



SCBWI

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2019 ISSUE 2

Art by Brian Lies

brian-lies.squarespace.com



For more info on Brian Lies, please check out our in-depth interview with him on page 2.

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LOCAL ARTISTS FEATURED ON EVERY PAGE

BrianLIES

By Gina Capaldi

Caldecott Honoree Shares His Secrets for Illustration Success

Children's book author/illustrator Brian Lies has created nearly 30 children's books, including his 2019 Caldecott Honor book, *The Rough Patch*, and the *New York Times* bestselling bat books (*Bats at the Beach*, *Bats at the Library*, *Bats at the Ballgame* and *Bats in the Band*). His latest book is *Got to Get to Bear's!* (October, 2018). His work has been featured on *The Martha Stewart Show*, named as a top ten book of the year by *Time/CNN* and read aloud on NPR's *Weekend Edition Saturday* by Scott Simon and Daniel Pinkwater. Brian spends part of the school year traveling throughout the United States to work with students and encourage them in their goals. Thankfully, Brian carved out some time from his busy schedule for this informative interview describing his road to success and lessons learned along the way.



You are a Caldecott Honoree! Inquiring minds want to know, what do you believe brought you to the point of winning such a prestigious award?

I think a lot of it was luck—though I've been working to improve my illustration for thirty years, THIS particular committee, THIS year decided that *The Rough Patch* merited a Caldecott Honor. Next year, a committee could easily decide otherwise! There were so many amazing books published in 2018 that equally deserved a Caldecott nod. I'm extremely grateful to the committee for their choice!

Which artist inspires (inspired) you?

My shortlist of art inspirations includes American Impressionist Frank Benson, Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, Gretchen Rogers, NC Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish.

How do you begin a work of art? How do you begin a book you are illustrating?

I start out with a bunch of really crappy sketches. I'm also big on trying as many different angles or perspectives for every single image as possible—though your first idea/sketch may be the best, it's possible that something entirely different could be. And you don't know unless you see them all. So sometimes I'll have five different sketches for each scene, and then choose the one that most effectively moves the story forward.



Art by Brian Lies

brian-lies.squarespace.com

INTERVIEW CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

BrianLIES

CONTINUED
By Gina Capaldi

I generate a LOT of material, then shuffle it together so it more or less looks like a story. Then I go back and revise, until I'm happy with it.

Do you write and illustrate or just illustrate?

I'm both a writer and illustrator. I began my career illustrating others' texts, but switched over to doing both. I enjoy interpreting a text I didn't write, but think the process of doing both is more holistic, and may create a more fully-integrated final product (since it all came from the same source).

Are you agented? Any great stories about your relationship with your agent?

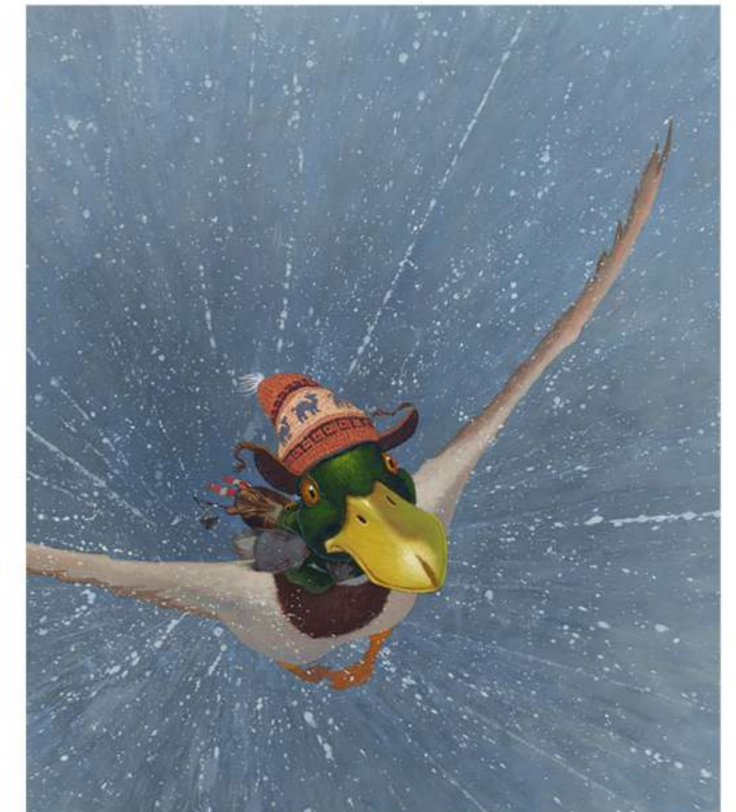
I spent the first 26 years of my career unagented—but when my longtime publisher passed on *The Rough Patch*, I felt I needed to find someone who knew today's market better than I did. I'm tremendously lucky to be able to work with Erin Murphy, of Erin Murphy Literary Agency, and she was able to find the perfect home for the book with Virginia Duncan at Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins). We ended up with seven rejections before that—but it's been a great lesson for me that you really DO want your story to be with an editor and house that will be strong advocates for it, and not just be willing to publish.

Sage words of wisdom?

I think my most important words of wisdom would be "never stop experimenting. Never get complacent. Especially when you're successful!" I think it's important to always be working on craft, trying new things, trying to face your weaknesses and turn them into strengths. I've had probably three

completely distinct styles over thirty years, and each of them has felt more "me" than the one before.

I'd also say, especially at the beginning of your career, do LOTS of drawings. People starting out worry a lot about what "their style" is going to be, and I think that style is what happens when you 1) have drawn enough that you've found things that spark your brain, turn out especially well, and get a good reaction from people who see your work and 2) have worked on deadline enough that you stop emulating artists you admire, partially because there's no time to try.



Art by Brian Lies

brian-lies.squarespace.com

Gina Capaldi is the Illustrator Coordinator for the SCBWI - SoCal region. She writes and illustrates picture books and has won many awards for her non-fiction work. You can learn more about her at www.ginacapaldi.com and www.ginacapaldi.blogspot.com, as well as on Facebook, Tumblr and Pinterest. ■



SOCAL *Summer* MEMBER NEWS

By Desi St. Amant

Art by Jon St. Amant

About the Artist: Jonathan St. Amant is a middle school art teacher and aspiring graphic novelist with a particular interest in video games and sci-fi and fantasy stories. jonsaintamant.com

Esther Tenenbaum eltenenbaum.com recently sold an article to *Writer's Digest* for their online site. Visit tinyurl.com/y6fmhaxb to read it. Also, one of Esther's books, *End of Ever After*, was a Kindle and Nook bestseller in the beginning of April.

SoCal SCBWI region members **Wendy** and **Chuck Grieb** wendygrieb.com are serving as co-chairs for the Society of Illustrators Los Angeles Illustration West 58 Competition illustrationwest.org/58/. Illustrators, please enter! October 31st deadline. Fantastic panel of judges, including children's book illustrators and art directors!

Tim Burke's short story "When Will I Ever Use This?" will appear in the September/October issue of *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, available at the end of August.

Desi St. Amant is a high school English teacher and an aspiring middle grade novelist. Send your member news to her email at dstamant07@gmail.com. ■



Art by Annie Ruygt

About the Artist: Annie Ruygt is an author and illustrator inspired by travel, nature and creativity. Boyds Mills and Kane Press will publish her first picture book in Spring 2021.

annieruygtillustration.com

Mixer connects

SCBWI with Hollywood

By E. L. Tenenbaum

During the first ever Makers Mixer in LA on May 9th, SCBWI PAL (published authors and illustrators) pitched their work to Hollywood executives and studio representatives interested in acquiring new IP (intellectual property). This event provided hardworking, middle-of-the-road writers and illustrators (agented or not), who don't yet have flashy sales numbers, with a unique opportunity to attract Hollywood filmmakers. SCBWI also set up a private webpage following the event so makers could look up the attending members' SCBWI public profile pages.

Makers from the industry, including representatives from the new Disney streaming platform, Disney Channel, Gotham Group, Sony and various animation studios, mingled with PAL members and browsed their published works from picture books to YA novels. During pitch-lulls, writers and illustrators swapped publishing experiences, promo ideas and encouragement in moving forward.

The small crowd ensured that, overall, every member grabbed a few minutes with each of the attending professionals interested in their age demographic. However, although a few minutes might be enough to snag a maker's interest, the greater challenge at these events is in making sure that you and your work remain distinct from all the other wonderful work seen that night and stay in their minds after the event is over. Ergo, below are three ideas to help your pitch and books stand out.

BOOK PROMOTION TAKEAWAYS:

1. **Always Be Display Prepared:** Of course you're going to bring your book to a promo event, but consider ways to make your book stand out. Basic is a stand or something else to prop up your book. Many members also brought small items connected to their book's theme to decorate the area around their books and attract attention. One whose book was set in New Orleans brought Mardi Gras beads and small masks. A children's book author created a small theater with changeable backdrops. Think of something that adds a little bit more pizzazz to attract the eye.



STORY CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Mixer connects

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BOOK PROMOTION TAKEAWAYS CONTINUED:

2. **Get Your OneSheet Done:** A onesheet contains your name, contact info, project title, logline and short synopsis. As guessed from the name, it's all supposed to fit on one sheet of paper. The real point of the onesheet is to get the basic ideas of your project on one page for the Hollywood person to use as easy reference. Many authors hadn't thought to prepare one, and having it on hand is highly recommended because most producers will automatically take one.

3. **Giveaways for Takeaways:** What's the best way to make sure someone remembers you and your work? Give them a branded item! The most standard is a business card with your name, website, social media or other important info. Many authors also give out bookmarks, because that's something a reader always sees. I saw coasters and stickers as well. Having these items handy is a great way to ensure your work stays in the forefront of the receiver's mind, and feel free to keep them on you always. You don't need to be at an official event to promote your work!

E. L. Tenenbaum is the author of several works of YA fiction. Visit her at ELTenenbaum.com and take a book off the shelf! ■

FACEBOOK HELP for the Helpless

By Kristine Ada Carter

I love Facebook because it allows more intimacy and interaction with the followers of my writing, photography and cooking pages than other social media platforms. With Facebook, I can also write longer posts, spread my promotions more organically and create a stronger sense of community.

PRIVACY

What makes Facebook most attractive also raises privacy concerns. To ensure security, I don't list my home city on any social media. I've also made my personal Facebook page private and designated most pics of my child as only viewable by friends.

I branched free public business accounts off of my personal account to keep my private life private.



Art by Marcela Cespedes-Alicea marcelacespedes.com

About the Artist: Marcela Cespedes-Alicea is a published freelance children's book illustrator from Colombia who enjoys writing and illustrating her own stories and collecting graphic novels. You can find her illustrations for the Nickelodeon series *Nella the Princess Knight* and Disney's *Vampirina* on Amazon.

FACEBOOK HELP FOR THE HELPLESS
CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Facebook Help for the Helpless CONTINUED...

To create a business account, you first need to create an easily recognizable unused handle, or title, for your Facebook page. For example, I requested my pen name of my first, middle and last name for my writing account: @kristineadacarter. You can also use your first and last name and add "writer" or "illustrator" after it. Avoid hyphens or other characters between words, which make your handle harder to find in searches.

Make sure your handle is also available on Instagram and Twitter and set up those accounts now while the handle is still available. For step-by-step instructions on how to create a business account, search Facebook's help section.

You can also maintain privacy within a single Facebook account. When unknown visitors ask you to friend them, you can make them acquaintances instead of friends. Then on an individual posting level, adjust post setting to friends only, friends of friends or public. So, for example, you can designate pics of close family available to view by friends only, community posts to friends of friends only and writing posts as public.

PROMOTION

First, figure out what you want to share. A great way to do this is to follow all of your local SCBWI friends and your favorite writers or illustrators. You will soon discover what posts fascinate you most and how you would like to emulate them.

I follow many artists who share sketches and discuss the process and/or inspiration behind them. For writers, social media has become the new arena for their blogs. Some ideas for posts include a writing snippet, book review, research notes or a link with intro to resources like this newsletter.

Always include an image or photo with your posts, but never steal from another website. You can Google free stock photos. However, most smartphone cameras take quality pictures you can edit with the Lightroom app.



Art by Annie Ruygt

annieruygtillustration.com

After you have composed a few posts, invite your friends from your personal page to like your public page for instant followers. If a post generates higher than average engagements, Facebook automatically gives you the opportunity to promote your post as an ad to those who share similar interests, which is probably the cheapest and easiest way to advertise. Just click the boost button and follow the steps.

In general, boosts cost less than \$20 and only run a day or two. You can stop promotions at any time and only be charged for costs incurred thus far. For published authors and illustrators, boosting posts might be especially worth it when promoting a newly released book by offering chances to win signed books in exchange for shares or tagging friends in comments.

Next issue's topic: Instagram!

Kristine Carter maintains three Facebook and Instagram pages: @kristineadacarter, @kristinescreativekitchen and @kristinecarterphotography. Feel free to follow and/or private message her with any social media questions.



ASK THE *Librarian*

Recommendations for
Young Advanced Readers

By Kelly Powers

Art by Chuck Grieb

A story artist and animator for studios including Disney and Nickelodeon, Chuck Grieb also illustrates and teaches animation. His illustrative work has been recognized with an SCBWI portfolio award, displayed in various shows, including Illustration West 57, and featured in esteemed publications like *Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*.

chuckgrieb.com

Dear Librarian

What fiction books would you recommend for first graders who read above their level, but cannot handle the complex emotional drama of books like *Harry Potter*? Thanks, Frustrated First Grader.

Dear Frustrated:

Kudos to your first grader for not only reading above level, but for seeking out books that both challenge and interest him/her! This is a magical age for young readers. It is the time when future reading habits and genres are selected and cherished for a lifetime. Though it is tough on you, know that you're doing the right thing by letting your child explore, while still guarding the emotional boundaries. I'd advise you to explore the classics, such as *Charlotte's Web*, *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*, or any early Beverly Cleary books. As for newer titles, here are a few of my absolute favorites:

Wishtree by Katherine Applegate. (Please note that ALL of Applegate's books are wonderful.) Red is an oak tree who is many rings old. She's also the neighborhood wishtree—people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red's branches. You might say Red has seen it all. That is, until a new family moves in and not everyone is welcome. Red soon finds that her experience as a wishtree is more important than ever. Funny, deep, warm and nuanced, this is Katherine Applegate at her very best. Writing from the heart and from a completely unexpected point of view.

Princess in Black by Shannon Hale. Princess Magnolia is having hot chocolate and scones with Duchess Wigtower when—Bring! Brring! It's the monster alarm! A big blue monster is threatening the goats! Stopping monsters is no job for a dainty princess. But luckily, Magnolia has a secret—she's also the Princess in Black, and stopping monsters is the perfect job for her! Can the princess sneak away, transform into her alter ego, and defeat the monster before the nosy duchess discovers her secret? From the award-winning team of Shannon and Dean Hale and illustrator LeUyen Pham, here's the first humorous and action-packed chapter book series for young readers who like their princesses not only prim and perfect, but also dressed in black.

Pax by Sara Pennypacker. Pax and Peter have been inseparable ever since Peter rescued him as a kit. But one day, the unimaginable happens: Peter's dad enlists in the military and makes him return the fox to the wild. At his grandfather's house, three hundred miles away from home, Peter knows he isn't where he should be—with Pax. He strikes out on his own, despite the encroaching war, spurred by love, loyalty and grief to be reunited with his fox. Meanwhile, Pax steadfastly waits for his boy, and embarks on adventures and discoveries of his own.

Kelly Powers has worked in libraries for over ten years and especially enjoys providing Reader Advisory (or book recommendations). If you have questions regarding book recommendations for children through young adult readers or need suggestions for comparable titles to help sell your manuscript, please send an email to Kelly Powers at kelpowers2000@yahoo.com. ■

CREATING A *Stand-out* PORTFOLIO

By Chuck Grieb

How to build the best portfolio is on the mind of most artists. I don't pretend to have all the answers but would like to share some of my own insights and discoveries.

1. Online is where it's at. If you haven't got an online presence, you need one. Keep it simple and focused. When an AD (Art Director) lands on your site, they should see art – not a landing page or loading screen. And the art should be right-mouse click downloadable. Be sure to include a discreet watermark on your art with your name and/or email address, as the AD will often save the images down and reference them later. If your name isn't there, they may have difficulty finding you again.

2. Include an about page and contact link. Tell a little about yourself and include a clickable email link. ADs do not like to complete web forms – clickable email links accompanied by the email written out (in case the link doesn't work) are the way to go!

3. Less is more. 10-12 images are enough.

4. Ask artist colleagues for input! Editing a portfolio is hard – get an outside, but educated, point of view to help.

5. Show the kind of work you want to create. Do you enjoy drawing with pen and ink? If yes, show it. If not, don't include that kind of work.

6. Is the subject matter relevant to the market you are pursuing? In other words, are you showing kids in your kidlit art portfolio? And don't include plein air landscapes, life drawing, still life paintings, etc. in your kidlit portfolio. If you wish to show other kinds of art, create a separate section of your site to showcase that work.

7. Tell a story. Portray the same character in at least two images, highlighting your ability to show even a small bit of a story.



Art by Chuck Grieb

chuckgrieb.com

CREATING A *Stand-out* PORTFOLIO

CONTINUED

By Chuck Grieb

8. Be flexible and prepared. Be prepared to send a .pdf, attach JPEGs, and/or print out a physical portfolio for events such as SCBWI conferences. Every AD is different and will want to see your work in the manner to which they are accustomed. When prepping a physical portfolio, review any possible restrictions an organization such as SCBWI may have upon the size and presentation at their events. I have found out the hard way the importance of checking portfolio guidelines for specific events. When I was new to SCBWI, my wife and I had to buy new portfolio cases to keep from running afoul of the rules. I find that pinazangaro.com makes a very nice portfolio package. But NEVER include original art – only show high-quality reproductions.

I hope these suggestions help – please join in on the conversation with the SoCal SCBWI Illustrators' meetup. We meet the second Saturday of each month, and have a Facebook group under the same name, which you are welcome to join.

A story artist and animator for studios including Disney and Nickelodeon, Chuck Grieb also illustrates and teaches animation. His illustrative work has been recognized with an SCBWI portfolio award, displayed in various shows, including Illustration West 57, and featured in esteemed publications like Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art. Chuck is currently illustrating his high-fantasy, middle grade graphic novel, The Goblin Twins. You can view his artwork at chuckgrieb.com and on Instagram: @chuck_grieb. ■



Art by Shiho Pate
About the Artist: Shiho works in the mobile gaming industry and illustrates picture books. She is represented by East West Literary Agency.

shihopate.com

Creative Director Reveals How She Selects Artists

By Marcela Cespedes-Alicea and Chuck Grieb

Shelley Baugh is a Creative Director at Quarto Publishing quartoknows.com. She has worked in the publishing industry for over twenty years, with a focus on children's and art books, as well as many licensed products. She loves collaborating with illustrators and shopping portfolios. In the interview below, Shelley shares what makes an artist stand out for her.

How do you most often review artist portfolios? Online? At conventions? Through an agent?

I typically review artist portfolios via agent websites. I bookmark any new agent that I find, and when I am trying to find the right illustrator for a project, I shop all the websites. This is the easiest route for me since I usually do not have the time to shop for days on end. I will query agents sometimes to see if they have any artists that can illustrate a certain subject.



SHELLEY Baugh



Art by Marcela Cespedes

marcelacespedes.com

I also refer to postcards that I receive in the mail. If I receive one that is interesting to me, I will usually hang on to it and display it as a mental reminder. I rarely view artist portfolios at conventions since I do not have the opportunity to attend those. I do bookmark individual artist websites if there is a link to it on the agent's website, and refer to Instagram a lot. If I find an artist I like in passing, I will usually start following them.

What do you wish artists understood better about designing their portfolio?

I wish every artist had their own website with links to Instagram. This is a great marketing tool. Be persistent and routine with Instagram.

INTERVIEW CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

SHELLEY Baugh

By Marcela Cespedes-Alicea
and Chuck Grieb

CONTINUED

I think artists that appear to be busy and productive will get more work in the end!

Good websites are important as well, with distinct sections for children, adult, etc. I like to see if they blog to see what their process is.

Any specific tips for picture book cover, chapter book vs. middle grade artist portfolios?

I realize that most artists gravitate to one type of genre or age group. I like to see completed book covers on their websites/portfolio with all the type in place. This helps me see that the artist understands the process. I don't think an artist needs to be able to illustrate to every type of medium as well as age range. There is a specialty that each artist has, and I usually will hire artists that seem to understand that market the best. It is nice to see illustrators with a distinct style. ■

Art by Marcela Cespedes-Alicea
marcelacespedes.com

GRAMMAR NERD

LIE vs. LAY

By Tim Burke

If you master today's topic, you will curse me for the rest of your days, because you will notice this error literally—yes, literally—every day. The error? It's the dreaded *lie versus lay* problem. Let's jump in.

LAY means to put.

Correct examples:

Every day I lay the book on the table. She never lays her keys in the same place twice.

Yesterday I laid my book on the table. She never laid her keys in the same place twice.

I have always laid my book on the table. She has never laid her keys in the same place twice.

LIE means to recline.

Correct examples:

Every day I lie on the couch for a nap. She always lies on the floor to do her yoga.

Yesterday I lay on the couch for a nap. In the past, she always lay on the floor to do her yoga.

I have lain on this couch for two hours. She has always lain on the floor to do her yoga.



EXERCISE

Fill in the blank with the correct form. Answers at the end.

1. You should _____ on the sofa for a while.
2. The exhausted tennis player _____ on the court.
3. The girl _____ her head on the pillow after _____ on her bed.
4. Brenda _____ her racket on the ground before she _____ her aching back on the wooden bench.
5. She had _____ on the bench twenty minutes before she felt better.

Answers to the exercise:

1. lie
2. lay
3. laid, lying
4. laid, laid
5. lain

BONUS

Is the Crosby, Stills, & Nash lyric correct?

*Find the cost of freedom buried in the ground.
Mother earth will swallow you—lay your body down.*

Bonus answer: Yes. Put your body on the ground, in essence. They could have said lie down, but not nearly as poetic.

When not writing MG and YA novels, Tim Burke plays guitar for various working bands, skates with an ice hockey team, teaches ESL or SAT and ACT and hangs out with his wife and two comedian mutts. Tim is also the regional coordinator of SoCal SCBWI. You can reach him with grammar questions or ideas for SCBWI at socal-ra@scbwi.org ■



Art by Annie Ruygt

Annieruygtillustration.com

Waaaait. Whaaat? "Yesterday I lay?" You just said lay means put. Make up your mind.

Nope. No mistake. The past tense of lie is spelled lay. Sorry. Now perhaps you have more sympathy for foreigners learning English.

Let's boil this down. The mistake is using *lay*, meaning put, when they mean *lie*, meaning rest.

Incorrect examples:

You look tired—go *lay* down. [correct: lie down]

I saw a guy *laying* in the street. [correct: lying]

I was so tired I immediately *laid* on the couch. [correct: lay]

She needed to *lay* on the floor to stretch her back. [correct: lie]

The football player *laid* down on the field as the medic approached. [correct: lay]

SAVE THE DATE

By Tim Burke
Art by Shiho Pate



WRITER ILLUSTRATOR DAY

DATE Saturday, September 28, 2019

- Meet 2 agents and 2 editors
- Guest author/illustrator: award-winning Brian Lies
- Agent Beth Phelan at Galt & Zacker Literary Agency
- Illustrator breakout session with Brian Lies
- Individual critiques by agent/editor
- Contest: PB/ MG/ YA
- Portfolio contest
- First pages panel
- More info coming soon. Check social.scbwi.org for updates.

TAHQUITZ PINES WRITER RETREAT FOR MG AND YA WRITERS

DATE June 12-14, 2020

PLACE Idyllwild, CA

- Meet 2 agents, 2 editors and 1 published author
- Individual critiques by agent/editor
- Contest: MG and YA

SUMMER CONFERENCE LOS ANGELES

DATE August 9-12, 2019

If you are planning on attending, be sure to drop by and meet your fellow chapter members on Friday, August 9, at 12:30 p.m. in the Diamond 3 Room. (First pick up something to eat and bring it to the meeting!)



Art by Shiho Pate

shihopate.com

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A two-time Author of the Month for her stories in *Highlights* magazine, Christine Henderson is currently revising her first middle grade novel. During the school year, Christine works as an instructional aide for the Corona-Norco school district. Twitter @cm_henderson.

Heather Inch-Desuta writes about everything from teenage problem stories to magical realism for the middle grade reader. In a prior life, Heather wrote marketing copy for internationally known brand names and served as the editor of two national publications: the Pittsburgh Zoo's *Animal Talk* magazine and a medical newsletter. Twitter @HLInch1

PROOFREADER AND TECH ADVISOR

Niki Blois is a YA writer who works in marketing and moonlights as an editor. She writes about witches, mermaids and traveling storytellers. Twitter @nikiblois