

# Scribbles

Summer 2018 Issue

scbwi Kansas/Missouri Newsletter

## MESSAGE FROM THE KSMO RA

# To Conference, or Not to Conference. That is the Question.

BY ERIN MOS, KS/MO CO-REGIONAL ADVISOR

For my entire vacation (that is a few days from wrapping up) I've been struggling through the world's most boring book. I won't share the title—who knows who reads this newsletter—but the central theme revolves around writing dark fiction. Each reading session has come to feel like wading through a bog of slightly rancid molasses, and yet I persist. Why, you might ask. Is it because I'm a masochist who stubbornly refuses to admit defeat at the hands of a how-to book? Perhaps. And those who know me well are likely convinced this is the ONLY reason. But I have a slightly different take. This book came highly recommended by a writer I admire. Other reviewers swear by its efficacy. And I'll be the first one to say I don't know what I don't know.

And this brings us to the topic at hand: conferences. (Bet you didn't see that one coming. But stick with me, folks, I promise I'll bring it home.)

Over the past several months I've had conversations with fellow SCBWI members who are struggling with the decision of whether to attend our November conference. They've been putting in the time with their writing, attending their critique groups, polishing and submitting, and after several years of conference attendance, they just don't know how much they're getting from the experience. Even though I'm far from disinterested (I'm one of the folks in charge of putting the whole she-bang together, after all) I won't pretend this isn't a valid feeling. The year before I decided to take on the co-regional advisor job, I was wallowing in the conferences-are-pointless-pit myself.

Before signing on to the KSMO regional team, I was struggling—I won't deny it. I'd reached a plateau in my work. Things were going okay, but I wasn't reaching my personal goals. This is why I understand my fellow members when they wonder about the conference. I kept thinking, "I don't need another workshop on editing. I know how to edit. I just have to go and do it!" (For those of you playing along at home—you know the struggle is real. If not, I refer you to last quarter's Scribbles.) So, I decided to shake up my writing life by earning an MFA in creative writing. It was during that process that I came back around to the value of conferences.

In one of my classes was a student who was finishing her own MFA journey. During one assignment, she commented

how glad she was to "have learned how to write" and now she was heading into the world as a fully-formed writer. This struck me as odd. I'd been out in that world working as a writer—I had the sales to prove it—but I didn't feel at all fully-formed. In fact, I felt about as formed as a bowl of jelly. At the same time, I was taking a class on genre fiction that required me to write an essay on my favorite example of post-apocalyptic fiction. Being me, I chose Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. (If you haven't read it, do so. NOW. I'll wait.)

My professor's response provided one of those I-couldn't-have-plotted-it-better-myself moments as a counter-point to my fully-formed classmate. In his comments, my professor noted that he'd never yet had anyone select that book as an example of post-apocalyptic fiction. His response was to say how much he enjoyed teaching as it allowed him to see the world through new eyes and he never had to quit learning.

Writing is life-time sport. Most of the really hard work happens alone in a one-on-one fight with a blank page, but it doesn't end there. What I came to realize is that like almost every other profession that requires, or at least strongly recommends, continuing education, writing needs constant stimulation and challenges to keep the writers fresh. Conferences provide that for me.

That is not to say that every session at every conference fills my writing bucket. I'm not going to pretend that sometimes I don't find myself listening to something I already know so well that I tune out and

*cont'd on pg. 2*

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## To Conference or Not to Conference ... cont'd from pg. 1

start working on my grocery list. It happens. But sometimes, in amongst the well-trod ground are some real gems. The kind of ah-ha moment that really does create a tangible change in my work.

For example, at this past national conference in New York I waded through several sessions that didn't provide new notes to my repertoire. Until I attended a session with the great Gail Carson Levine. I admit I signed up more for the experience of hearing her speak, but during her session, she gave me a new tool. As most of you know, I write dark fiction/horror with some SF/F flavors. That is well-trod ground full of clichés. Levine suggested that whenever I find myself faced with a cliché, I need to make a list of all possibilities. But not a short list. The list must be at least 10, preferably 12, items long. Her reasoning was that by the time you reach number 6, most of the clichéd ideas are gone. You are forced to go wild. Since it's just a list—and no one is going to see it—you can be as silly as you want.

This simple idea—to make a list—has helped make my work fresher and more unique. But I had to sit through a lot of not so helpful sessions before I got to this tidbit. It wasn't a huge moment, but it has helped me immeasurably.

But what if I hadn't had this happen? If I'd passed on the Levine session in favor of a less helpful workshop, I still would have considered the conference a success. This is the other benefit of conferences that I realized I needed as much as continuing education: companionship.

I'll explain. Some time ago I was wandering through a Home Depot while arguing with a character. I'd been struggling with Clem's voice and had decided to have a conversation with him while running my errands. I wasn't in the store for power tools, but found myself wandering the aisle discussing them with Clem. Being the good-old-boy-trucker he is (was, actually. I told you I'm a horror writer) he kept calling me "missy" and telling me I didn't need any more tools. As I was arguing the merits of a table saw, I noticed I'd picked up a trail of two worried looking

employees. One hesitantly approached me to ask if everything was okay. I responded honestly by saying that yes, "this conversation was just between me." The employees followed me out of the store. I doubt they'd have allowed me to purchase anything with a blade.

Now, when I tell my non-writing friends this story, they tend to scoot away and look for the exits. But when I tell you—my tribe of writers—you ask me if I figured out Clem's voice. (Yes, story finished and sold.) Writing is a solitary activity that requires a thick skin for rejections and not-so-helpful feedback. We need each other. There is no other way to put it. I'm an introvert who is sometimes overwhelmed by the companionship of my golden retrievers, but even I have come to realize the importance of people who don't look at you like you've sprouted a second head when you tell them a character refuses to change her name.

I've been up front about having a stake in this decision, but I'll be equally honest when I say that you will find me at conferences—ours and others—well after I've finished my term as RA. Like my professor, I don't ever want to stop learning. I need all of you to keep me on my toes, to inspire me, and to challenge me. Hopefully I'll keep finding little gems of wisdom that improve my craft and keep me growing. That is the real reason I won't give up on my boring how-to book. I hope you won't give up on conferences either.

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### ERIN MOS, CO-REGIONAL ADVISOR

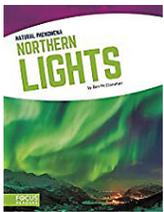


Erin Mos wears many hats (and several names) – not the least of which is regional co-advisor for the Kansas-Missouri SCBWI. Under the name E. Lillith McDermott she writes dark fiction from her home in Kansas City where she collects apothecary bottles, spell books, and the tears of her enemies. She periodically geeks out at

GeekMom.com and her other work can be found at [elillithmcdermott.com](http://elillithmcdermott.com)

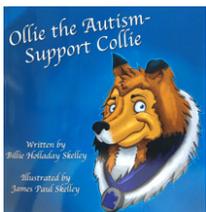
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## MEMBER NEWS



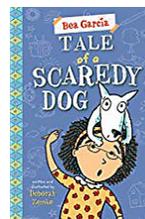
**Ben McClanahan's** first work-for-hire title, *Northern Lights*, will be released Aug. 1, 2018 from Focus Readers. This title explains what causes the northern lights and contains beautiful photos, fact-filled text, and helpful infographics to help readers learn all about the science behind this phenomenon as well as

ways that people study or protect it.



The second book in *Billie Holladay Skelley's* Therapy Dogs series has been released: *Ollie the Autism-Support Collie*. This book provides an easy rhyming text and colorful pictures to help children understand how service dogs provide comfort and security. It highlights the training, work ethic, and

dedication of these remarkable animals.



The third book of **Deborah Zemke's** Bea Garcia chapter book series, *Tale of a Scaredy Dog*, came out in July. "Bea Garcia's beloved dog, Sophie, is smart, sweet, loyal, and almost brave—until she meets the monster cat who lives next door."



**Amy E. Sklansky's** latest book, *These Little Piggies Go to the Beach*, was released in March by Moondance Press/Quarto Publishing.

# Paid Critiques: Are They Right for You?

BY JESS TOWNES, KS/MO CO-REGIONAL ADVISOR

You've written. You've revised. You've line edited. Your critique partners have provided thoughtful feedback and you are almost ready to send your shiny manuscript out into the world. But after you draft your query letter, you can't bring yourself to press the send button.

Or, maybe you've already sent your manuscript on submission and received a handful of rejections. Perhaps those rejections came in the form of a standardized letter, and you're not quite sure how to improve your work. Or perhaps they all have the same suggestion, and you don't know how to fix the problem.

If either of these scenarios sounds familiar, you might consider a paid critique from a published author or illustrator. Every year at our region's annual conference, in addition to critiques from editors and agents we also have several outstanding published faculty authors and illustrators who provide paid critiques and portfolio reviews. While many new writers overlook this opportunity in favor of a critique with an acquiring editor or agent, sometimes an author or illustrator critique is exactly the right choice. Here are a handful of reasons why:

1. Published authors and illustrators have been in the querying trenches. They know exactly where you are and where you want to be. They have traveled the road from prepublication to a book on the bookshelf and often are able to identify what your work is missing to continue its journey. They are also able to commiserate in a way that is unique to a fellow writer.
2. Your work isn't quite ready for submission. If your work isn't ready for submission and you pay for a critique with an acquiring faculty member, their first impression of your work won't be your best impression. Published authors and illustrators aren't looking to acquire your work, but they are hoping to help you improve it before you take advantage of post-conference submission opportunities.
3. You are nervous and/or it's your first conference. My first SCBWI conference gave me the confidence I needed to move in the direction of my dreams, but part of the reason it was so successful was a paid critique I had with picture book author Lisa Wheeler. I had a polished manuscript that had been reviewed by my critique partners, but I wasn't on submission yet. I

knew I wasn't ready to submit my work to literary agents and was nervous about receiving a critique from acquiring faculty at my very first conference. My critique with Lisa was just what I needed. She helped me elevate that manuscript to the next level. Six months later I signed with my agent, and I know Lisa's critique was part of the reason I was ready to go on submission.

4. You are writing in a new genre or format. Perhaps you are a seasoned writer, or even a published author, but the manuscript you are submitting to the conference is in a format or genre that is new to you. It may help to get a published expert in your new format or genre to take a look at your manuscript before you put it in front of the eyes of an agent or an editor. Nicki Jacobsmeyer, KSMO ARA, is published in adult and middle grade, but recently took on the challenge of crafting a picture book biography.

"When I registered for the SCBWI KS/MO Middle of the Map Conference last year, I jumped on the chance to purchase a critique with Author Ann Ingalls. My WIP was a non-fiction picture book, and I knew that Ingalls had several publications in that genre that I adored. She did not disappoint! Ingalls helped me tighten and strengthen my manuscript by teaching me what words could be cut and changed. She shared exercises and tools that work for her that helped my theme come into focus. After applying all I learned from Ingalls at my 2017 conference critique, I felt confident to submit the polished manuscript for our St. Louis Agent Day 2018 in April which led to acquiring representation a month later. I look forward to signing up for more author critiques in the future - they are invaluable!"

Registration for our annual conference opens soon. I hope that you plan to join us, and moreover I hope that if you opt for a critique, you consider whether a critique with an author or illustrator might be right for you and your work.

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JESS TOWNES, CO-REGIONAL ADVISOR



Jess Townes currently serves as regional co-advisor for the Kansas-Missouri SCBWI. She is a children's writer and a regular contributor at All the Wonders. She lives in Wentzville, Missouri with her ukulele-strumming husband, two insatiably curious boys, a shoe-stealing dog, and two cats. [jesstownes.com](http://jesstownes.com).

# On the Move

BY NICKI JACOBSMEYER, KS/MO ASSISTANT REGIONAL ADVISOR

We know writing and illustrating children's book can be mentally and emotionally demanding. Recently, I've become aware of the physical strain as well. Whether you're typing at your computer, writing in a notebook, or drawing at your art board, you're spending a chunk of time being sedentary.

According to the American Heart Association, "Sedentary behavior may be associated with an increased risk of developing diabetes, cardiovascular disease, impaired insulin sensitivity (linked to diabetes) and an overall higher risk of death from any cause." ([newsroom.heart.org/news/sedentary-time-may-raise-heart-disease-risk-sit-less-move-more](https://newsroom.heart.org/news/sedentary-time-may-raise-heart-disease-risk-sit-less-move-more).)

Don't panic! This doesn't mean you have to give up your love of writing and/or illustrating. It simply means you should take breaks and move. Brian Parr from the Department of Exercise and Sports Science at the University of South Carolina Aiken suggests getting away from your desk every half hour. "I think a good goal is 5-10 minutes of activity per hour. That could be five minutes every half hour or 10 minute each hour. When you schedule out breaks in half hour increments, you prevent eyestrain, RSI, and the negative effects of sitting all in one go." ([lifehacker.com/the-desk-jockeys-schedule-to-healthy-living-sit-behind-a-d-516248751](https://lifehacker.com/the-desk-jockeys-schedule-to-healthy-living-sit-behind-a-d-516248751).)

Maybe you've experienced sore muscles in your wrist, neck, and shoulders. You may not feel the strain at first, it may slowly creep up on you. As artists and writers it's frustrating that a productive day can result in stress on your body. Here are some simple, yet effective exercises that can keep your body happy.

## From Uprite Ergo

([upriteergo.com/exercises-for-people-who-work-at-a-computer-all-day/](https://upriteergo.com/exercises-for-people-who-work-at-a-computer-all-day/))

### 1. Stretching

To stretch your neck, bend until your ear is touching your shoulder and hold it there for five seconds. Put your arms behind your back, interlace your finger and pull backwards to stretch your chest. You can also stretch by holding your hips and bending slowly to each side.

### 2. Chair Exercises

There are several great exercises that you can do without having to ever leave your seat. The first is meant to improve your core and arm strength. Sit in your chair with your legs up and crossed. Place your arms on the rests and, using your core, lift yourself out of the chair. Hold your body in this position for up to 20 seconds or longer before slowly lowering yourself back down. Another great core and leg exercise can be completed by lifting each leg individually and holding it out for 10 to 20 seconds, then try doing the same with both legs simultaneously.

### 3. Standing Exercises

Health care professionals highly encourage office employees to get up out of their seats and on their feet multiple times a day. Simply taking a few walks can diminish your sedentary activity and provide you with a multitude of health benefits. If you are unable to leave your desk often, you should consider investing in a height-adjustable workstation. While standing at work, you

will be able to perform yoga moves, squats, lunges and stretches without having to leave your standing desk.

**From Dr. James Levine, Co-Director of the Mayo Clinic**  
([fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2014/11/21/5-health-tips-computer-workers.aspx](https://fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2014/11/21/5-health-tips-computer-workers.aspx))

### 1. Stand Up

If you're lucky, your office may be one that has already implemented sit-stand workstations or even treadmill desks. Those who used such workstations easily replaced 25 percent of their sitting time with standing and boosted their well-being (while decreasing fatigue and appetite).

But if you don't have a specially designed desk, don't let that stop you. Prop your computer up on a stack of books, a printer, or even an overturned trash can and get on your feet.

### 2. Get Moving

Why simply stand up when you can move too? The treadmill desk, which was invented by Dr. Levine, is ideal for this, but again it's not the only option. You can walk while you're on the phone, walk to communicate with others in your office (instead of e-mailing), and even conduct walking meetings.

### 3. Monitor Your Screen Height

Whether you're sitting or standing, the top of your computer screen should be level with your eyes, so you're only looking down about 10 degrees to view the screen. If it's lower, you'll move your head downward, which can lead to back and neck pain. If it's higher, it can cause dry eye syndrome.

### 4. Imagine Your Head as a Bowling Ball

Your head must be properly aligned to avoid undue stress on your neck and spine. Avoid craning your head forward, holding it upright instead. And while you're at it, practice chin retractions, or making a double chin, to help line up your head, neck, and spine.

### 5. Try the "Pomodoro Technique"

You know those little tomato-shaped (pomodoro is Italian for tomato) timers? Wind one up to 25 minutes (or set an online calculator). During this time, focus on your work intensely. When it goes off, take 5 minutes to walk, do jumping jacks, or otherwise take a break from your work. This helps you to stay productive while avoiding burnout.

Don't sweat it! While you're on the move, your words and illustration will continue to move the children of the world.

NICKI JACOBSMEYER, ASSISTANT RA



Nicki Jacobsmeyer writes fiction and non-fiction for children and adults. She has a middle grade book, *Surviving the Iditarod, You Choose: Surviving Extreme Sports* (Capstone Press, 2017) and a historical non-fiction book, *Images Of America, Chesterfield* (Arcadia Publishing, 2016).

Her short stories and poetry are published in several anthologies. Besides reading and writing she loves to travel, knit, sunsets, family barbecues and watching a storm come in from her front porch. Visit her at [nickijacobsmeyer.com](http://nickijacobsmeyer.com).

## ILLUSTRATOR'S CORNER

# Coming Soon!

BY AMY KENNEY, KS/MO ILLUSTRATOR COORDINATOR

Last year, KSMO SCBWI tried a new approach to promoting our annual regional conference. We came to YOU, oh dear members, with *The Middle of the Map Spread the Word Contest*.

Members shared information about our conference on social media, or physically shared fliers about our conference, for points. Each point represented an entry into a random drawing for a chance to attend the private faculty dinner on Saturday night of the conference weekend. The Spread the Word contest was such a huge hit, we have decided to run it again this year. Keep an eye on your inboxes for an email detailing the rules of this year's contest (along with the promotional flier to share.) Only one point is needed to win, but the more you help promote, the better your chances will be.



(Alastair Heim photo)



Last year, PAL member Alastair Heim (author of many books including: *No Tooting at Tea*, *The Great Puppy Invasion*, and *Hello Door*) was the very lucky winner of our first ever Middle of the Map Spread the Word Contest. We decided to interview Alastair to give our members a completely organic, totally unbiased, not at all staged, peek behind the scenes of the contest, and the faculty dinner itself.

### 1. How much blood, sweat, and/or tears did you shed while participating in last year's promotions contest?

- None.
- **A few drops here or there.**
- You don't want to know.
- I still can't talk about it.

### 2. How fun was the conference faculty dinner last year?

- Better than I expected.
- **As good as I expected, and I have high expectations.**
- Exceeded my wildest dreams.
- It was so much fun, I'm still enjoying myself.

### 3. Would you recommend that Kansas/Missouri SCBWI members participate in this year's promotions contest?

- Yes.
- Absolutely.
- 100%.
- **All of the above.**

Thanks Alastair! If you would like to meet Alastair, and buy his books, be sure to check out his upcoming event in Kansas City.

#### **AUGUST 29th: Storytime in the Village**

[shawneemissionpost.com/2018/04/19/introducing-story-time-in-the-village-70853](http://shawneemissionpost.com/2018/04/19/introducing-story-time-in-the-village-70853)

Please send all questions regarding the *Spread the Word Contest* to the KSMO Illustration Coordinator, Amy Kenney at [ksmo-ic@scbwi.org](mailto:ksmo-ic@scbwi.org).

AMY KENNEY, ILLUSTRATOR COORDINATOR



Amy Kenney is a freelance illustrator and children's book author based in Kansas City, MO. Amy earned a BFA in Illustration and Graphic Design from the University of Central Missouri. She and her husband currently live on 20 acres with one dog, one cat, and way too many children. [amykenney.com](http://amykenney.com)

Check out our featured  
illustrator of the month  
on the Kansas/Missouri  
SCBWI website at  
[ksmo.scbwi.org/featured-illustrator](http://ksmo.scbwi.org/featured-illustrator)

# Previously Published—or Not?

BY PEGGY ARCHER, KS/MO PAL COORDINATOR

Back before the internet, things were a lot less complicated for writers. The only option for sharing your written work then was by publishing it in print. If your poems, stories, or other created work appeared in a book, magazine, anthology, textbook, newsletter, *or any other printed publication*, your work was considered to be published. If it didn't, it wasn't.

Good or bad, things have come a long way. Today's options include all of the above *plus* publishing on websites, blogs, vlogs, online publications, online discussion groups, and many more. Having been published on any of these venues, and sometimes including public readings, is often considered by editors and agents to be 'published.'

Not all editors and agents agree on the definition of 'published,' and not all feel the same way about work that has been previously published. Here are a few of today's guidelines for being 'published.'

Something you were paid for. For example, a poem in a children's magazine for which you were paid \$10 would qualify.

Something that has been assigned an ISBN and made available for sale. For example, something published by CreateSpace.

Something that you printed on your home printer and gave to a family member is *not* considered published, *unless* it was later put up for sale online. If your work has been available for sale, it is published.

Previously published means publication of the exact same work. If you've posted your entire children's poem online, it's published. If you've shared a 'short' excerpt from your book someplace online, the book is not published. This includes Pitch Wars, as long as you are not posting the entire work (such as a poem or short story) or most of the work. When you enter a Pitch Wars contest, you are giving permission to have your submission posted online.

If you've posted your work on a private writing forum or web board for the purpose of receiving feedback, then *most* editors and agents will consider the work unpublished. If the forum or web board is public, it would be considered published.

If your work has been posted online you can take it down before submitting it, but it's risky. What's posted on the internet doesn't always go away. "Search engines log all new web content as it is created. If you put something online, ever, even for a short while, it will stay in a search engine's cache and will still appear in search results." (*KidLit.com*)

Remember that each editor or agent can have their own definition of what it means for something to be previously published. And some don't really care if a work has been previously published on a website or blog with small readership. So what's an author to do? Here are some suggestions.

**Read the publisher's guidelines, carefully.** Many editors consider anything published, anywhere, at any time, under any circumstances, as published. They want their publications to be fresh, new, and different. They want previously *un*-published manuscripts. Others disagree or will accept work that has been shared in some venues.

**When submitting a manuscript, always be upfront about its history.** Let the editor/agent know if it's been published anywhere, including on your blog, in a writers discussion group, or in a publication or website with low readership such as your church bulletin.

**Maintain the copyright after your work is published.** If part of your book is published somewhere and later you want to submit the entire book to a publisher. Or if you intend to submit it for publication in a different form. For example, if your poem is published in a magazine and you plan to re-publish it in a poetry collection. Magazines often return the rights to the author once the poem has been published, but not always. You can write to the publication later if you have an offer on the table for your book, and they may return those rights to you, but to be safe it's better to specify that in your contract.

**If you plan to submit your work to an established agent or editor or to an established children's magazine and want to be entirely safe, don't post it publicly online.** Several years ago when my dog, Snickers, passed away I posted a poem about her on my blog. Last year the Institute of children's Literature posted a PAWsome Poetry contest on their Facebook page and I *knew* this was the perfect poem to submit! Then I read their guidelines—"An 'unpublished piece' means not published anywhere as of yet. That means anything from on your own blog..."!

Be aware of the 'meaning' of previously published and safeguard your writing. Then decide what to take a chance on and share your writing style online!

Sources used:

**KidLit.com**

**Writers Digest** (Robert Lee Brewer and *Poet's Market* editor Nancy Breen) [writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/poetic-asides/personal-updates/poetry-faqs-when-is-something-considered-published](http://writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/poetic-asides/personal-updates/poetry-faqs-when-is-something-considered-published)

**WritersRelief.com** [writersrelief.com/blog/2013/11/what-is-considered-previously-published-writing/](http://writersrelief.com/blog/2013/11/what-is-considered-previously-published-writing/)

**Janet Reid, Literary Agent** [jetreidliterary.blogspot.com/2016/05/previously-published.html](http://jetreidliterary.blogspot.com/2016/05/previously-published.html)

**Steve Mooser, SCBWI**

**PitchWars.org**

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PEGGY ARCHER, PAL COORDINATOR



Peggy Archer's most recent picture book, *Name That Dog!* (Dial), is on the Accelerated Reader list, and is listed with Scholastic Book Club. Her picture book, *Turkey Surprise*, was a NY Times bestseller. Originally from northwest Indiana, Peggy and her husband now live in O'Fallon, MO. [peggyarcher.com](http://peggyarcher.com)

Don't forget to check out our featured PAL Author of the Month on the Kansas/Missouri website at [ksmo.scbwi.org/featured-author](http://ksmo.scbwi.org/featured-author)

# The Market Place

COMPILED AND EDITED BY RITA RUSSELL

“The \$2.3 billion children’s book market is expected to grow 0.9% each year through 2022, IBISWorld reports. Even as the publishing industry as a whole is struggling to adapt to the digital age, and Barnes & Noble sales have continued to decline, Nielsen BookScan notes that **children’s book sales are growing faster than the overall print books market, with 233 million units sold in 2017, compared to 181 million in 2012.**”

*Nicole Lyn Pesce – Moneyish.com 6/11/2018*

## BOOK MARKETS

**CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS** publishes children’s and young adult nonfiction books that cover a wide range of subjects about history, science, math, music, literature, and art. Most of their children’s books are active nonfiction, featuring hands-on activities and projects for kids ages 7 & up. Among these are the bestselling *For Kids* series, the build-it-yourself *Science in Motion* series, and the multicultural *A Kid’s Guide* series. Also popular is YA biography series *Women of Action* that features courageous women and girls throughout history. Nonfiction proposals should be emailed to editors **Cynthia Sherry** or **Jerome Pohlen**. Submission guidelines on website. [chicagoreviewpress.com/information-for-authors-agents-pages-100.php](http://chicagoreviewpress.com/information-for-authors-agents-pages-100.php) (*Children’s Book Insider – June 2018 and ChicagoReviewPress.com*)

**FLUX** and **JOLLY FISH PRESS**, imprints of Minnesota-based **North Star Editions**, are accepting young adult and middle grade submissions. **PRESS BOX BOOKS**, a third imprint, is seeking sports-themed nonfiction submissions. These presses also offer work-for-hire opportunities for authors, editors, copy editors, fact-checkers, and proof readers. Submission and work-for-hire details at [northstareditions.com/work-with-us/](http://northstareditions.com/work-with-us/) (*Children’s Writer eNews 6/7/18 and NorthStarEditions.com*)

**FREE SPIRIT** publishes nonfiction books, learning materials, and fiction that provide children and teens with tools to overcome challenges and make a difference in the world. Currently seeking fiction and nonfiction proposals in multiple categories, including early childhood, gifted & special education, and bullying prevention and conflict resolution. Review Free Spirit’s complete list of categories, titles, and submission requirements. [freespirit.com/Submission-Guidelines](http://freespirit.com/Submission-Guidelines) (*CBI – May 2018 and FreeSpirit.com*)

In January 2019, **Harlequin Teen** will relaunch as **INKYARD PRESS**. Inkyard will continue to publish a wide range of books, from contemporary and mainstream novels to genre fiction. The rebranding of Harlequin Teen, which debuted in 2009, is intended to give Harlequin’s YA list a fresh feel. Up first from

Inkyard: *The Evil Queen*, first in a fantasy trilogy by bestselling author Gina Showalter; *29 Dates*, a romantic contemporary novel by Melissa de la Cruz; and *The Voice in My Head* by Dana L. Davis, about a teen girl who convinces her family, including her terminally ill twin sister, to go on a road trip. (*Publishers Weekly 6/1/18*)

Also coming in 2019: **NORTON YOUNG READERS**, the first children’s book imprint in the nearly 100-year history of **W.W. Norton & Company**. **Simon Boughton**, formerly senior v-p and publishing director of Macmillan Children’s, will helm Norton YR as publishing director. He promises the list will feature picture books and illustrated books for children as well as works for middle grade and young adult readers. “We’re cultivating a broad range of books, both in terms of age and category. Nonfiction is a particular strength for Norton and a particular interest of mine. Putting it at the center of the program is part of what’s exciting to me.” (*PW 4/16/18*)

**Macmillan Children’s Publishing’s** newest imprint finally has a name: **ODD DOT**. The press was created last October by publisher **Daniel Nayeri**, editorial director **Nathalie Le Du**, and creative director **Colleen AF Venable**, all formerly of Workman, but had operated without a name until this past spring. Nayeri, Le Du, and Venable reportedly chose Odd Dot to signify a celebration of individuality and artistic creativity, “while giving a nod to the idea that a color field comprises many distinct dots arrayed together.” Odd Dot plans to distinguish itself with a slate of interactive nonfiction children’s books aimed at academically gifted children, as well as those who struggle with traditional learning. Inaugural titles releasing in spring 2019 will include *One More Wheel*, a counting board book with moving wheels built into the book; *Code This Game*, which teaches preteen readers to code a video game, then hack their work to develop a game of their own; and a TinkerActive Workbook series that follows characters that are geometrically designed to teach basic math to children in kindergarten through second grade. (*PW 5/31/18*)

**Random House Children’s Books** will launch **RANDOM HOUSE GRAPHICS**, its first dedicated graphic novel imprint, in fall 2019. **Gina Gagliano** come aboard as publishing director for RHG after 13 years at First Second Books, the graphic novel imprint she helped launch for Macmillan Publishing, where she was associate director, marketing and publicity. RHG will specialize in titles for children and young adults with a list focused on both commercial and literary graphic works. (*PW 5/8/18*)

**Enslow Publishing** is introducing **WEST 44 BOOKS**, a hi-lo fiction imprint for middle grade and young adult readers. The new line is aimed at readers from a variety of backgrounds and will offer “authentic new and diverse voices” and “gripping narratives for struggling readers.” Plans are to publish 24 titles per year, beginning with four books each to be released in August, October, and December of this year. Among the inaugural offerings for middle school readers: *When Zombies Invade*, first in the Z Team series in which characters race to save their hometown from zombies; and *Welcome to 4B*, first in the

*cont’d on pg. 8*

Bad Kids in 4B series, which explores the backstories of kids who are considered the worst-behaved in the school. The YA series debut list includes *The Same Blood* by M. Azmitia, a story of polar opposite twin sisters – one who embraces their Puerto Rican culture and one who is embarrassed by it. (*Publishers Weekly Children's Bookshelf* 7/19/18)

“Stories about the everyday beauty of being a little human being of color are scarce. . . . They want to read books that engage with their everyday experiences, featuring characters who look like them. Just like any other child. White children, too, deserve — and need — to see black characters that revel in the same human experiences that they do. Real diversity would celebrate the mundane — like a little kid going out after a snowstorm — rather than the exceptional.”

*Denene Millner – Author and Editor of Bolden Books*

## PUBLISHING PERSONNEL NEWS

Feather Flores has joined **CHRONICLE CHILDREN'S BOOKS** as Editorial Assistant. (*Publishers Weekly Children's Bookshelf* 7/3/18)

**Elizabeth Stranahan** is Assistant Editor, promoted from editorial assistant, at **CROWN BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS**. (*PWC Bookshelf* 4/24/18)

**DISNEY PRESS** welcomed **Jocelyn Davies** as Senior Editor, focusing on IP initiatives that develop Disney properties into stories. Previously she was an editor at HarperCollins Children's Books. (*PWC Bookshelf* 5/15/18)

Promotions at **HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S**:

- **Alice Jerman** is Editor, from associate editor. In the art department, **Alison Klaphor** and **Erin Fitzsimmons** were both elevated to Art Director, from associate art director; and **David Curtis** moved up to Senior Designer, from designer. (*Publishers Weekly Children's Job Moves* 5/1/18 and *PWC Bookshelf* 5/22/18)
- **Amy Cloud** exited Aladdin to join **HMH Books For Young Readers** as Senior Editor, acquiring middle grade and young adult books. (*PWC Bookshelf* 5/10/18)

At **MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING**:

- **Nicole Otto** was promoted to Associate Editor at **Imprint**.
- **Weslie Turner** joined as Associate Editor; previously she was assistant editor at Scholastic. (*PWC Bookshelf* 7/3/18)
- **Elizabeth Lee** has joined **FSG Books for Young Readers** as Editorial Assistant. (*PWC Bookshelf* 6/14/18)
- **Val Otarod** has been promoted to Associate Editor at **Square Fish**; previously she was editorial assistant. (*PWC Bookshelf* 5/10/18)

Former v-p and editorial director **Erica Green** exited **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS BOOKS** to move overseas. Replacing Green is **Becky Baines**, who moved up to

V-P and Editorial Director, from executive editor; and replacing Baines is **Kate Hale**, who was promoted to Executive Editor, from senior editor. Also on the rise: **Ariane Szu-Tu** to Editor, from associate editor; **Kathryn Williams** to Associate Editor, from editorial assistant, and **Michaela Weglinski** to Assistant Editor, from editorial assistant. (*PWC Bookshelf* 5/1/18)

**Jocelyn Schmidt** added Senior V-P to her Associate Publisher title at **PENGUIN YOUNG READERS** (*PWC Bookshelf* 5/17/18)

**Dani Valladares** joined **RANDOM HOUSE BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS** as Editor for Rodale Kids; previously she was associate editor at Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. **Alex Sanchez** is Assistant Editor at **Razorbill**, promoted from editorial assistant. (*PWC Bookshelf* 6/14/18)

**SIMON & SCHUSTER CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING**:

- **Simon Pulse** – **Sarah Creech** promoted to Associate Art Director, from senior designer. **Nicole Ellul** promoted to Editor, from associate editor. **Sarah McCabe** promoted to Associate Editor, from assistant editor.
- **Aladdin** – **Tiara Iandiorio** promoted to Junior Designer, from art and design coordinator. **Tricia Lin** promoted to Assistant Editor, from editorial assistant. **Anna Parsons** joined as Editorial Assistant.
- **Heather Palisi** has been named Senior Designer for Aladdin and Simon Pulse; most recently she was senior designer at Penguin Random House. (*PWC Bookshelf* 5/1/18, 5/10/18, and 6/20/18)

**Dana Leydig** joined **VIKING CHILDREN'S BOOKS** as an Editor, shifting from Puffin where she was editor. (*PWC Bookshelf* 5/24/18)

“I don't promote diversity because it's a topic to discuss, but rather because I want a well-rounded canon of children's and young adult literature. I firmly believe that having that will change the world for the better. So I approach and encourage diversity as a fact. It's our world and we are all a part of it. Our literature should reflect that, period.”

*Marietta Zacker – Agent/Owner, Gallt & Zacker Literary Agency*

## AGENT NEWS

**\*\*SCAM ALERT\*\*** **Danielle Smith**, previously of Red Fox Literary and Fuse Literary, and most recently owner of her own agency, **LUPINE GROVE**, has resigned as an agent and been fired from Walden Pond Press, where she worked in marketing. It was recently discovered that for several years, Smith had forged offer letters to her clients, and then subsequently counseled said clients not to take offers. (*Twitter #KidLitAlliance #LupineGrove* 7/24/18)

Picking an agent is a lot like choosing a mate – a good fit for you might not be a good fit for someone else. So always do your due diligence, always ask lots of questions and seek reasonable

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responses, and always stay informed about the business of your writing. You can find people discussing their experiences with agents on forums like **Absolute Write** [absolutewrite.com/forums/activity.php](http://absolutewrite.com/forums/activity.php) and sites like **Writer Beware** [sfa.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/agents/](http://sfa.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/agents/). Editor **Harold Underdown** offers great advice on why you might not need an agent at all. [underdown.org/agent-not-needed.htm](http://underdown.org/agent-not-needed.htm)

Associate Agent **Jennifer March Soloway** at **ANDREA BROWN LITERARY** is open to submissions for all age groups and genres. For picture books, Soloway connects with a wide range of stories from silly to sweet, and always with surprise endings. In middle grade, she likes adventures, mysteries, ghost stories, as well as humor, realistic contemporary, and fantasy. For YA, Soloway loves suspense, action-packed thrillers full of unexpected twists, conspiracy plots, and romance. “But her favorite novels are literary stories about ordinary teens, especially those focused on family, relationships, sexuality, mental illness, or addiction.” She’s also interested in nonfiction and graphic novels. Visit the ABL agency website for additional preferences and submission guidelines.

*(Children’s Book Insider – June 2018 and AndreaBrownLit.com)*

Three years after joining **CURTIS BROWN, LTD.**, as an assistant, **Tess Callero** now represents young adult and adult fiction manuscripts, as well as select nonfiction projects. For YA, Callero gravitates towards stories involving friendship, coming of age, romance, or suspense, as well as believable YA fantasy and magical realism. In addition to her role as Agent, Callero is also the Social Media Director at Curtis Brown. Query her with a description of your work. She will respond if interested.

*(Guide to Literary Agents 7/16/18 and CurtisBrown.com)*

**Kiana Nguyen** is building her client list at **DONALD MAASS LITERARY AGENCY**, with YA fiction across all genres, except historical. Seeking contemporary stories featuring POC and queer voices, with specific interest in psychological thrillers similar to Kara Thomas’ work or *One of Us is Lying* by Karen McCanus. “I want diverse casts, and would love them from diverse creators! I am not interested in white suburbia or rich kids.” Nguyen’s sweet spot would be a black/POC *We are Okay* by Nina Lacour. She has been at DMLA since 2016.

*(Guide to Literary Agents 7/5/18 and MaassAgency.com)*

**FOLIO LITERARY MANAGEMENT** has promoted **John Cusick** to Vice-President. Cusick, at Folio since 2015, will continue to rep YA and MG authors, and author-illustrators. Folio also welcomed **Elissa Erwin** as Assistant to **Emily van Beek**, moving from Sourcebooks, where she was an editorial assistant. Van Beek is open to queries from YA and MG authors, Author/Illustrators, and Illustrators-only.

*(Publishers Weekly Children’s Bookshelf 7/24/18 and FolioLit.com)*

**Cari Lamba** at **JENNIFER D. CHIARA LITERARY** is building her list with middle grade fiction and both fiction and nonfiction picture books. She prefers MG stories with super wacky characters and plots, à la Roald Dahl, as well as contemporary stories that are both humorous and heartfelt. For picture books, Lamba is looking for “unique ideas with fun and quirky elements as well as sweet, endearing.” Non-fiction stories featuring strong female role-models are welcome. Lamba also

reps adult commercial fiction. See agency website for submission details. *(Children’s Writer eNews 5/17/18 and JDLit.com)*

**Kristin Nelson** at Denver-based **NELSON LITERARY** is open for submissions, seeking books that “walk the line between commercial content and literary execution, particularly in young adult and middle grade fiction in all genres.” #Ownvoices, #WNDB, boy adventure, magical, and STEM girl books are at the top of Nelson’s wish list. She also represents select upmarket women’s fiction and the occasional adult SF/F project. “My goal as an agent is simple: I want every client of mine to make a living solely from writing and 90% of my authors do without help from any other source of income.” Also at Nelson, **Joanna Mackenzie** is open for YA submissions. She’s looking for strong, confident voices and characters that stay with you beyond the last page. “I’d love to find a Veronica Mars-ish character I could really sink my teeth into; or be swept away into a Bone Gap world; or be enthralled by characters like those in *I’ll Give You The Sun*.”

Agency submission guidelines on website.

*(NelsonAgency.com and GLA 5/9/18 and 5/18/18)*

Junior Agent **Samantha Wekstein** at **WRITERS HOUSE** is seeking YA and MG manuscripts, and PB author-illustrator submissions, as well as illustrator-only work. She loves creative and epic YA fantasies, and she is also drawn to contemporary YA with multi-dimensional female characters like those of Rainbow Rowell, Julie Murphy and Melina Marchetta. In middle grade, Wekstein especially loves books that deal with themes of friendship, adventure, or encountering tragedy for the first time. Favorite authors are Sharon Creech and Gail Carson Levine.

*(CBI – July 2018 and WritersHouse.com)*

Also at Writers House, Junior Agent **Lindsey Auld** is actively building her list, seeking picture book, middle grade, and young adult manuscripts. Strong affinity for mysteries, fantasy, historical fiction, magical realism, adventure, and books with humor. Favorite authors include Roald Dahl, Madeleine L’Engle, Philip Pullman, Katherine Paterson, E. L. Konigsburg, Lois Lowry, Beverly Cleary, and Judith Viorst. Query with the first 10-15 pages of your manuscript. Responds within two weeks.

*(GLA 4/18/18 and WritersHouse.com)*

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“If you have made mistakes, even serious ones, there is always another chance for you. What we call failure is not the falling down, but the staying down.”

*Mary Pickford – Actress and Producer, Founder of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences*

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## MAGAZINE MARKET

**HIGHLIGHTS** magazine is closed for submissions until September 16, 2018. When submissions reopen, Highlights will only accept submissions on specific current needs, as listed on their Submittable page.

*(Children’s Writer eNews 6/28/18 and Highlights.Submittable.com)*

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“I have several rooms of my house covered with the snowstorm of rejections, but they didn’t realize what a strong person I was; I persevered. . . Even today, my latest books of short stories contain at least seven stories that were rejected by every magazine in the United States and also in Sweden!”

Ray Bradbury – Author & Screenwriter

## WRITING RESOURCES

### FREE SELF-PUBLISHING GUIDE FROM KIRKUS

Thinking of going the self-publishing route? This comprehensive free guide from **Kirkus** offers plenty of information that you’ll want to know, everything from copyright to permissions to distribution, blurbs and reviews. If you have questions, this guide will likely offer sound answers. [s3.amazonaws.com/kirkusreviews/www.static/pdf/Book\\_Publishing\\_Guide.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/kirkusreviews/www.static/pdf/Book_Publishing_Guide.pdf) (*Children’s Writer eNews* 7/19/18)

Before his death in 2012, legendary author-illustrator **MAURICE SENDAK** published more than 100 books, including the classics *Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and *Outside Over There*. In the documentary *Tell Them Anything You Want*, which debuted on Hulu in June 2018, viewers get a rare glimpse at his creative process. Here are five tips from Sendak’s luminous career that might help you harness your own creativity.

(*Read the entire article at INC.com and PWC Bookshelf* 6/20/18)

### 5 LESSONS IN CREATIVITY FROM MAURICE SENDAK

#### 1. Start with imitation

Sendak learned to draw by copying the work of his big brother Jack, who was, according to Sendak, a better artist.

**Takeaway:** Choose a mentor, study their work, and learn everything you can on the road to developing your own style.

#### 2. Only get formal training if you want to

Sendak never went to art school, but he took classes at the New York Art Students League while working as a window dresser. **Takeaway:** Being creative doesn’t require a degree, just commitment and hard work.

#### 3. Don’t let criticism discourage you

Sendak’s greatest masterpiece, *Where the Wild Things Are* sold more than 20 million copies worldwide, but upon its release in 1963, the book received terrible reviews. **Takeaway:** Don’t be a slave to criticism or praise. If left unchecked, both can stifle you from further developing your craft and expanding your creativity.

#### 4. Set a creative routine

Sendak spent many hours drawing every day, but he also created “little rituals” for himself, such as looking out the window and observing nature, listening to classical music, and reading Charles Dickens for an hour each night.

**Takeaway:** Creativity is fueled by engagement with the world, not isolationism.

#### 5. Don’t take yourself too seriously

Despite his many accolades, including a National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, and an honorary doctorate from Princeton, Sendak didn’t take himself or his work too seriously. “I am not earth-shakingly important. I am trying very hard to concentrate on what is here, what I can see, what I can smell, what I can feel—making *that* the important business of life.” **Takeaway:** Live in the moment. It will never come again.

Are you a shy writer who struggles to make professional connections? If so, you might find relief from **Deanna Cabinian**, author of the YA novel *One Night*. She offers some salient advice on how to get comfortable networking with others to get your work in the hands of the right people.

(*Read the entire article at WritersDigest.com* 5/25/18)

### 4 NETWORKING STRATEGIES FOR AUTHORS WHO HATE NETWORKING

#### 1. Submit your polished work to online outlets in a professional manner.

Even if the work is rejected, if it’s well done, you’ll often be referred to other contacts who might be interested.

#### 2. If you’re going to write a blog post, be helpful.

The easiest way to increase blog traffic is to provide readers with information that serves their interests and needs. Do that, and they’ll be happy to share your link on other social media.

#### 3. Just talk to people (like they’re a regular person) without expecting anything in return.

There’s nothing better than an old-fashioned conversation, whether face-to-face or even voice-to-voice (via telephone). Be curious. Be interested. Be aware of others around you. There’s no telling where a friendly chat can lead.

#### 4. Extend bigger thank yous to people who go the extra mile for you.

Good manners go a long way, especially in this age of hyper-incivility. When someone shows you extra kindness or attention, show them your sincere appreciation. Remember, it’s nice to be nice!

“Writers are the only people who don’t need someone else’s permission to work.”

Unknown

## CONTESTS

### #PITMAD TWITTER PITCH PARTY

- September 6, 2018
- December 6, 2018

#PitMad is a pitch party on Twitter where writers tweet a 280-character pitch for their completed, polished, unpublished manuscripts. Agents and editors make requests by liking/favoriting the tweeted pitch. Any unagented writer is welcome to pitch any genre/category manuscript. #PitMad occurs quarterly. For details on how to participate, visit [pitchwars.org/pitmad/](https://pitchwars.org/pitmad/)

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## #FAITHPITCH TWITTER PITCH PARTY

• Wednesday, Nov 28, 2018

#FaithPitch is a one-day Twitter Pitch Party specifically hosted for authors to pitch their latest and greatest faith-based, Christian Fiction manuscript directly to industry professionals using #FaithPitch. This event is open to unagented writers of children, young adult, and adult fiction with completed manuscripts that are unpublished and specifically for the Christian Fiction/Inspirational market. #FaithPitch occurs three times a year. For details on how to participate, visit [littlambbooks.com/faithpitch/](http://littlambbooks.com/faithpitch/)

“There is an element of good fortune involved in getting your story to the right editor on the right day. Learn your market well, and accept that your odds are better here than in the lottery – but not by much.”

*Catherine Ryan Hyde – Novelist*

## HONORS AND AWARDS

### 2018 ANNA DEWDNEY READ TOGETHER AWARD

Author-illustrator **Dan Santat** has been named this year's award winner for his picture book *After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again)*. The honor, presented by Penguin Young Readers, the Children's Book Council, and Every Child a Reader, is given annually to a read-aloud picture book that sparks compassion, empathy, and connection. The award is named for author-illustrator **Anna Dewdney**, best known for her Llama Llama picture book series, who died in September 2016 at the age of 50. (Publishers Weekly 5/1/18)

### 2018 E.B. WHITE READ-ALOUD AWARD WINNERS

Selected by members of the American Booksellers Association, a consortium of independent booksellers across the U.S., the E.B. White Read-Aloud Awards are bestowed annually on works that reflect the “playful, well-paced language, the engaging themes, and the universal appeal embodied by E.B. White's collection of beloved books.” (*BookWeb.org and PWC Bookshelf 5/10/18*)

• **MIDDLE READER:** *Wishtree* by **Katherine Applegate**

• **PICTURE BOOK:** *The Wolf, the Duck, and the Mouse* by **Mac Barnett**, illustrated by **Jon Klassen**

• **INDIE CHAMPION:** **Jason Reynolds**

Presented to the author or illustrator who booksellers feel understands the importance of independent bookstores and exhibits strong support for the mission of independent booksellers.

## • PICTURE BOOK HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES:

- *Ada Twist, Scientist* by **Andrea Beaty**, illustrated by **David Roberts**
- *I Have a Dream* by **Martin Luther King Jr.**, illustrated by **Kadir Nelson**
- *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by **Michael Rosen**, illustrated by **Helen Oxenbury**

## 2018 INDIES CHOICE BOOK AWARD WINNER

- **Young Adult Book of the Year:**  
*The Hate U Give* by **Angie Thomas**

RITA D. RUSSELL



Rita D. Russell joined SCBWI in 2009, after hearing Anna Dewdney sing its praises. When not writing picture books and chapter books, the former journalist and television script writer teaches screenwriting at St. Louis Community College.

## About Scribbles

### Co-Regional Advisors

Jess Townes, [kmo-ra2@scbwi.org](mailto:kmo-ra2@scbwi.org)  
Erin Mos, [kmo-ra@scbwi.org](mailto:kmo-ra@scbwi.org)

### Editor

Sue Bradford Edwards, [suebradfordedwards@yahoo.com](mailto:suebradfordedwards@yahoo.com)

### Art Director

Lynn Alpert, [lynn@lynnalpert.com](mailto:lynn@lynnalpert.com)

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