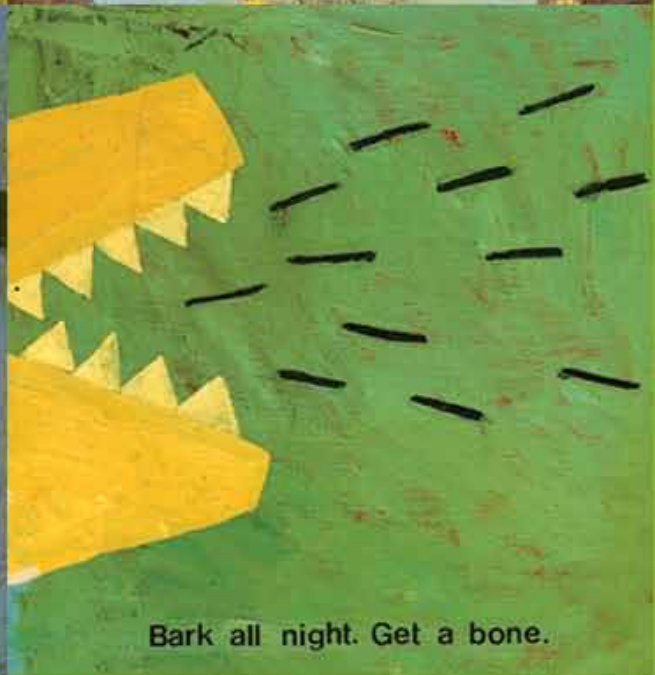
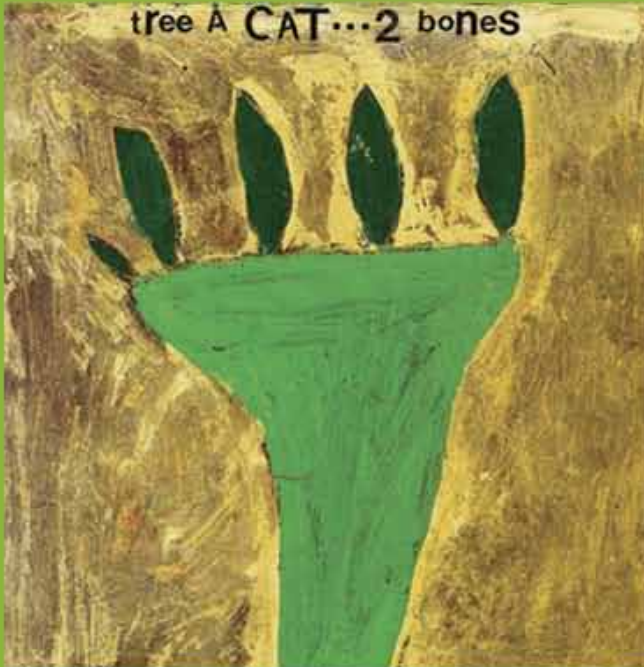


Pen & Palette

The Quarterly Publication for SCBWI Carolinas Members

Summer 2009



Pen & Palette

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Cover Credit:



THE DOG GAME
by Annette
deFerrari. Read
an interview
with the artist on
page 12.

RA Letter

from Teresa Fannin

Hi Everyone,

It's spring, and it is an exciting time full of promise and potential. The pull of the garden and the beautiful outdoors is huge, but we resist, don't we? We are writers and illustrators intent on bringing our best work into the marketplace. So we toil at our computers or writing notebooks or drawing boards working on great characters, wonderful settings, and charming plots, and editing or revising or submitting or maybe all of the above.

This past month we've enjoyed an excellent Polishing Your Picture Book Conference in Beaufort SC put on by Kami Kinard and Jo Hackl. Editors from three NYC publishing companies with savvy information and dead-on critiques together with a picture book author and an author/illustrator excited and energized all who attended the conference.

We've got more. Our 17th Annual Fall Conference, Reach for the Stars, has come together, and it's pretty exciting stuff. In this edition, learn about our keynote speakers as well as our breakout session presenters. Additionally, with this conference we are introducing an Illustrator Track—covering four breakout sessions Saturday through Sunday. So mark your calendars and make plans to be in Durham September 2009.

Make sure your SCBWI membership is up-to-date so you can get in on the Early Bird Registration available only through our SCBWI-C website Members-Only section. If you're not a SCBWI member on June 30, you may not be able to sign on and register at the reduced tuition.

Happy Summer!

the Masthead

Pen & Palette, a publication of SCBWI Carolinas

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Reach for the Stars

17th Annual SCBWI Carolinas Fall Conference

September 25 -27, 2009

Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Durham, NC

The SCBWI Carolinas Annual Fall Conference is coming! We have a fabulous lineup of keynote speakers and workshop presenters covering an amazing amount of craft material for both writers and illustrators.

Friday begins with critiques from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. followed by a workshop session from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Learn about trade books and school visits with Jan Broadfoot of Broadfoot's of Wendell and our own Carole Boston Weatherford. At 7:30 p.m. we'll gather for an interactive, fun-filled session for writers and illustrators.

Conference sessions Saturday and Sunday will include information for PB, MG and YA storytellers covering topics such as what makes up YA, historical fiction, revising your character, creating and being successful in an online critique group, and, of course, First Pages.

This year we have added a new dimension to our workshop sessions – an Illustrator track, complete with a picture book editor, an art director and agent, and a breakout session on Sunday, First Pages for Illustrators.

CONFIRM that your SCBWI membership is up-to-date.

MARK your calendar: July 1, 2009

FIND your username and password for the www.scbwicarolinas.org. (Note: This is not the same as your www.scbwi.org login information.)

Registration is online only. TROUBLE SIGNING ON? CONTACT scbwicarolinas@earthlink.net.

Tuition and Fees

SCBWI Members

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION (July 1-15) \$145
CONFERENCE TUITION (As of July 16) \$155
MANUSCRIPT & PORTFOLIO CONSULTATION \$50

Non-SCBWI Members

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION (July 1-15) NA
CONFERENCE TUITION (As of July 16) \$165
MANUSCRIPT & PORTFOLIO CONSULTATION \$65

REGISTRATION IS ONLINE ONLY!

www.scbwicarolinas.org

Manuscript and portfolio consultation registration is July 1-15 for early bird registrants and July 16-31 for all others. Limit two per person. Manuscripts must be received no later than AUGUST 5, 2009. Submission address will be available with registration.

HOTEL INFORMATION: The conference rate is \$92 per night. The link to the Sheraton Imperial Hotel will be available online during registration.



Reach for the Stars

17th Annual SCBWI Carolinas Fall Conference Faculty



Namrata Tripathi is an Executive Editor at Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster's Children's Publishing division. She acquires fiction and nonfiction PB to MG and YA novels. She has had the pleasure of working with Christopher

Myers, Lane Smith, Judith Viorst, and Rosemary Wells among others and has launched several debut author-illustrators such as Julian Hector, Lita Judge, and John Rocco. She is interested in finding young, bold picture books and older fiction with a unique voice and diverse characters.

Books which represent her editorial style:
JABBERWOCKY, illustrated by Christopher Myers
THE LITTLE MATADOR, by Julian Hector
A SWEET DISORDER by Jacqueline Kolsov
UGLY by Donna Jo Napoli
One more title that she didn't edit but loved...
DINOSAUR VS. BEDTIME by Bob Shea



Bonnie Bader is the Editor-in-Chief of Grosset and Dunlap and Price Stern Sloan, two imprints of the Penguin Young Readers Group. She oversees a group of eight editors who actively acquire a wide range of books from series to readers to novelty to licensed properties. The editors

are always looking for writers to work on both a "for hire" and a "royalty" basis. While licensed publishing is a staple of the group, a big focus is on middle-grade series. Some of the bestselling series published by Grosset include CAMP CONFIDENTIAL, HANK ZIPZER, and KATIE KAZOO.



Fatimah Khan looks for innovative novelty projects with a playful twist for the LB Kids list, as well as picture books with strong commercial appeal. She works on developing engaging formats for the youngest of readers, ranging from board, cloth, and bath books to interactive lift-the-

flap and touch-and-feel books. She is most interested in acquiring original novelty formats, eye-catching holiday and seasonal tie-ins, and fresh, fun-to-read-aloud picture books. Before joining Little, Brown in 2004, she interned at Workman Publishing, Sesame Workshop, and Nick Jr. Magazine.



Elana Roth began her career at Nickelodeon Magazine, which made her fall in love with children's publishing. Afterward, she spent nearly 5 years as an editor at Parachute Publishing, a packager specializing in children's book series. There she worked on R.L. Stine's ROTTEN SCHOOL

among many other series for kids of all ages. She's spent the last year as an agent, and loves working with her clients closely, being very hands-on editorially to get those existing (and already fabulous) manuscripts just right. Elana is a graduate of Barnard College and a member of the Caren Johnson Literary Agency.



Helen Robinson is the art director for namelos, a consortium of independent publishing professionals, and operates the design company Helen Robinson Design. She has worked in book publishing, museum exhibit design, advertising, jewelry design, fine art painting, and

photography. As the art director of Front Street/Boyd's Mills Press, she designed and produced award-winning children's picture books, young adult novels, poetry, and nonfiction titles. She grew up in Athens, Greece, and now lives in Asheville, NC.

Reach for the Stars

17th Annual SCBWI Carolinas Fall Conference Faculty



David Macinnis Gill's debut novel, SOUL ENCHILADA, was released this spring from Greenwillow. Other works include stories in several magazines and a biography, GRAHAM SALISBURY: ISLAND BOY. David is the Past-President of the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents and teaches at UNC Wilmington.



Lisa Williams Kline is the author of three MG novels: ELEANOR HILL, which won the NC Juvenile Literature Award; THE PRINCESSES OF ATLANTIS; and WRITE BEFORE YOUR EYES from Delacorte Press. She has also published the non-fiction book FLOODS. Her stories have appeared in Cricket, Cicada, Spider, and Odyssey.



Edith M. Hemingway (MFA, Spalding University) spent her childhood summers in the North Carolina mountains, the inspiration for her most recent novel. When she's not writing, she's teaching workshops at Misty Hill Lodge, her 1930s log cabin home in Maryland, and is the ARA for MD/DE/WV SCBWI.



Carrie Ryan is a former litigator who now writes full time. She lives with her fiancé, two fat cats and one large puppy in Charlotte, NC, where they are not at all prepared for the zombie apocalypse. THE FOREST OF HANDS AND TEETH is her first novel and the sequel, THE DEAD-TOSSED WAVES, will be out from Delacorte in Spring 2010.



Chris Woodworth's first books, WHEN RATBOY LIVED NEXT DOOR (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2005) and GEORGIE'S MOON (FSG, 2006), were nominated for and won numerous awards, including an IRA Children's Book Award and Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year. DOUBLE-CLICK FOR TROUBLE (FSG) was recently released.



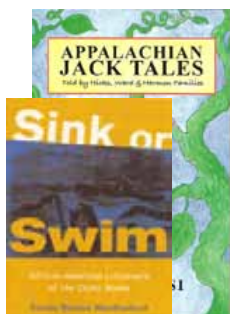
Joyce Moyer Hostetter was raised in Hickory, NC, the setting for her novel, BLUE. Joyce's first book, BEST FRIENDS FOREVER, was published in 1995. BLUE followed in 2006 and HEALING WATER, a novel about Hawaii's leprosy settlement, was published in Spring 2008. COMFORT, a sequel to BLUE, was released in April 2009.



John J. Bonk is the author of the middle-grade comic novels, DUSTIN GRUBBS: ONE-MAN SHOW and DUSTIN GRUBBS: TAKE TWO! published by Little, Brown. The movie rights for One-Man Show have been optioned. John's work has appeared in many magazines including Cricket, Pockets, Cobblestone, and Highlights.



New York Times best-selling author Carole Boston Weatherford has written 32 books of poetry, nonfiction, and children's literature. Carole received Golden Kite Honors from SCBWI for DEAR MR. ROSENWALD and BEFORE JOHN WAS A JAZZ GIANT. Her books have been named best of the year by ALA, SLJ, and Kirkus Reviews.



Jan Broadfoot of Broadfoot's of Wendell concentrates on the needs of K-12 students to provide timesaving assistance to teachers, media coordinators, and librarians. It is her strong belief that NC lends itself to highly motivating study. Significant authors have portrayed the state in both fact and fiction.



Calendar

by Maria Nolletti Ross

MAY 1-JUNE 10: SCBWI Martha Weston Grant Applicant's must be SCBWI writer or illustrator members who have previously been published in book format and would like to work in a different genre of children's literature. See www.scbwi.org/awards.htm.

JUNE 13, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.: SCBWI-Mid-Atlantic "Dummies for Dummies" Illustrator's Day at Greater Reston Arts Center, Reston, VA. See www.scbwi-midatlantic.org.

JUNE 18, 7:30 p.m.: YA author Sarah Dessen presents *Along for the Ride* at Quailridge Books and Music in Raleigh, NC. See www.quailridgebooks.com.

JUNE 21-25: 34th Annual Writer's Southeastern Writer's Association Workshop in St. Simons, GA. See www.southeasternwriters.com.

JUNE 27, 2:00 p.m.: Fancy Nancy's neighbor, Mrs. Devine Character Event at Quailridge Books and Music in Raleigh, NC. See www.quailridgebooks.com.

JUNE 30: Deadline for Eighteenth Annual Delacorte Yearling Contest for a middle grade novel of contemporary or historical fiction set in North America. See www.randomhouse.com/kids/writingcontests.

JULY 11-18: Highlights Foundation 2009

www.scbwicarolinas.org

Children's Writers' Workshop in Chautauqua, NY. See www.highlightsfoundation.org.

JULY 15: Deadline for Cheerios Spoonfuls of Stories Children's Book Contest. Open to unpublished (for pay) writers of an original picture book story up to 500 words for ages 3 to 8. See www.spoonfulsofstoriescontest.com.

SEPTEMBER 12: Bookmark's Festival of Books in Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC. See www.bookmarksbookfestival.org.

SEPTEMBER 25-27: Reach for the Stars! 17th Annual SCBWI Carolinas Fall Conference at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel in Durham, NC. See www.scbwicarolinas.org.

OCTOBER 1-DECEMBER 31: Deadline for Twenty-Sixth Annual Delacorte Press Contest for a First Young Adult Novel. See www.randomhouse.com/kids/writingcontests.

OCTOBER 23-25: South Carolina Writer's Workshop Annual Writers Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC. See www.myscww.org.

OCTOBER 31: Deadline for Children's Writer Readaloud Folktale or Fantasy for age 7, to 500 words. See www.childrenswriter.com/contests.htm.

[childrenswriter.com/contests.htm](http://www.childrenswriter.com/contests.htm).

DECEMBER 4-6: Creating Children's Picture Books with Elizabeth Dulemba at John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. See www.folkschool.org/index.php.

Jeffrey Duckworth © 2009 "Dino Shower"



DECEMBER 15: Deadline 2010 SCBWI Magazine Merit Award. Every magazine work for young people by an SCBWI member – writer, artist, or photographer is eligible during the year of original publication. See www.scbwi.org/awards.htm.



Laura Lagomarsino © 2009 "Happy Raindrops"

Maria Nolletti Ross is a stay-at-home mom who lives in Wilmington, NC, with her husband and two children. She writes every day.



Please send your calendar items to mariaross@ec.rr.com.

Opportunities

by Janelle Bitikofer

ILLUSTRATORS ON DISPLAY

In the current publishing environment, editors, art directors, and agents often want to know that we artisans can do even more than write brilliantly and make wonderful art. They want to know whether “fans” already know about us. They get excited if we have a following, groupies, or some sort of popularity that will help them to market us and our work.

So let’s think about the illustrators. Many illustrators have websites featuring their artwork and showcasing their style. But are there additional ways to get the word out and to build a fan base for your art?

Yes. Some children’s and YA illustrators in our region are doing this the old fashioned way. They’re exhibiting their art in their local communities – in art galleries, coffee shops, restaurants, and libraries. They’re letting people see their work and helping people learn their style. They’re building a fan base.

Sometimes these illustrators create pieces of art specifically for their displays, which does involve extra work. But it gets their style and their name out to the local community. People see their art around town and go home to look up the artist’s website. Then they share the artist’s work with their online friends.

Many venues, like coffee shops, restaurants, and of course the art galleries, will allow the artists to not only display but also sell their work.



Billy Edd Wheeler © 2009 “Musician”

But how does an illustrator find such opportunities? It takes some creativity, but it’s actually not hard.

TIPS FOR FINDING OPPORTUNITIES NEAR YOU:

Check in the phone book, online, in the paper, and around town. Specifically, call your local coffee shops. Check with the management at restaurants where you have seen art hanging for sale. Contact your local library. Check local newspapers, especially if you have an “arts and culture” newspaper, or an arts section in your local listings. You can find “calls for entries” for arts displays near you.

Many towns also have some sort of cultural space where they like to display the work of local artists. Cities like Cary, NC, and others, have an “arts loop” or a “First Friday” event, in which citizens of the town can follow a map to various venues where new art is displayed monthly or weekly.

Another great place to search is on the web. In North Carolina you can find out about arts display venues through the Directory of Local NC Arts Council’s website (www.ncarts.org/lacdirectory.cfm). In South Carolina, the South Carolina Art and Artistry website (www.artist.sc) has hundreds of listings of art venues, galleries, art stores, and studios, in places like Charleston, Columbia, Hilton Head, Myrtle Beach, and Greenville.

And in any region, a frequent search of Craigslist.org can produce more “calls for entries” for various display locations. Go to www.craigslist.org/about/sites. Pick your state, then your nearest large city, then click on “artists” in the top left corner.

There are many opportunities for illustrators who wish to put their art out on display in the world.

Janelle Bitikofer works and writes in Raleigh and travels whenever she can. Please send suggestions for future Opportunities columns to jbiti@yahoo.com.



Hurrahs

by **Blonnie Wyche**

Linda Andersen created an online teacher's guide for the May/June 2009 issue of APPLESEEDS magazine. The issue is entitled "Journeys."

Carol Baldwin's TEACHING THE STORY: FICTION WRITING IN GRADES 4-8 is a finalist in the Association of Educational Publishers awards in the Professional Development category.

Tameka Brown's Picture Book, AROUND MY WAY, has sold to Abrams. Her story, I'M NOT EATING THAT, placed as a runner-up in the 2008 Cheerios picture book competition.

Clay Carmichael's newest novel, WILD THINGS (May 2009, Front Street) received a starred rave from Kirkus.

Kristy Dempsey's debut picture book, ME WITH YOU, from Philomel/Penguin Putnam, came out on May 14.



Holly McGee © 2009
"Flutter By"

Bonnie Doerr's YA ecological mystery, ISLAND STING, is contracted with Climbing Rose, a division of The Wild Rose Press.

Patz Fowle illustrated MY NAME IS BUTTONZ (Picture Book by author B. Lee Schmidt), which is due out this summer. Pat won an award for her creation, "Runs in the Family," to be published in the 2009 KAKALAK, ANTHOLOGY OF CAROLINA POETS. Pat has been invited to study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and at the Educators Artlab at the Kansas City Art Institute.

Bernadette Hearne's chapter of a work-in-progress placed third in the "Love and Laughter" contest sponsored by the NYC Chapter of the Romance Writers Association.

Constance Lombardo's illustration, "Yummy Book," was published in the March/April 2009 issue of the SCBWI Bulletin.

Matt Musson sold his book, '51 ROCKS – BATBOY ON THE WORST TEAM EVER, to Baker Trittin Press.

Kathleen Reilly's book, ENERGY: 25 PROJECTS INVESTIGATE WHY WE NEED POWER AND HOW WE GET IT, was released by Nomad Press in April.

Carrie Ryan's young adult novel, THE FOREST OF HANDS AND TEETH, was released in March. Film rights for the story have already been sold to Seven Star Pictures.

Ian Sands was chosen as one of 12 artists to participate in Raleigh's Art-On-the-Move project. You can view his artwork on the side of one of the CAT buses.

Niki Schoenfeldt's article, "Nurse Cat," will be published in the May/June issue of I LOVE CATS magazine.

Carole Boston Weatherford's book, BECOMING BILLIE HOLIDAY, was included on Bank Street College's list for 2009 of the Best Children's Book of the Year.

Blonnie Bunn Wyche's YA historical fiction, CECILIA'S HARVEST, A NOVEL OF THE REVOLUTION, was released in March.

Blonnie Bunn Wyche, author of THE ANCHOR and CECILIA'S HARVEST, loves to brag on writers and illustrators. Send announcements for future issues of the P&P to blonnie@ec.rr.com.



Carrie Ryan

First Sale Insights

Tell us about your first book sale, *THE FOREST OF HANDS AND TEETH* (Delacorte Press, 2009).

Q: What initial incident or idea sparked this story?

A: For me it was a few random things that pulled together into one first line that sparked it all. I'd been working on a few projects but none of them were going well, and I was casting about for a new idea when my fiancé said, "Write what you love." What I'd been loving recently were dark dystopic books and even darker post-apocalyptic movies. But that's not what I'd been writing.

So I decided to try something totally different – to push my voice. My fiancé and I had been talking over lunch one day about a world set after a zombie apocalypse and the entire world was just so fascinating to me that I really wanted to explore it. Then one day walking home from work a first line came to me, and that was that!

Q: Did you begin writing as soon as you got the idea?

A: I totally did! In fact, the moment the first line popped into my head, I was afraid of forgetting it so I pulled out my Blackberry and emailed it to myself. As soon as I got home I opened a new document, pasted in what I wrote, and kept going. That night I wrote two thousand words and within two weeks I'd written the first third of the book!

Q: What was the most challenging part of your revision process?

A: It was hard to make it all work – to go back through and make sure that every piece lined up and fit together and that I wasn't cutting any corners. That's when you need a really good critique partner to ask why you made certain choices and whether you should rethink them. But I also love revising for just this reason!

Q: How did you know when it was ready to submit?

A: My critique partner got tired of me stalling! I'd never

really revised anything before but I knew that *THE FOREST OF HANDS AND TEETH* was the best book I could write at the time, and I wanted to give it every chance. I didn't want to end up with a box full of rejections and wonder what I could have done differently – wonder if I could have made the book better. But when I got to the point that I was worrying over a few phrases here and there and not the overall voice and plot – that's when it was time to submit. Honestly, at the end I was just scared and had to take a deep breath and send off those query letters.

Q: What key incidents led to this publishing house/this sale?

A: The sale to Delacorte Press was all my agent's doing. I did a lot of research into agents before submitting (looking at their lists, clients, sales history, reputations). Once I signed with Jim McCarthy, he had some small revisions and then we were set to submit to a list of houses on a Monday. Friday afternoon he called and said he was going to send a sneak peek to a few editors who'd expressed interest. Monday morning he called with the news that Delacorte offered a pre-empt! So the key for me was to find an agent that I trust and work well with, and I love working with Jim!

Q: What book on the craft of writing do you like to recommend to others who write for children?

A: I love reading about craft (whether articles, blogs, books) because even if I read the same advice over and over again I feel like I get something new out of it, depending on what I'm working on and where I am in the process. Some of the craft books I have on my shelf are *BIRD BY BIRD* by Anne Lamott; *THE WRITING LIFE*, by Annie Dillard; *WRITING THE BREAKOUT NOVEL*, by Donald Maass; and *ON WRITING*, by Stephen King.

Q: Any daily habits that keep you writing?

Continued on page 16



Donna Earnhardt

Pursuing the Craft

Pursuing the Craft is dedicated to those active members of SCBWI Carolinas who make the chapter so strong – and have yet to sell a first book. To quote the great American rock band Journey, “Don’t Stop Believing.”

Q: How long have you been a member of SCBWI, and what do you feel is most valuable about your membership?

A: Let’s see, I first joined when my oldest girl was still itty-bitty. I think it was 2002. For me, the interaction with the local members is the most valuable thing about membership. There is a real sense of community and family among the Carolinas Chapter! We all want to see one another succeed.

Q: What project(s) are you working on now?

A: As of late, I’ve focused on my songwriting, but also poetry and greeting cards. I have a picture book swirling around in my mind, but haven’t put it to paper yet.

Q: What helps you stay motivated in your work?

A: When I get an idea that just won’t go away, I am compelled to write it down. Some people feel “called” into ministry or other fields. I feel “called” to write! My hubby (and my family) constantly encourages me to get stuff out there. That is a blessing. I am also a member of two critique groups who keep me on my toes!

Q: Is there a book on the craft of writing that you have found to be particularly helpful?

A: SELF-EDITING FOR THE FICTION WRITERS by Browne and King. It has been a tremendous help. An easy read yet full of wisdom. Good stuff.

Q: What is your writing routine?

www.scbwicarolinas.org

A: I don’t have a routine. I go through periods of “I WILL write for X amount of minutes a day”...but it’s just not me. I’m more of a fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants kind of gal. When I have a new poem, story, or song forming, I can sometimes work out a rough draft in my mind before getting it to paper. Other times, I have a word or phrase that I want to expand on and start typing. And when it flows...it’s wonderful!

Q: What helps you keep a kid’s eye view of the world?

A: I have three daughters under the age of 12, and I teach and help mentor the youth at our church. Those things definitely help! I think, though, that I’m still a “child-like” in many ways. Not sure if that’s always a good thing!

Q: What are you reading?

A: Right now? Not a lot. We are in the end-of-the-school-year crunch! But I have several books in my “to read” list for vacation. A CURSE DARK AS GOLD by Elizabeth C. Bunce is at the top of my list.

Q: Parting thoughts/favorite quote?

A: “Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring twopence how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.” C. S. Lewis

To suggest a SCBWI Carolinas member for Pursuing the Craft, please send an email to jcllbell@yahoo.com. Include a few details about why this person should be featured.



Dianne Sherrill © 2009
“A Secret Place”

Annette deFerrari

Cover Story

Annette deFerrari's quirky board game for dogs is this month's cover.

Q: "Dog Game" is such a playful piece. What's the story behind it?

A: Thanks! I enjoy the playfulness of this piece. I created it in response to a neighborhood full of barking dogs. I wondered why the dogs thought all that barking was a good idea. So I started to think like a dog, and I guessed those dogs would think it right to receive a treat for barking and for many other situations. I created it in the form of a game to accentuate the humor of the piece. It's made up of 59 squares, painted dogs, ceramic bones, and a spinner. I intended it to be from the point of view of the dog, so there's no point to the game, no winning, no losing, just collecting bones and nosing about.

Q: Is this part of a series? Commissioned work or "just for fun"?

A: It's not part of a series, although I've created other works in this genre, e.g. The Love Kit, The Shake Box, The Dream Box. The Dog Game is the most kid-like and playful piece of these works. And no, it wasn't commissioned, unless you consider that in some odd way those neighborhood dogs commissioned it. But they didn't pay me.

Q: There's such wonderful texture in the collage elements. Is this typical of your style?

A: Thank you. Yes, most of my work has textural qualities. There's something about the tactile pleasure of it. These pieces though, are painted, not collaged. I work in a couple of styles, from flat iconic imagery to realistic renderings, and there's a textural component to all of it.

Q: Where do you find the inspiration for your art?

A: This question always confounds and fascinates me. I don't think in terms of inspiration so much as in terms of I always want to be in my studio, and the work I do there is the most fulfilling and rewarding work I know. I have a wild imagination, a tendency to see the world in

metaphor, and the problem-solving inherent in resolving a picture is a fight I enjoy. So, working itself inspires more work; each piece spawns ideas for more pieces. And life itself offers so many quirky, beautiful, magical experiences that putting marks or words on paper feels

like a natural reaction. My reaction to beauty, a flower for example, might be to render it. And I do that, but more often the world filters in through what might be called my right brain, is processed there and comes out in an intuitive way. So it's a reaction to the world, but not necessarily a direct reaction.

Q: Do you prefer to work traditionally or digitally?

A: Traditionally. Working with paint is so direct, allowing me to be deeply connected to the work in a way that doesn't happen for me with digital work.

Q: What is your training in art?

A: I've been drawing pictures ever since I can remember. I was the kid who could draw in grammar school. I attended several post-secondary art schools, with the bulk of my studies at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. It's a small studio school, with serious students and with teachers who came from many schools of thought. It was a wonderful and intense training. Many years later I received training in design, but never stopped painting.

Q: What led you to illustrating for children specifically?

A: I love pictures. I loved picture books as a kid and began collecting them as an adult. I simply never got over them. From the vantage point of being a painter, a beautifully illustrated children's book is heaven. And the magic, tenderness, quirkiness, silliness, and raw emotional honesty that I've found in picture books are qualities that I hold dear.

Q: How does your design background influence your illustrations?

A: There are some great things about understanding

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Collective Wisdom

by Niki Schoenfeldt

This column focuses on different elements of writing for children. We invite all our members, both published and unpublished, to share their thoughts in future columns. For this issue, our questions were: ***“What’s your best advice for getting out of the slush pile? How do you go about developing relationships with editors or art directors, and do you have a strategic approach for submitting your work?”***

If at all possible, don’t wind up in the slush pile in the first place. Be as targeted with your submissions as possible. Find out which editors (this could be agents as well) are the best fit for your story. This takes some Google snooping. What books have they edited? What authors do they work with? Can you find blogs or excerpts from workshops or interviews they’ve given? Maybe you’ll find out they think eco-zombie-coming-of-age stories are hot or that the market for fairy-romance-sagas is saturated. This sort of information can guide your comments in your cover letter. Show that you’ve done your research. Editors (and agents) take notice when you’re knowledgeable about their specific tastes and interests. Being professional and courteous never hurts either.

John Claude Bemis

THE NINE POUND HAMMER (Random House Books for Young Readers, Summer 2009)

www.johnclaudebemis.com

I got my first rejection letter back in the early 80’s. It took me a couple years to recover and, two decades later, I decided to submit again, this time to a children’s magazine I was familiar with. I knew its style, market, and focus, all of which are crucial to fitting in with a publisher. Much to my delight, that submission led to the publication of my first book, TINY TREATS, which was published by American Girl in 2006.

I learned important lessons during the two decades I didn’t get published:

- Just because one publisher doesn’t like your manuscript doesn’t mean your writing is bad.
- Criticism from an editor doesn’t necessarily mean your creation deserved rejection.
- Your own harsh opinion of your work doesn’t mean it’s not a genuine masterpiece.
- Criticism is worthless if it stops you, but it’s worth its weight in gold if it makes you better.
- Don’t be afraid to drastically cut, edit, or change your work.
- Don’t give up.
- Work hard to polish your craft, study your market, and most important, care about your readers.

Julia Monroe

TINY TREATS: FUN FOODS TO MAKE AND EAT (American Girl Publishing, Inc., 2006)

There may not be any way for an unpublished author to avoid landing in a “slush pile.” And in fact, those of us who are published probably land in the slush pile at other publishers. The familiar strategy of attending a conference so you can mark the envelope, or getting a recommendation from someone relevant might put you in a different pile.

The issue is, when your manuscript is pulled from the slush pile, how do you get it noticed? I think it’s important to remember that the cover letter is their first look at how you write. So your hook needs to be inviting, But the tone of the cover letter is important too. It should be respectful, not presumptuous, competent, but not conceited, and very polite. Thank them for something specific: such as a wonderful website, or clear submissions guidelines, or coming to the conference etc. etc. It goes without saying the quality of your manuscript is foremost. And both manuscript and cover letter need to be error free.

Tilda Balsley

LET MY PEOPLE GO! (Kar-Ben Publishing, 2008)

www.tildatalks.com

My first published writing, dating back forty years, was with people and publications I personally knew. Our local

www.scbwicarolinas.org

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Collective Wisdom

by Niki Schoenfeldt (Cont.)

Pulitzer Prize winning newspaper needed short articles of local interest. Newsletters for local organizations needed interviews, articles, and fillers. With these publications I honed my skills. The clips from these publications were the treasures I used when I submitted to other magazines, papers, and periodicals. Being with a “name” publishing house or a magazine known nationally is wonderful for the ego and the pocket book. I search for, query, and submit with success to those publications.

I still, however, most enjoy my relationships with small presses. Banks Channel Books was the small press that published *THE ANCHOR*, my first YA historical novel. DramTree Press, another small-but-growing-fast publisher, has just released *CECILIA’S HARVEST*, the sequel to *THE ANCHOR*. While you’re studying markets don’t forget the small presses. Along with professional care for your work, they offer such a wondrous personal touch.

Blonnie Bunn Wyche

CECILIA’S HARVEST: A STORY OF THE REVOLUTION (DramTree Press, 2009)

Here’s what worked for me. Of course, time and technologies have changed.

1. Name drop, even if you know somebody, who knows somebody, who knows somebody.
2. Compare your manuscript to a familiar or best-selling book, but only if your manuscript can hold a candle to that published work.
3. Learn to market your concept and yourself in a cover or query letter.
4. Reduce your pitch to 25 or 50 words or less.
5. Develop a hierarchy of prospects, including publishers of various sizes.

Carole Boston Weatherford

BECOMING BILLIE HOLIDAY (Wordsong, 2008)

www.caroleweatherford.com

I don’t know how I would have gotten out of the slush pile without the efforts of my agents. They found the right editor for me. To get a quality agent (let’s assume you have already written a great book), you will need a good query letter. Google “QueryFail” for suggestions on what not to do in your letter. Then, send the letter out to reputable agents, a list of which can be found through SCBWI. Network at conferences to increase your list of agent contacts. Find out who represents other published authors whose work you emulate or admire. ‘Children’s Writer’s & Illustrator’s Market’ is also a good resource for more information on agents. I would advise visiting agency websites before querying, as the information in CWIM may not be up-to-date, and follow the agency submission guidelines precisely.

Stephen Messer

WINDBLOWNE (Random House Children’s Books, Summer 2010)

www.stephenmesser.com

I’m an author-illustrator, who also paid her dues in advertising. I take a lot of care with my writing and illustrations, and so I also took time to present my work beautifully and professionally--made it stand out in the pile. I designed and made eye-catching presentation portfolios that were also tough enough to survive the mail (think drop-kicked by the NFL). Each 11 x 17 portfolio opened like a book to reveal a complete PB dummy topped by a short cover letter binder-clipped on the left, and a pocket that held sample color art on the right. I attached a SASE to the back with a big rubber band. Everything was nicely printed on good paper and

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Niki Schoenfeldt's first picture book, NATURE'S LULLABY, was recently released by Little Blue Works/Windstorm Creative. Email nikiofware@carolinas.rr.com.



Voice

Becoming a Serious Writer by Jo Watson Hackl

One of the hardest but most essential elements of fine writing is voice. Voice is the way the narrator sees the world. It is in the details the narrator notices, the words the narrator chooses to tell the story, the cadence of the narrator's language, and the rhythm of the sounds. Below are some tips I've found helpful in working on voice.

Every writer has a voice (and usually many). Voice begins with craft and is refined with confidence. Master the technical elements, but don't try and sound like other writers. Trust your unique way of seeing the world. Those things that you were embarrassed about growing up, embrace them. They make you a better writer. Things that bug you, things you love, and details and quirks that you can't get out of your mind, put them all in your work.

Write what's in you. Several months ago, I was brainstorming on a novel with my critique group. I worried aloud that I was making the piece too dark. One of my good friends stopped me mid-sentence and gave me great advice: "You just write what's in you." Of course, she was

absolutely right. Concentrate on getting out of the way and letting



your way of seeing the world through the eyes of your characters fill the page. You can always go back and edit. The important first draft lays the groundwork for developing wonderful voice.

Write about things that matter to you. We all know the adage to "write what you know." I would add to that a caveat to write about

things that are important to you and help share your unique experience.

Writing is too often hard and lonely. Make sure that your time is well spent on topics and characters that engage you. Your passion for your characters and story will shine through your work.

Read your work aloud. This can help you hone your voice. It can also help identify places in which your voice wavers as you work to make your unique voice ring through loud and clear.

I look forward to hearing the great voice in the work of fellow SCBWI-Carolinas writers.

**Brooke Lauer © 2009
"Pirate Girl"**

Jo Watson Hackl is ARA of the Carolinas chapter and is a founding member of the Upstate Children's Writer's



Group. She can be reached at jhackl1@charter.net.

Amy Clipston

Mudskippers Schmooze by Niki Schoenfeldt

On January 16, 2009, a local critique group of SCBWI members, known as The Mudskippers, hosted their first schmooze of the year featuring new author, Amy Clipston. Amy moved to the Carolinas from Virginia. When she settled in this area, she quickly found some local writing groups to help hone her craft.

After completing one novel and nearly finishing the sequel, Amy queried the Seymour Agency. This led to the sale of a six book series, known as the Kauffman Amish Bakery Series, to Zondervan Publishers. As if that weren't enough, a novel, inspired by Amy's love of NASCAR, was also picked up and will be released in September 2009 by Five Star Publishing.

Along with writing and being a wife and mother to her two boys, Amy works a full-time job and, because her husband, Joe, suffers from kidney disease, she is also an advocate for organ donation. Amy's family has been featured in a brochure and video with the Community Blood Center of the Carolinas, and she volunteers her time with the National Kidney Foundation's local office.

Amy's story was inspiring. Even with a very full plate, she has managed to forge a successful career from what started out as a simple hobby. Attendees left the schmooze ready to write, edit, and submit their next great masterpiece.

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A: Sit down and write. Really, that's usually the hardest part for me, just to start. Once I start writing, I'm usually fine. Right now deadlines help me stay on track, but even before I had deadlines I realized that nothing felt better in the whole world than having a good writing session. Seriously, sometimes I finish writing and dance around the house because I love it so much.

Q: What helps you keep a kid's eye view of the world?

A: Part of it is that I wonder if we ever really grow up. I feel like so many things we go through as teens we also go through as adults but maybe we've just learned how to handle them better. I really remember a lot of the emotions of my teen years and if I ever forget, I have a box full of angst-ridden journals to remind me.

Q: What are you reading now?

A: I just finished reading *BONES OF FAERIE* by Janni Lee Simner and *THE MAZE RUNNER* by James Dashner. Next up I'm reading *NATION* by Terry Pratchett.

Q: Any parting thoughts or a favorite quote to share?

A: I think sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the market and numbers and selling that we forget the writing, and more than that we forget our love of writing. When I first started writing *THE FOREST OF*

HANDS AND TEETH, I was convinced it would never sell, totally convinced there would be no market for it and worse, every agent I queried would laugh at my premise and voice. I wrote the book because I loved the story – I think in the end that's what's important.

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design when it comes to illustrating for children. I've worked in publication design, so I have an understanding of creating pacing throughout a book and how images and typography work together. Dummied up a book is second nature to me from doing this sort of design. Also, my design training stressed communication while my fine art comes from my heart. So the two put together create a wonderful standpoint from which to create children's books.

Q: Can you tell us about your current projects? Where can we see more of your work?

A: I've been working on some monster-ish characters including dogs for *The Dog Game*. I like the iconic quality of the game, but want to incorporate some more character-driven dogs. I also write and have several stories in the works. They're folktale-like and poetic. I work on them, let them lie fallow, then go back to them. I get a good vantage point on them that way. You can see more work at either of my websites, annettedeferrari.net and deferraridesign.com.

Caption Contest

Receive a \$10 Barnes & Noble Gift Card

Kit Grady © 2009



Previous issue art with winning caption:

Sketch by Bonnie Adamson © 2009



"Let's all sing, 'Ant Misbehaving!'"

Congratulations to Joy Acey and Kit Grady, winners of \$10 B&N gift cards! Joy submitted the winning caption for the previous issue, and Kit submitted the selected art for this issue.

Get in on the action! Caption writers submit suggested text to jlbell@yahoo.com. Please use subject line "Summer 2009 P&P Caption Contest." Illustrators submit art in need of text to bonnieadamson@att.net. Please use subject line "Fall 2009 Caption Contest." Deadline for both is July 15.

Collective Wisdom

by Niki Schoenfeldt (Cont.)

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thoughtfully and creatively packaged, right down to the stamps. I've heard editors say that going to such trouble is a waste of time--that they are "used to looking at roughs and sketches" but my experience is that presentation matters. Many of them commented that my mailing looked great and got their attention. Each presentation cost me about 40 bucks and many woman-hours, but I thought it was worth it. Presentation won't help if the work's not high quality, but if it's your best, I say pull out all the stops.

Clay Carmichael

WILD THINGS (Front Street Press, 2009)

www.claycarmichael.com

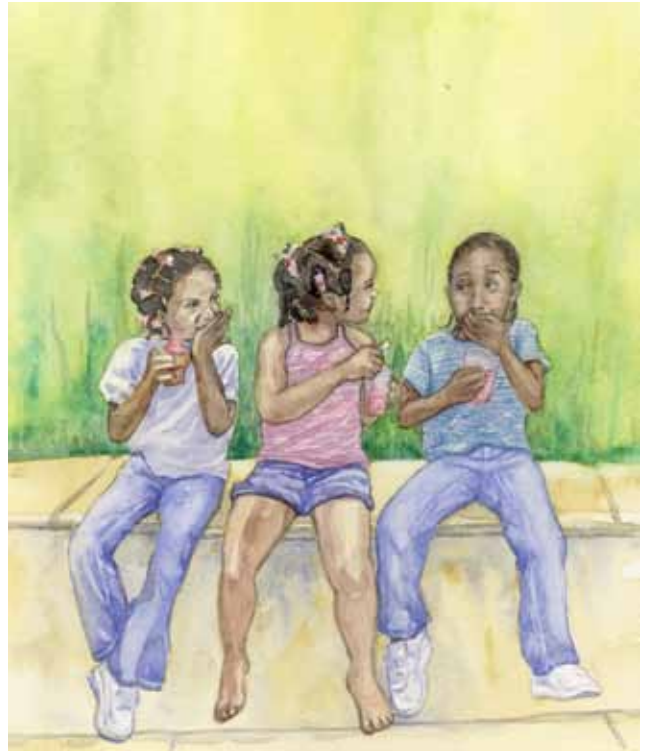
I tried to really do a lot of research on what agents were interested in, what kinds of projects they'd been picking up and what kind of client list they had. I felt like the best way to get out of the slush pile was to try to target my work to an agent who I thought would be interested in the kind of stuff I was writing. So for me, it was research that I think helped me out of my agent's slush pile (that and writing the best book I could and really revising it).

Carrie Ryan

THE FOREST OF HANDS AND TEETH (Delacorte Press, 2009)

www.carrieryan.com

You have written a manuscript for a novel/chapter book/picture book. It has been polished with the help of your trusted readers, your writing group, your picky grammarian aunt, and finally you are ready to send it out to the world. So where do you send your material and to whom? In my opinion, you'll want to start by trying to find an agent. Why? Because if you can't find an agent who is good match for you, you can still easily send your manuscript to editors. The reverse is not true. Once a large number of editors have passed on a work, it's much more difficult to convince an agent to take the project on.



Roxann Lewis © 2009 "Oops! Sorry!"

The best two places I know for finding an agent are Publishers Marketplace (PMP) and your local bookstore. PMP charges for access to its sales database, but it's the fastest way to tell who is selling what right now. You can find the same info, although it's dated, by looking at the acknowledgments page on recently-published books. Either way, the most important thing you should look for is a match. Choose an agent (or editor, if you decide to go that way) who enjoys the kind of book you write and is willing to invest two-four years of her time getting the book to market.

David Macinnis Gill

SOUL ENCHILADA (Greenwillow/HarperTeen, 2009)

www.davidmacinnisgill.com

www.soulenchilada.com

For the next issue: Give your best tips for garnering a web presence. How do you get your name out there where people will recognize it, and how important a step do you think a web presence is in terms of your writing/illustrating career? Send responses of 100 words or less to nikiofware@carolina.rr.com by July 15. Please put "Creative Wisdom" in the subject line.

The Artists

Submit art for future issues to bonnieadamson@att.net



Annette deFerrari lives, paints, and writes in Durham. www.annettedeferrari.net.



When Brooke Lauer isn't playing the banjo or fiddle, she writes and illustrates picture books. www.brookelauer.com.



Anne Runyon's artwork reflects her love of the natural world. www.annerunyon.com



Jeffrey Duckworth is an illustrator/writer, designer, stay-at-home dad and Duck of All Trades. www.jeffduckworth.com.



Roxann Lewis is a professional artist from the San Francisco Bay area, now in Charleston. www.roxannlewisart.com.



Dianne Sherrill eats, sleeps, and creates art and photography in the beautiful state of NC. www.dsherrilldesign.etsy.com



Kit Grady is a published illustrator and writer from Southern Pines, NC. www.kitgrady.com



Constance Lombardo received her BFA in illustration in 1986 and is now attempting to put it to good use.



Billy Edd Wheeler, paints, writes songs, plays, and books, and lives in Swannanoa, NC. www.billyeddwheeler.com.



Laura Lagomarsino has been an artist most of her life, drawing and painting from an early age. www.ljlago.com



Holly McGee lives in Asheville, NC. See more of her work at www.hollymcgee.com.

**Anne Runyon © 2009
"Springtime Beauties"**



Coming Next Issue:

First Sale Insights with David Macinnis Gill

Pursuing the Craft with Joan Edwards

Fall Issue Deadline: July 15



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