITH. CRYSTAL SHRECK managed the Zoom meeting set-up and in-person camera recordings. Attendees, both in person and online, were impressed with the attention to detail, and many hours of work and dedication put into the event. Throughout the day, there was an abundance of smiling faces coming and going from the large conference room. And I don't think it was just because they served coffee this year, although some would disagree.



Volunteers guided attendees to the conference hall, where they could take fall-themed photos and explore tables with PAL members' books and an array of illustrator portfolios. MARK ADAMS, owner of San Marino Toy and Book Shoppe, gave an insightful recommendation speech. He also offered a variety of books for sale, from picture books to young adult. And attendees were given the opportunity to have the books by presenting authors and illustrators signed.



With a buzz of excitement in the air and a feeling of reunion, writers and illustrators enjoyed mingling with guest faculty and fellow chapter members. Or "hobnobbing," as Tim Burke would say.

CONCETTA DELUCO said, "The energy in the room!" was the best part of the conference for her. She said, "I had not attended this conference in person in the last few years. I can honestly say I was pleasantly surprised at how it has improved. The photo booth, coffee/tea, book signings, decor, etc., all added such an extra-special touch. I also loved that the illustrator's portfolios were displayed on the screen. Very inspiring. It was intimate, informative, motivating and, overall, the best one yet."

After a pre-recorded welcome by SCBWI Executive Director Sarah Baker, Bev started things off with KELLY POWERS, who directed attendees in an icebreaker activity. Her snowball fight gave writers the opportunity to laugh out loud while throwing crumpled wads of white paper at one another. They then opened the papers to discover thought-provoking questions to ask each other. Zoom attendees answered the questions in the chat. It was a delightful and fun activity to get the ball rolling. KRISTINE SHELERETIS said, "I thought the icebreaker activity was awesome, especially for introverts like me."

Guest speaker COURTNEY STEVENSON, Editor at Quill Tree Books, HarperCollins Children's, got right down to business with her talk titled "It's Great, Now Fix It: The Writer's Art of Being a Critique Partner." She said, "Writing's hard and first drafts are messy. Another pair of eyes will take your manuscript to the next level." Her message about building connections, whether intentional or not, seemed to be a theme throughout the conference.

Authors TINA ATHAIDE and LAURA TAYLOR NAMEY emphasized, during their author panel, how critique partners play a very important role in helping them when writing books. IRIS WIDMAN said, "One key message that I heard was the importance of building your community, finding a writing group or critique group of like-minded, yet different enough people to support each other's growth."

Providing opportunities for connections was a huge part of the conference, with 30-minute breaks built into the schedule. LORIAN STEIDER BRADY said, "I thought the day's pacing was great. Breaks were well-timed and long enough that we could stretch our legs, mingle, and digest information. I didn't hit people overload/info saturation until right at the end of the event. Good timing!"

During the breakout sessions, SAVANNAH BROOKS, an agent at KT Literary, enlightened writers with her talk, "Using Fact in Fiction," while Art Director LAUREN RILLE, from Simon and Schuster, engaged in an "Ask Me Anything" Q&A for illustrators across the hall. For many attendees these breakouts offered invaluable information they needed to hear. Attendee YUKI YOSHINO said, "Lauren Rille gave an engaging one-hour Q/A that was informative and lively." KELLY POWERS said Savannah Brooks had the most impact on her, "because research is a huge part of writing for me and (Savannah) helped me get new ideas on how to go about it, as well as acknowledge my own personal expertise."



Illustration by Briana Young



Illustrator LISA JOHNSTON HANCOCK gave a breakout on Procreate 101 that many enjoyed. MARIANNE D. WALLACE said, "I've had Procreate for over a year, hesitant to deal with the learning curve, but (Lisa) was very encouraging, making it look not only easier than I expected but fun as well."

For the very first time, our First Pages event included one-page portfolio submissions from illustrators, along with the writing samples from writers of all genres. They heard live feedback from all three guest industry professionals: Courtney Stevenson, Savannah Brooks, and Lucy Hamilburg. Stories and illustrations were projected on the screens while being read out loud. IRIS WIDMAN said, "All three speakers were thorough and well-prepared and had a great chemistry together." For several, the first-page readings were their favorite part of the conference. ALEXANDER GRIGG said, "I loved the first pages. It was great to listen to the works of other people and then hear the critiques that came after. A lot of what was said was advice that I could implement into my own work."

During lunch, attendees enjoyed sitting on the outdoor patio, with their choice of vegan or meat sandwiches or wraps. Those that signed up could even sit with a faculty member and chat while they enjoyed their meal. KELLY POWERS said, "The faculty were amazing and so approachable. Usually, I feel very nervous talking to agents and editors, but not this time and not at this event."

Following lunch, LUCY HAMILBURG, from The Hamilburg Agency, gave a talk: "Best Practices for Querying an Agent." And with full bellies and the goal of publication on most of our minds, this was dessert. Not only did she break down and discuss the different parts of a query letter, but she also shared insight that the author's voice is so important when submitting. When asked, "What did you take away from this experience?" MARIANNE D. WALLACE responded, "That the query letter is not 'rocket science.' When Lucy took apart its sections and gave straightforward explanations and examples, it seemed eminently doable."

Two panels featuring bestselling and award-winning authors were offered during the conference, one with young adult author LAURA TAYLOR NAMEY and middle grade author TINA ATHAIDE, moderated by SoCal's Co-Regional Advisor CARLENE GRIFFITH; the other with picture book author-illustrator SCOTT SUSSMAN and graphic novelist author-illustrator BETTY C. TANG, moderated by SoCal's Illustrator Coordinator SHIHO PATE. Attendee CATHY VIGIL said, "I liked the author panels. I learned a lot about how they do their writing." Scott Sussman gave some great tips on how he handles school visits, and ways he involves the kids and keeps them engaged.

A common theme among the authors was to persevere even when faced with rejection, and to write every day. "Revision and perseverance are key," said Tina Athaide. Laura Taylor Namey said, "I could paper my walls with rejection letters before I got my first deal." Regarding rejection, she added, "Oh, I love it like a challenge. Yeah, it's a challenge and some things hurt. If you write books, especially for kids, you're going to hurt. Use it, embrace it. I try to employ it as a tool." Betty C. Tang said she'd tell her pre-published self to get a "thicker skin." Attendee RONNA MANDEL said, "I loved the two sets of Q&As. They were honest, thoughtful, and encouraging."





Throughout the event, Zoom attendees were able to engage as well, by asking questions in the chat during Q&A sessions and after speeches, which CRYSTAL SHRECK then read out loud for them. Bev planned well by having a few Cal State Fullerton techs on hand to troubleshoot any hiccups that occurred. And there were a few—just ask SHIHO PATE, who beautifully handled the connectivity glitches during the ProCreate workshop. Goes to prove, even with a tech-check the day before and preparation, when using technology, always expect the unexpected.

In addition to random raffle drawings of copies of faculty books during the day, the winners of the writing and illustrating competition were announced. The picture book category's first place winner was CHRISTINE KORNYLAK for Luna is a Wolf, with runner-up LILLIE PARDO for Claes and Coosje Think Big. First place for middle grade went to DODIE GREGG for Ella Bella French Fry, with runner-up TERRI VITTERS for Message from a Ghost. In young adult, RILLA JAGGIA'S The Lotus Princess and the Divine Chakra was the winner, with runner-up TOOTIE NIENOW for Camouflaged. First place for picture book dummy went to ELLEN KIM for Sea in Me, with runner-up GILA VON MEISSNER for her book We Are Many. The illustrator portfolio award went to JOY HWANG RUIZ.

Overall, it was a great day, and at the end, the bonus for those who paid extra was a chance to pitch 1:1 with agents and editor faculty members. Syd Blue said, "Meeting agents and editor" was the best part, "because blind queries aren't helpful. Personal connection makes a difference, especially with the volume of writing that's received." KIM-HOA UNG said her take-away for the conference was, "I need to keep on trying and take every opportunity available to help improve my skills. Also, to keep attending special events like this to network with others." I wholeheartedly agree. Going to an SCBWI conference can be one of the most advantageous opportunities for wanna-be-published children's book authors and illustrators. Don't just attend meetings, either—get involved and volunteer. Contact your chapter's regional advisor and ask what you can do. SCBWI can lead to paths for making dreams come true.

Carlene Griffith is the author of the 10 Minute Plays for Kids of All Ages and the Rose Maidelaiden series. She has a proud SCBWI member since 2017 and serves as SoCal's chapter co-Assistant Regional Advisor and Newsletter Editor. www.carlenegriffith.com

Photos provided by the SoCal Region



Illustration by Susi Schaefer



Our 2024 calendar features the twelve winning images created by SCBWI SoCal Illustrators!

Congratulations to:

January - Farnaz Nadim

February - Shiho Pate

March - Haana Yoo

April - Lisa Johnston Hancock

May - Raissa Figueroa

June - Juniper Johns

July - Jen Swain

August - Marie Hammond

September - Chuck Grieb

October - Ellen J. Kim

November - Jonathan St. Amant

December- Andrew Mitchell



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Illustrators Break-Out Session



Illustration by Haena Yoo

Regional SoCal Fall Harvest Writers & Illustrators Day by Catherine Lee

The Illustrators Break-Out Session, held at the Hetebrink Meeting Room from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., was full of fun, starting with a lively and informative hour-long “Ask Her Anything” session with LAUREN RILLE, Art Director at Simon & Schuster for Young Readers. She also works with Beach Lane Books, Atheneum and McElderry imprints.

Lauren spoke about how her background in English and illustration led her to an internship that turned into a Junior Designer position with a kidlit publishing company. One of the book designs she did was for Judy Blume’s *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret*. She’s also the recently-published author of her own children’s storybook, *I Feel Teal*.

Her love for kidlit and picture books has never faltered. Lauren calls her job “marrying words and art together.” She shared lots of important information, which every illustrator will benefit from knowing. For instance, she prefers digital submissions rather than postcards. She likes social media links showing one’s best illustration work. She loves illustrations with backgrounds and active characters, as if taken out of a real-life scene.

When finding new illustrators, Lauren looks through Pinterest and other social media rather than starting at an agency. She doesn’t mind working with non-agented illustrators. She ended her session by answering a few questions from both the audience and Zoom attendees.

Next, LISA JOHNSTON HANCOCK, a published illustrator repped by Ana Crespo at East West Literary Agency, gave what was supposed to be a 30-minute presentation on using Procreate. Although 15-20 minutes were lost due to technical visual screen problems, Shiho Pate came to the rescue. Lisa used the remaining time to show attendees some Procreate tips and tricks on digital painting and using layers. Her current book, *Santiago and Great Bear*, is out on submission.

Catherine Lee, a recent member of SCBWI and the Regional SoCal Illustrators, volunteers for the SoCal Newsletter while working on her book dummy. Her past published works include illustration work for Children’s Playmate, plus her story Mustard & Pea in The Kids Reading Room of the LA Times, both now discontinued.

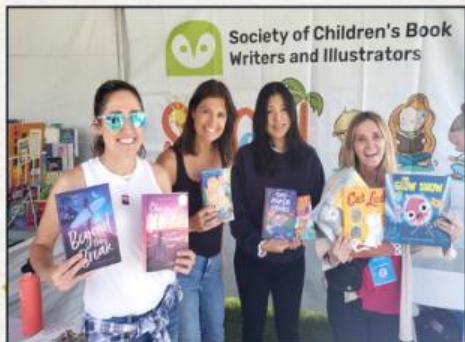


OC Children's Book Festival

by Beverly Plass

Illustration by Carolyn Le

Thousands of book-loving families flocked to the OC Children's Book Festival at Orange Coast College on Sunday, October 1st. The event featured hundreds of booths as well as several on-stage presentations. SoCal SCBWI hosted a booth for our published authors, illustrators and author-illustrators.



Heather Buchta, Bronwen Newcott, Susie Yi and Susi Schaefer sell their books at the OC Children's Book Festival.



AUTHORS

Heather Buchta

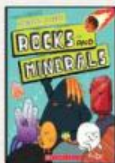
Chasing After Knight, Beyond the Break

Tootie Nienow

There Goes Patti McGee

Bronwen Newcott

Race to the Great Invention



ILLUSTRATORS

Shiho Pate

Ramen for Everyone, The Rescues Finding Home, Chi-Chi and Pey-Pey series, Animated Science: Rocks and Minerals, and Animated Science: Periodic Table



Susi Schaefer

The Glow Show, Cat Ladies, Zoo Zen: A Yoga Story for Kids, and a sneak peak at her upcoming Good Morning, I Love You, Violet



Amin Sharif

The Phoenix of Persia, The Blue Tree



Nazli Tahvili
Road Adventures



Author-Illustrator Susi Schaefer shares Glow Show onstage.



AUTHOR-ILLUSTRATOR

Susi Yi

A Sky of Paper Stars, Cat and Cat Adventures: The Quest for Snacks.



Heather Buchta, author and co-organizer of our event, said, "We tried a few different things this year. Last year we had a lot of foot traffic going by... so we had a lot more interactive games and prizes this time, so the kids can come by and play a game. That's proved really effective! We've had a lot of kids coming by and talking with the authors, so that's been fun."

Susi Schaefer, illustrator and co-organizer said, "We're trying something new by having a lot of things to draw the kids in.... We're also going to try to have the authors' and illustrators' books (in the booth) after their allocated time slots."

The activities included a cornhole bean bag toss with sticker prizes, an hourly spinner with prizes, and bubbles. We met many families, brought smiles to many kids' faces, plus sold and autographed books.



Amin Shari' holds his illustrated *The Phoenix of Persia* at the SoCal Books Display

Images provided by the SCBWI SoCal region.



Illustration by Shiho Pate

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