

# Scribbles

Winter 2019 Issue

scbwi Kansas/Missouri Newsletter

## MESSAGE FROM THE KSMO RA

### New Year, New Me

BY ERIN MOS, KS/MO CO-REGIONAL ADVISOR

My birthday is in December. I'm not saying this in an effort to receive birthday wishes (although my email is available online...) but because birthdays can be catalysts for introspection. If your birthday is close to New Year's, even more so. It wasn't a particularly big birthday—ok, so at my age *all* birthdays are pretty big—but as it comes toward the end of the year, it got me to reflect.

I'm not usually prone to bouts of self-doubt—in fact, most of the people who know me think I could use a sprinkle more self-doubt most of the time. But this December sent me reeling. I should probably explain. I'm the type of person who sets lists of daily/monthly/yearly goals so long they could give Santa a run for his money. This works to keep track of dentist appointments and flea collars (my dogs *hate* the dentist, but on the flip-side, the flea collars have cured my son's itching)

but, I began to suspect as I sat studying my 2018 To-Do Writing List, this might not be the best policy for creative self-esteem.

Even though the rational side of me knew I'd made some strides for which I should be happy, since so many large-scale goals remained uncrossed, just looking at my list made me feel like a failure. After a few hours (and a lot of gin) I realized the problem wasn't that I wasn't productive—forcing myself to write a list of only the things I accomplished helped cure me of that worry—but that I was setting myself up for failure.

Now, I don't know your personal preferences when it comes to giving yourself crippling writer's doubt, but I am willing to go out on a limb and guess I'm not alone in finding myself in front of my computer feeling like such a failure the only logical response is to start a backyard bonfire with all my manuscripts. If you too have contemplated a creativity campfire so intensely that only the lack of marshmallows for s'mores held you back, then read on and maybe I can save you some stress next year.

#### Honesty is the best policy.

One of the hardest things I've ever (and likely will ever) struggle with is to look at myself with honest, open eyes. Sadly, sometimes we don't always like the unvarnished truth. Being honest with ourselves and our writing isn't any easier than tackling other personal attributes. Sometimes, I think it's even harder. Is my writing really at the level it needs to be to accomplish my goals? Maybe it isn't. Yet. If that's the case, then the honest goal might not be to find an agent, but to work on my craft until I've written something worthy of an agent. Stepping back and using a critical eye is crucial.

Honesty isn't just valuable in telling us where in our own journey we are, but it needs to be applied to our specific goals as well. I've spent a lot of time in the short story world. I enjoy writing short stories, reading short stories, and—if I'm being totally honest—selling short stories. It isn't much money, but the rush of being told you really are a good enough writer is enough to make up for barely being able to buy my kids a happy meal.

But short stories aren't my true goals in 2019. After honestly assessing my situation, I realized that to be happy with my own creative progress, I need to focus on my novel writing. I'm weaker in this area, and it needs attention. My lifetime goals include novels, and for that I must work. But it is hard to take the idea of selling stories off my to-do list. They provide a rush and it's a world I'm attached to living in. However, if I don't, I'm not being honest. Worse still, if I focus on stories instead of novels, I'll be unhappy. And if I don't, but leave story sales on my list, then I'll feel I didn't meet my goals. As uncomfortable as it is, short story sales are off the 2019 list.

#### Let's be realistic.

Honesty and realism seem like the same thing, but in this case, they aren't. Being honest about what you want to accomplish and what you are ready to accomplish—skill-wise—is one thing. But being realistic about the industry in which you are striving is another. Sure, we'd all love to publish a book and hit the top of the *NY Times's* Bestseller list in 2019. But unless your book is already in production, that's not going to happen. Publishing moves at the speed of a sloth in quicksand. Even if you are completely

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ready to sell that manuscript, just the amount of time taken to go through the submission processes might make that difficult. As writers we need to realize that many of our goals are contingent on others and not beat ourselves up about the pace. This is some of my own advice that I find the hardest to take. But I'm working on it and if you are too, find me at the next event and commiserate. (I'll be the one crying in the corner.)

### Accidental accomplishments should count.

When I forced myself to sit down and list the things I'd accomplished throughout 2018, I discovered that some of the things I was most proud of weren't on my To-Do list at all. But if I hadn't been feeling bad enough to need my list writing session, I'd not have remembered them enough to feel good about what I'd achieved.

I'm going to be honest, I'm not entirely sure how this will work out, so I'll have to touch base at the beginning of next year with an update. My current working proposal is to tape a blank sheet of paper next to my list (I tape my goals lists on the wall behind my desk) and to make a point of writing in those unexpected and unplanned accomplishments. Hopefully, by the time my next birthday rolls around, I'll have a list of unplanned successes that is as long, or longer, than my list of uncrossed non-accomplishments. I'll keep you posted.

### All the small things.

If my house had a motto (*Game of Thrones* reference for those dreading/anticipating the final season) it would probably be "Go Big, Or Go Home." (That, or "Butter, Bacon, and Beer"—depending on the moment.) But that motto isn't particularly effective for yearly To-Do lists. For example, I'm far too likely to set a goal of "get into triathlete shape" when I'd really be satisfied with being able to climb my stairs without needing a break to catch my breath.

This year, I'm breaking down my big goals into bite sized chunks—and giving myself credit for each and every step. One of my goals is to finish my current work in progress. When I apply my own advice, it seems both honest and realistic. However, what I'm putting on my list is "finish a rough draft," "two to three revision edits," and then "find beta readers." But this is where I'll need to be realistic about timing. Even if I finish my drafts and edits quickly and find beta readers lurking outside my door begging to read for me, odds are the reading of a novel will take some time. I need to be prepared for this step of the process to push past the end of 2019. Thus, I'm not putting "finish my next novel" on my list. That is too big a bite to chew all at once.

### Not everything is about writing, but it should be.

Just kidding—it actually shouldn't be. Writing is something we do in service to life, not the other way around. But I've realized I need to credit those accomplishments that aren't specifically writing related but impact my writing life.

One of the best pieces of advice I've heard in the past few years (and just happened to come from the 2018 Middle of the Map Conference—shameless plug) was to make sure I had a creative outlet that wasn't writing. When you pour creative energy into something that doubles as a profession and involves a lot of rejection, the impact on our creative energies can be depleting. Having an outlet that is just for fun, on the other hand, can be energizing. For all of us, this will be different. Some of us sew, crochet, felt, cook, draw, paint, garden, jog (why, I don't know. But they do), drink, or any number of other hobby activities. For 2019, I'm giving myself credit for the time I spend strengthening my creative flow, even if it isn't writing.

This is going to be one of those big goals—but an achievable one. At the top of my 2019 list is "enjoy a creative hobby." It's a big chunk to chew, but pretty much anything I do to further my creative endeavors will fit. I'm calling this one a win-win. Hopefully you too have, or can find, a way to let your creativity flow for fun (no rejections involved) in 2019. Just remember to give yourself credit. Everything we can do to build the muscles of imagination should count as an achievement.

### So let's get started...

Goal lists can be public or private. I lean toward private in most things—excepting, apparently, *Scribbles* articles—so I won't share more of my own goals list. But I hope, as you make your own, you will consider some of the above advice. I don't plan on another beat-yourself-up-birthday, and I hope you don't have one either.

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)

## Social Media Do's and Don'ts with Matthew Winner

Would you like to find out how to build a positive online presence as a children's book author and/or illustrator? Are you curious about how other authors and illustrators use social media to their benefit...and detriment? Join Matthew Winner, school librarian, author, and *The Children's Book Podcast* host, for a webinar that will give the inside scoop on the do's and don'ts of social media. Matthew will also be taking on a small number of social media critiques for SCBWI members, to give you direct feedback on your online presence.

**Date:** February 16th, 2019

**Time:** 7PM-9PM Central Standard Time. Ticket holders will have access to a recording of the webinar for one week after the event.

**Cost:** \$15 for members; \$25 for non-members; \$50 social media critiques

**Hosted by:** Kansas/Missouri SCBWI

**Note:** this will not be a social media use tutorial. Attendees should have at least a working knowledge of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

**DON'T DELAY! These spots will go fast!**

## MESSAGE FROM THE KSMO RA

# A Year of Goals and Habits

BY JESS TOWNES, KS/MO CO-REGIONAL ADVISOR

It's a new year, and that means a fresh chance to renew your writing goals and the habits you'll need to achieve them. While January 1st may be an arbitrary date to renew our creative commitments, the coming year's calendar offers many resources for authors and illustrators looking for a challenge.

### January

**Storystorm** – Founded by picture book author Tara Lazar in 2009 as PiBoIdMo, **Storystorm** is the picture book writer's answer to the all the fun the novelists are having in November. **Storystorm** challenges writers to come up with 30 ideas in 30 days. While **Storystorm** will be over by the time this newsletter reaches your inbox, **Storystorm** past posts can be found at <https://taralazar.com/> for a dose of inspiration year-round.

### February

**Kidlitart28** – This challenge is to help illustrators find their voices. The idea is to draw something everyday in February featuring a theme, creature, idea, character, etc. that you LOVE. Follow the hashtag #Kidlitart28 on tumblr, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and join in with your own drawings. <http://kidlitart.blogspot.com/2015/01/the-twenty-eight-day-art-challenge.html>

### March

**ReFoReMo** – Founded by Carrie Charlie Brown and Kirsti Call, **Reading for Research Month** challenges picture book writers to read five selected books a day. The books are chosen by a guest contributor and focus on a specific theme. Reading informs our writing, and **ReFoReMo** will teach you to examine picture books with fresh eyes and stay current in the market. Registration opens February 15th at [www.reforemo.com/](http://www.reforemo.com/).

**NaNoEdMo** – Did you write a novel last year that needs revision? Maybe your **NaNoWriMo** draft is still sitting in the freezer? **National Novel Editing Month** might provide just the inspiration you need. **NaNoEdMo** encourages fifty hours of editing over the course of the month of March. Find more information at <https://www.nanoedmo.com>.

### April

**National Poetry Month** – **National Poetry Month** is full of opportunities for readers and writers of poetry. Head to [poets.org/national-poetry-month/30-ways-celebrate-national-poetry-month](http://poets.org/national-poetry-month/30-ways-celebrate-national-poetry-month) for 30 ways to celebrate this month from **Poem a Day** to **Teach This Poem**. Poet Renee DeTullipe features a series of posts entitled **Community Collection** in the month of April in which published poets offer a poetry lesson and prompt ([nowaterriver.com](http://nowaterriver.com)). Also check out Angie Karcher's **Rhyme Revolution** classes that take place throughout the year ([rhymerev.com](http://rhymerev.com)).

### May

**MerMay** – April showers bring May flowers...and mermaids! Follow the hashtag #MerMay on Instagram or Twitter and join in with your own daily illustrations of mermaids.

### June – August

**Summer Reading** – June marks the beginning of summer and

with that comes your local library's summer reading challenge. Visit your local branch this June and sign up for the adult program. As Stephen King says, "If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that." What better time than summer to dedicate yourself to your most important research – reading.

### October

**Inktober** – October brings changing colors all around, but color is not required for #**Inktober** participants on Twitter or Instagram. All you need to participate is paper and ink (color or black and white) and **Inktober** founder Jake Parker will provide a list of daily prompts to spark your imagination.

### November

**NaNoWriMo** – Perhaps the most famous of the monthly writing challenges, November is **National Novel Writing Month**. The object is to draft an entire 50,000-word novel in the month of November. Many a published novel started as a **NaNo** draft, so join in the fun at [nanowrimo.org](http://nanowrimo.org).

**Slowvember** – Don't despair illustrators, November has something in store for you too. Now that you've developed some daily illustration habits, **Slowvember** is your chance to take your time to "make one thing and make it beautiful." Find more information at [www.svslearn.com/slowvember/](http://www.svslearn.com/slowvember/)

As you may note, I've missed a few months of the year. Do you know any other month-long writing, illustration, or reading challenges for children's writers? Feel free to tag us on social media with more resources to share with our members!

In addition to the month-long opportunities, there are year-round resources that might be a good fit for you:

**12 x 12 Picture Book Challenge** – Founded by picture book author Julie Hedlund, **12 x 12** is a picture book writing community that aims to write 12 drafts in 12 months. Find more information at: <http://12x12challenge.com>. 2019 registration is still open.

**Storyteller Academy** – An online writing course that offers classes with professional storytellers and editors. There are four terms throughout the year. Find more information at: [www.storytelleracademy.com](http://www.storytelleracademy.com)

**Making Art Every Day** – Illustrator Lisa Bardot's year-long challenge to make art each day of 2019 offers daily prompts and inspiration for artists. Read more at <https://bardotbrush.com/making-art-everyday/>. It's not too late to join in for 2019.

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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).

# Outline Your Novel

BY NICKI JACOBSMEYER, KS/MO ASSISTANT REGIONAL ADVISOR

HAPPY NEW YEAR! As I'm putting away my holiday decorations, taking off my stretchy yoga pants, and getting back into a routine, my goals for 2019 swirl in my mind. A bright, new shiny idea has me captivated, and I need to decide if I'm going to be a "pantser" and write as I go or be a "plotter" and outline. With outlining comes a variety of choices, all valid and successful. The right choice comes down to what works best for YOU, the writer.

Brian A. Klems from *Writers Digest* shares some options in his article "Choosing the Best Outline Method for You," ([writersdigest.com/whats-new/choosing-the-best-outline-method-for-you](http://writersdigest.com/whats-new/choosing-the-best-outline-method-for-you).)

## (1) THE "STRUCTURE-PLUS" OUTLINE

The structure-plus outline is the most traditional method. These outlines contain detailed written descriptions of the individual scenes that will progress in a linear fashion throughout your novel.

The most common kind of structural outline can be roughly divided into three parts, or three "acts," as they are often termed.

- Act 1 introduces (characters and plot situations)
- Act 2 complicates (the main character wants something, but plot complications stand in her way)
- Act 3 resolves (the character either gets what she wants or doesn't get what she wants).

**PROS:** *Very detailed. In fact, you can add as many details as you'd like.*

**CONS:** *Not as easy to physically manipulate the information once you begin writing.*

## (2) THE SIGNPOST OUTLINE

If you are resistant to the outlining process in general, you might find the signpost outline to be better suited for your needs. In this kind of outline, you'll fill in placeholders, which briefly note the types of scenes you'll need, including the characters and the setting and a general idea of what happens, but not necessarily the details.

- **SCENE #**
- SETTING:
- CHARACTERS:
- PLOT:

The signpost outline is a good choice if you're more of a big-picture thinker. This kind of outline gives you a good amount of freedom up front, but on the flip side, it doesn't work through all of the logistical details of your novel, which will mean you'll need to spend more time doing so during the actual writing process.

**PROS:** *A good choice for those who scorn outlining; allows for more creative discovery during the writing process.*

**CONS:** *Not as thorough; scenes not clearly mapped, which can result in potential dead ends later.*

## (3) THE NOTECARD TECHNIQUE

Notecards are excellent learning tools for two main reasons:

- 1) They were portable, so you could take them with you anywhere;
- 2) You could mix up the cards, shuffling them so you weren't just memorizing the answers in the order of the cards. Let each individual card represent one scene of your novel; on it, list the setting and characters involved, as well as the major plot details and the scene's purpose.

- **SETTING:**
- **CHARACTERS:**
- **GOAL:**

The advantage of the notecard technique is that you can easily move cards around to find the best order for the scenes in your novel. Additionally, it visually breaks the novel into mini compartments, which makes it easy to see how your story is progressing, how to transition from scene to scene and what might be missing. And, of course, they're portable! You can take a stack of notecards to a coffee shop without having to lug your expensive laptop around.

**PROS:** *Portable; good for those who visually conceptualize; easy to reorganize scenes.*

**CONS:** *Can be bulky to deal with several scenes at once; no electronic backup (so don't lose them).*

Of course, these are only a few of the many choices that are available to writers. The bottom line is to find what works for you and then start the fun part – WRITE!

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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

# Back to the Drawing Board: Staying Strong While Sitting at the Page

BY AMY KENNEY, KS/MO ILLUSTRATOR COORDINATOR

When authors get stuck, or encounter writer's block, they are told to get up! Change locations! Go for a walk! Illustrators are often told to double down on drawing time to break through problems. There is the sense that authors fix story problems in the shower, and illustrators fix problems in the sketch book. Unfortunately for illustrators, this mindset will make it harder to break through in your work, and could potentially result in work place injuries.

Whenever people think about starting an exercise regimen, or playing sports, they talk about stretching before and after a workout. Although, as authors and illustrators, we spend a lot of our working hours sitting at a desk, we also need to be mindful of how we take care of our bodies. How do we prepare our bodies for a day of working? How do we take care of our bodies during and after a work day? Fortunately, many of the principles that apply to athletes also apply to desk workers. Staying hydrated, and making sure we eat balanced, regular meals is important. Making sure to get up and walk around for at least 10-15 minutes out of every hour is important. And stretching is so important for those of us spending long hours at a computer or performing repetitive motions.

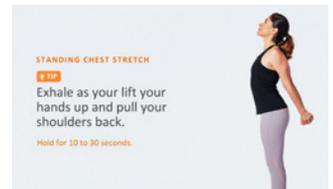
Some of my own personal favorite stretches include neck, back, hand, wrist, and leg stretches. I start and end each drawing or writing session by reaching up in the air and bending in half at the waist to touch my toes, letting my arms dangle. Breathing deeply through the process helps my muscles relax into the stretch, extending my reach gently. I then like to stretch my neck by rolling my head in slow circles. After work I especially like letting my chin rest against my chest as I keep my back straight. I also make sure to stretch my forearms and wrists by holding my arms, one at a time, straight out in front of me, palm facing away from me and fingers up. I then reach with my opposite hand and pull gently on my fingers. This stretch can be repeated with your fingers facing down, and with your palm facing you. And last, but not least, I stretch my calves to take pressure off my lower back. Doing these stretches before working, after working, and a couple of times throughout the day during breaks, keeps me from getting sore over hours of sitting and drawing and writing.

One valuable resource in the process of making sure that your work day is as healthy as possible is the book *Draw Stronger* by Kriota Willberg. A lot of my own practices came from that book. There are also plenty of free online articles, and videos, for desk workers and artists. We will link some below. Be sure to listen to your own body when approaching the stretching recommendations of strangers (or regional team members), and seek the advice of a doctor if you have any pain related to your work.

### "10 Best Stretches for Office Workers"

by Paige Waechner on Very Well Fit.

[verywellfit.com/best-stretches-for-office-workers-1231153](http://verywellfit.com/best-stretches-for-office-workers-1231153)



### "12 Hand Stretches for Artists"

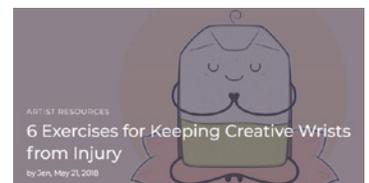
on the blog DonCorgi.

[donicorgi.com/blog/hand-stretches-for-artists/](http://donicorgi.com/blog/hand-stretches-for-artists/)

### "6 Exercises for Keeping Creative Wrists from Injury"

on the blog Red Bubble.

[blog.redbubble.com/2018/05/6-exercises-for-keeping-creative-wrists-from-injury/](http://blog.redbubble.com/2018/05/6-exercises-for-keeping-creative-wrists-from-injury/)



### Draw Stronger by Kriota Willberg

Interested in the book Amy mentioned? Find out about it here on Amazon.

[amazon.com/Draw-Stronger-Self-Care-Cartoonists-Artists/dp/1941250238](http://amazon.com/Draw-Stronger-Self-Care-Cartoonists-Artists/dp/1941250238)

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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)

# Practice Makes Perfect—or does it?

BY PEGGY ARCHER, KS/MO PAL COORDINATOR

Practice Makes Perfect! Write every day! It's advice that we hear all the time and it's good advice!

So, you write every day. You write your heart out! But if practice makes perfect, then why are we still getting rejections? Just how much practice does it *take* to be perfect!? Ok, here's where I get analytical.

'**Practice**,' according to the English dictionary, means "doing something regularly in order to be able to do it better."

'**Perfect**' means "having *all* of the required or desirable elements, qualities or characteristics; as good as it is possible to be."

'**Practice Makes Perfect**' is an idiom that means "repeatedly doing something that will make one become proficient or skillful at it."

So, if someone practices playing Fur Elise on the piano day after day, after a while he should be able to play it perfectly, right? But if he repeatedly makes the same mistake and hits the wrong key on the piano, it will never be perfect. Again, he may play the correct keys, and get the timing correct. But unless he puts emotion into playing the music, it won't be perfect.

Writing is similar. You may write every day, but if you repeatedly make the same mistakes, you won't improve. And if your heart isn't in your story, it won't be 'perfect.' And since no one is ever really 'perfect,' let's change that around a little bit. How about this—

**Practice makes things better over time? Or—  
Writing every day improves your writing!**

## So how do we make our 'practice' count?

I watched a short video online by Eduardo Briceno on How to Get Better at the Things You Care About. In his video Briceno talked about having two zones in which you improve, the Learning Zone, and the Performance Zone.

**In the learning zone** the goal is to improve. This is where we learn about writing for children. Briefly, we do this by **reading**, **listening** to published authors, editors and agents speak, attending webinars and conferences and other events, and by **practicing**. We write, share our work in critique groups or with other children's writers, and listen. And we re-write (repeat many times).

**In the performance zone** we share what we've learned with others. We do this in critique groups, blogs, and by doing author presentations. The goal is to do the best that we can. I think there's a great opportunity for learning in the performance zone as well.

As we prepare our presentation, we are reminded of what we've learned. When we perform, we take mental notes on what works and what doesn't, and we revise our presentation for the next time. We get feedback from adults in the background and from our audience. We identify the mistakes we've made and revise. We *practice*. Because practice helps us to improve over time. We

also continue to learn more about our craft because the more we know about writing for children and become confident about, the better we become at speaking about it.

Setting goals is not just for the new year. Set goals now to improve, and to do the best you can. Practice writing. Write every day, even if it's just a line or two. Keep a pencil and paper somewhere in every room in your house so that when a thought comes, you can capture it. Once you develop the habit of writing *something* every day, you'll find there are more days when you will write much more.

Remember, practice makes things better, and maybe even a little bit perfect.

## Resources on the web:

**How to Get Better at the Things You Care About** by Eduardo Briceno [ted.com/talks/eduardo-briceno-how-to-get-better-at-the-things-you-care-about?language=en](http://ted.com/talks/eduardo-briceno-how-to-get-better-at-the-things-you-care-about?language=en)

**SCBWI Frequently Asked Questions**  
[scbwi.org/online-resources/frequently-asked-questions/](http://scbwi.org/online-resources/frequently-asked-questions/)

**Writing Children's Books for Dummies Cheat Sheet**  
[dummies.com/education/language-arts/writing-childrens-books-for-dummies-cheat-sheet/](http://dummies.com/education/language-arts/writing-childrens-books-for-dummies-cheat-sheet/)

**Getting Started: The Basics of Children's Writing and Illustrating** by Harold Underdown / **The Purple Crayon**  
<http://underdown.org/basics.htm>  
[underdown.org/](http://underdown.org/) (Home page with index)

**InkyGirl—Reading, Writing and Illustrating Children's Books**  
[/inkygirl.com/inkygirl-main/2015/11/4/free-picture-book-thumbnail-templates-for-writers-and-illust.html](http://inkygirl.com/inkygirl-main/2015/11/4/free-picture-book-thumbnail-templates-for-writers-and-illust.html)

**11 Steps to Writing Your First Children's Book** by the editors of **Children's Book Insider**  
<http://cbiclubhouse.com/clubhouse/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/11steps.pdf>

If you haven't looked at our Kansas/Missouri website yet this month, check out our PAL members with children's books published in 2018 under 'Featured Author'!

PEGGY ARCHER, PAL COORDINATOR



Peggy Archer's newest picture book, *A Hippy-Hoppy Toad* (Schwartz & Wade/Random House 2018), won the SCBWI Work-in-Progress award for picture book text, and is a Junior Library Guild Selection. Her other recent picture books include *Name That Dog!* (Dial) and *From Dawn to Dreams* (Candlewick Press).

Originally from northwest Indiana, Peggy and her husband now live in O'Fallon, MO where they are much closer to their grandkids! [peggyarcher.com](http://peggyarcher.com)

# The Market Place

COMPILED AND EDITED BY RITA RUSSELL

“According to the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, first-time authors usually receive an \$8,000 to \$12,000 advance for a 32-page children’s book they have to split with the illustrator (often the illustrator takes home an even larger advance than the author). If their book earns back the advance in sales, writers will start receiving anywhere from 3.5 to 6 percent in royalties.”

*Mental Floss, “11 Secrets of Children’s Book Authors,” 12/21/18*

## BOOK MARKETS

**ACORN** is a new imprint from Scholastic, aimed at four to seven-year-olds who are just beginning to read. The line will debut in May with four titles featuring three or more self-contained stories and full-color art. Acorn executive editor **Katie Carella** noted that her experience as a former teacher has made her intensely aware of the need for more attractive books that appeal to new readers. Acorn is an offshoot of Scholastic’s **Branches** line, which launched in 2013 for slightly older, first-time readers. (*Publishers Weekly 9/25/18 and Underdown.org*)

**Westminster John Knox Press** has announced its new picture book imprint, **FLYAWAY BOOKS**, featuring titles that are rooted in multicultural characters and artwork. Currently seeking stories for children 10 and under that reflect themes of diversity, inclusion, self-esteem, concern for the environment, and social/emotional/contemporary challenges that children tackle today. Titles must appeal to the general trade market, i.e. online booksellers, bookstores, school and public lending libraries. For a list of current titles and submission guidelines, visit website. (*FlyAwayBooks.com and Children’s Book Insider – December 2018*)

**NORTH-SOUTH BOOKS** is looking for fiction picture book submissions from US-based authors and illustrators with universal themes that could appeal to children ages 3-8. Manuscripts must be under 1,000 words. No rhyming, since books must also be translated into German. Detailed submission guidelines on the website. [northsouth.com/contact/](http://northsouth.com/contact/) (*Institute of Children’s Learning eNews 11/8/18 and NorthSouth.com*)

**WORTHYKIDS**, the children’s imprint of **Hachette’s Worthy Publishing Group**, publishes Christian-themed fiction and nonfiction board books, novelty books, and picture books for children eight and under. Subjects include inspiration/faith, patriotism, holidays – particularly Easter and Christmas, relationships and values, and general fiction. Board book manuscripts should be no longer than 250 words. Picture book manuscripts should be under 800 words. Backlist includes colorful, interactive books, such as *VeggieTales* and *Berenstain Bears*. For current titles, go to [worthypublishing.com/product-category/worthy-kids-ideals/](http://worthypublishing.com/product-category/worthy-kids-ideals/) (*CBI – January 2019 and WorthyPublishing.com*)

**Lerner Publishing Group** has acquired young adult nonfiction publisher **ZEST BOOKS**. Founded in 2006 by **Hallie Warshaw**, Zest will launch at least 10 new titles in the YA entertainment, history, science, health, fashion, and lifestyle advice categories this year. Warshaw will continue to oversee acquisitions and serve as Zest’s new publisher-at-large. The imprint’s three top selling titles are *97 Things to Do Before You Finish High School* by Erika Stadler and Steven Jenkins; *Where’s My Stuff? The Ultimate Teen Organizing Guide* by Samantha Moss and Lesley Schwartz; and *How Not to Be a Dick: An Everyday Etiquette Guide* by Meghan Doherty. (*PW 11/26/18*)

“Too many people think if you got a couple books out there you’re doing OK and you can make a living just from royalties, etc. I think for 97 percent of people that’s not the case. Most people who do well in terms of sales still visit schools, still do conferences, still do other things to help supplement that.”

*Calef Brown –  
#1 New York Times–bestselling Writer/Illustrator*

## PUBLISHING PERSONNEL NEWS

**Emma Ledbetter** joined **ABRAMS CHILDREN’S BOOKS** as Editorial Director, Picture Books, effective November 26, 2018. Ledbetter most recently served as senior editor at Simon & Schuster’s Atheneum Books for Young Readers imprint. She succeeded **Tamar Brazis**, who left Abrams in September to become editorial director, picture books, at Viking Children’s Books. (*Publishers Weekly 11/15/18*)

**ALFRED A. KNOPF BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS** announced that **Melanie Nolan** has been named V-P and Publisher of the imprint, effective January 17. Prior to joining Random House in 2012, Nolan was publishing director at Bloomsbury Children’s Books. (*Publishers Weekly Children’s Bookshelf 1/17/19*)

**BONNIER PUBLISHING USA:** **Charlie Ilgunas** has been promoted to Associate Editor of **Little Bee Books** and **Yellow Jacket** from assistant editor. **Rebecca Webster** has been promoted to Senior Editor of **BuzzPop** from editor. (*PWC Bookshelf 1/8/19*)

**CANDLEWICK PRESS:** **Katie Cunningham**, **Kate Fletcher**, and **Andrea Tompa** have all been promoted to Executive Editor from senior editor. All three have worked at Candlewick for 15 years. (*Publishers Weekly Children’s Job Moves 1/3/19*)

**DIAL BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS:** **Dana Chidiac** and **Ellen Cormier** have moved up to Editor from associate editor. (*PWC Job Moves 1/3/19*)

**Jean McGinley** is now V-P, Associate Publisher at **HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN’S BOOKS**; she was previously v-p, subsidiary rights. **Nancy Inteli** has moved up to

*cont’d on pg. 8*

V-P, Editorial Director; she was previously editorial director. **Erica Sussman** has been promoted to V-P, Publishing Director; she was previously editorial director. And **Claudia Gabel** has been promoted to Editorial Director, rising from senior executive editor. (*PWC Job Moves 11/1/18*)

**Mora Couch** was promoted to Associate Editor from assistant editor at **HOLIDAY HOUSE**. The publisher also welcomed **Talia Levitt** as Editorial Assistant; she was an agent at Studio Goodwin Sturges and an instructor at the Rhode Island School of Design. (*PWC Job Moves 12/4/18*)

**LITTLE, BROWN BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS:** **Farrin Jacobs** has been promoted to V-P, Editorial Director, and **Lisa Yoskowitz** has been promoted to Editorial Director, Nonfiction. (*PWC Bookshelf 1/8/19*)

Promotions and additions at **PENGUIN YOUNG READERS:**

- **Kate Meltzer** was promoted to Editor at **Putnam Young Readers** from associate editor.
- **Eileen Savage** has been promoted to Assistant Art Director from senior designer.
- **Kelsey Murphy** joined **Philomel Books** as Editor; previously she was associate editor at Balzer + Bray. (*PWC Bookshelf 11/27/18 and 1/8/19*)

**MACMILLIAN CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING GROUP** announced recent promotions:

- **Feiwei and Friends:** **Holly West** and **Kat Brzozowski** moved up to Senior Editor at both Feiwei and Swoon Reads from editor. **Anna Roberto** was promoted to senior editor at Feiwei from editor.
- **Henry Holt:** **Julia Sooy** has been promoted to Editor at both Holt and Godwin Books from associate editor. **Jessica Anderson** is now Associate Editor at both Holt and Ottaviano Books from assistant editor. **Mark Podesta** has been promoted to Assistant Editor at Holt from editorial assistant.
- **First Second Books:** Robyn Chapman has been promoted to Senior Associate Editor from associate editor.
- **FSG:** Melissa Warten has been promoted to Assistant Editor from editorial assistant. (*PWC Bookshelf 1/17/19*)

**QUIRK BOOKS** has welcomed **Alexandra Arnold**, previously at Katherine Tegen Books, as Senior Editor, focusing on YA, middle-grade, and picture books. "I'm looking for bold, offbeat, timely stories that push the envelope in format and content, offering fresh entry points for kids and teens to fall in love with reading." Read Arnold's detailed manuscript wish list on Tumblr – [alexarnoldditor.tumblr.com/wishlist](http://alexarnoldditor.tumblr.com/wishlist) (*Underdown.org – December 2018*)

**RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS:**

- **Kristen Depken** has been promoted to Editor of **RH Books for Young Readers** from associate editor. **Samantha Gentry** has been promoted to Associate Editor of **Crown Books for Young Readers** from assistant editor. **Rachel Chlebowski** has been promoted to Assistant Editor of Random House Books for Young Readers from editorial assistant. (*PWC Bookshelf 1/17/19*)
- **Andrea Posner-Sanchez** is Editorial Director of **Little Golden Books** and **Sesame Street**; she was previously senior executive editor. Posner-Sanchez fills positions vacated by

**Naomi Kleinberg**, editorial director of Sesame Workshop Books, who retired after more than 35 years at Random House; and **Diane Muldrow**, editorial director for Little Golden Books, who stepped down after more than 20 years at Random House. (*PWC Bookshelf 1/8/19 and 1/10/19*)

- **Sara Sargent** is Senior Executive Editor, picture books through YA (fiction and nonfiction), focusing on platform-driven books with subject matter connected to pop culture, celebrity platforms, and current events. Sargent was previously executive editor at HarperCollins Children's Books. (*PWC Job Moves 1/3/19*)
- **Caroline Abbey** is now Editorial Director, moving up from senior editor. (*PWC Bookshelf 11/15/18*)
- **Regina Flath** was promoted to Assistant Art Director from senior designer. **Casey Moses** was promoted to designer from junior designer. (*PWC Bookshelf 11/8/18*)

On the move at **SCHOLASTIC TRADE. . .**

- **Liza Baker** was promoted to V-P, Associate Publisher of **Cartwheel Books, Orchard Books, Acorn, and Branches**. She was previously v-p, executive editorial director. **Katie Carella** moved up to Executive Editor of Acorn and Branches from senior editor. **Celia Lee** was promoted to Senior Editor of Cartwheel Books and Orchard Books from editor. **Jessica Tice-Gilbert** was promoted to Associate Art Director of Cartwheel Books and Orchard Books from senior art and novelty director.
- **Yaffa Jaskoll** was promoted to Executive Art Director, Trade Fiction from art director. (*PWC Job Moves 1/3/19*)
- At **Scholastic Press**, **Anna Bloom** and **Emily Seife** were promoted to Senior Editor from editor. **Baily Crawford** has been promoted to Senior Designer from designer. **Maya Marlette** has been promoted to Assistant Editor from editorial assistant. (*PWC Bookshelf 12/13/18*)

**SIMON & SCHUSTER CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING** has a round of editorial changes:

- **Atheneum Books:** **Alexa Pastor** was promoted to Editor; she was associate editor at S&S Books for Young Readers. **Julia McCarthy** has been promoted to Assistant Editor from editorial assistant. (*PWC Job Moves 12/4/18 and 1/3/19*)
- **S&S Books for Young Readers:** **Catherine Laudone** has been promoted to Associate Editor from editorial assistant. **Amanda Ramirez** and **Alyza Liau** were promoted to Assistant Editor from editorial assistant. (*PWC Job Moves 12/4/18*)
- **McElderry Books:** **Nicole Fiorica** has been promoted to Assistant Editor from editorial assistant. (*PWC Job Moves 12/4/18*)
- **Simon Pulse:** **Jennifer Ung** was promoted to Senior Editor from editor. **Jessi Smith** was promoted to Assistant Editor from editorial assistant. (*PWC Job Moves 11/1/18*)
- **Simon Spotlight:** **Lisa Lauria** has joined as Editor, coming from Toys R Us, where she was a copywriter, and previously at Disney Publishing Worldwide, where she was an editor. **Sally Hosokawa** has been promoted to Assistant Editor from editorial assistant. (*PWC Job Moves 11/1/18 and 1/3/19*)
- **Paula Wiseman Books and Beach Lane Books:** **Sarah Jane Abbott** has been promoted to Associate Editor from

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assistant editor. (*PWC Job Moves 11/1/18*)

**Simon & Schuster** art department promotions and new hires:

- **Matt Adamec** has been promoted to Associate Art Director from reprints designer.
- **Brittany Naundorff** has been promoted to Designer for **Little Simon** and **Simon Spotlight** from junior designer. **Gabrielle Chang** has been named junior designer for those imprints.
- **Rebecca Syracuse** has been named Designer for **Atheneum**, **McElderry**, and **Beach Lane Books**; previously she was a designer at Macmillan Children's Publishing Group. **Karyn Lee** has been named Junior Designer for those imprints.
- **Laura Eckes** has been named Designer for **Simon Pulse**; she was most recently a designer at HarperCollins. (*PWC Job Moves 12/4/18*)

**Eliza Swift** joined **SOURCEBOOKS** as Senior Editor for **Fire** and **Jabberwocky**; previously she was an editor at Albert Whitman and Company. (*PWC Job Moves 11/1/18*)

**Brian Monahan** joined **STERLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS** as Editorial Director. Previously he was a children's buyer at Barnes & Noble. (*PWC Job Moves 12/4/18*)

“I think that’s a typical thing that all writers tell people to read, but you’d be surprised at how many people want to write for kids and say they don’t have time to read. But if you don’t read you’re not going to know what’s out there and what kids expect. You have to know the market.”

*Debbi Michiko Florence –  
Author of the Jasmine Toguchi chapter book series*

## AGENT NEWS

**Savannah Brooks**, Associate Agent at **JENNIFER D. CHIARA LITERARY**, is building her list with YA fiction. “I’m especially interested in books that bring to light the challenges teens face in their day-to-day (uncertainty about the future, friendship tension, mental health, etc.), but I’d like to read a work where the protagonist actually enjoys high school (or at least doesn’t dread it).” For more wish list details, visit Brooks’ agent page [jdlit.com/savannah-brooks](http://jdlit.com/savannah-brooks) (*Guide to Literary Agents 1/7/19 and JDLit.com*)

**Kristy Hunter**, Associate Agent with **THE KNIGHT AGENCY**, is seeking middle grade and young adult manuscripts in most genres, including fantasy, paranormal, contemporary, historical, and magical realism. Of interest are stories with a unique voice, strong hook, and diverse cast of characters. Visit the agency website for Hunter’s wish list and submission details. (*KnightAgency.net and Children’s Book Insider – November 2018*)

**Quessa Robinson** of **NELSON LITERARY AGENCY** is building her list with middle grade, young adult, and adult fiction. “I’m seeking modern-day blue stockings, POC fangirls/fanboys, #blackgirlmagic, #carefreeblackgirls, #blackboyjoy, LGBTQ+, neuroatypical/neurodivergent, and disabled POCs as leads.” Middle Grade (contemporary and SF/F) that’s cute,

quirky, charming, and fun. Young adult (contemporary, SF/F, historical). Submission guidelines on agency website. (*Guide to Literary Agents 10/5/18 and NelsonAgency.com*)

**Edite Kroll** of Edite Kroll Literary Agency has transferred her active children’s book clients to **Victoria Wells Arms** of **WELLS ARMS LITERARY**. The transfer was effective January 1, 2019. Kroll will continue to work with her children’s backlist and adult trade clients. (*Publishing Trends 11/8/18*)

**Alexandra Levick** of **WRITERS HOUSE** was recently promoted to Junior Agent and is open to queries for picture books through adult. Manuscript wish list and submission details on her website. (*AlexandraLevick.com and JustinColonBooks.com*)

“Writing is learned by imitation. I learned to write mainly by reading writers who were doing the kind of writing I wanted to do and by trying to figure out how they did it.”

*William Zinsser – Journalist and Nonfiction Writer*

## MAGAZINE MARKET

**IDEALS CHRISTMAS** and **IDEALS EASTER**, published by **Worthy Publishing Group**, are magazine-inspired large-format paperbacks published at Christmas and Easter only. Looking for poetry (metered verse and free verse) that is optimistic and nostalgic. Maximum 5 poems per submission. Also seeking nonfiction (600-1000 words) that offers cheerful, nostalgic stories; upbeat personal experience essays; humor and inspirational articles. Maximum 2 selections per submission. Publication is primarily aimed at adults but should be appropriate to read aloud to children or be read by older children. Back issues available in libraries and on Amazon. Submissions guidelines on publisher’s website. (*Children’s Book Insider – January 2019 and WorthyPublishing.com*)

**KEYS FOR KIDS** is accepting contemporary stories that reflect the message and meaning of specific scripture passages. Story should be written in third person, crafted with intriguing description and dialogue. Humor is a plus! Maximum 375 words. “Some of our specific needs at this time include: stories featuring kids from single-parent or blended families; stories that take place in urban or multi-cultural communities; stories featuring kids who live outside the United States.” Pays \$30 for each story accepted. Writer guidelines and sample stories available on website [keysforkids.org/WritersGuidelines](http://keysforkids.org/WritersGuidelines) Also, sister publication **UNLOCKED**, a new daily devotional for teens, is seeking content. Submission details on website <https://unlocked.org> (*Institute of Children’s Literature eNews 12/20/18 and KeysForKids.org*)

“Sometimes being unschooled is actually helpful. I have learned a great deal through trial and error. More than anything, I’ve learned through practice. And imperfect technique helps make my pictures distinctive!”

*Mark Teague – Author & Illustrator*

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## WORK-FOR-HIRE

**CAPSTONE PUBLISHERS** is seeking authors, particularly from marginalized backgrounds, for work-for-hire assignments (paid a flat fee with no royalties). Capstone publishes nonfiction topics only, for kindergarten through 8th grade readers. Titles are fun, informative, and accessible, and allow all kids to see themselves in the pages. Capstone Press supports struggling and reluctant readers with limited word counts and vocabularies, leveled text, key back matter and strong photo-text matching. For a list of current titles and series, go to [capstonepub.com/library/books/](http://capstonepub.com/library/books/). Send a cover letter with previous publishing credits, topics of interest, and 2-3 writing samples in the genres or topics you wish to write to Eliza Leahy, Editor, Capstone Publishers, at [ELeahy@Capstonepub.com](mailto:ELeahy@Capstonepub.com). Responds only if your application meets their needs.

(*Children's Book Insider* – December 2018 and *CapstonePub.com*)

“When I was starting out, I got 118 rejections on my poetry before my first sale. Posted them on my bedroom wall. Now I have 375 books out.”

*Jane Yolen – Award-winning Author*

## CONTESTS

\***2019 LEAPFROG FICTION CONTEST** is open through May 1. The entry fee is \$33. Seeking submissions of adult, young adult, and middle grade novels, novellas, and short story collections. Minimum word count: 22,000. Complete contest guidelines on website: [leapfrogpress.com/contest.htm](http://leapfrogpress.com/contest.htm)

**First Prize:** publication contract offer from Leapfrog Press, with an advance payment, plus the finalist awards. **Finalists:** \$150 and one or two critiques of the manuscript from contest judges; permanent listing on the Leapfrog Press contest page as a contest finalist, along with short author bio and description of the book. (*LeapfrogPress.com and Children's Book Insider* – January 2019)

\*The annual **KATHERINE PATERSON PRIZE FOR YA AND CHILDREN'S WRITING** is open to submissions through March 1. The entry fee is \$20. The Prize, sponsored by *Hunger Mountain* journal, has three categories: **Young Adult** (for ages 12 and up — a short story or novel excerpt up to 10,000 words); **Middle Grade** (ages 8-12, short story or novel excerpt of up to 10,000 words); and **Picture Book or Writing for Young Children** (picture books and short stories for up to age 8). One overall first place winner receives \$1,000 and online publication. Three category winners receive \$100 each and online publication. The 2019 judge for the Katherine Paterson Prize is celebrated children's book author **Monica Brown**. Submission details at <https://hungermtn.org/contests/katherine-paterson-prize/> (*HungerMtn.org*)

\* **Note:** These contests include an entry fee. SCBWI does not endorse any market and this information is strictly for informational purposes. Members are responsible for researching markets before submitting.

“Your job as a writer is to learn from yourself, to identify your own mistakes and find ways to correct them so that next time around, you can take another step toward honing your skill. Consulting other people only teaches you to depend on their reactions, which may or may not be legitimate.”

*Sue Grafton – #1 New York Times–bestselling Author*

## WRITING RESOURCES

**CYNSATIONS**, the blog of award-winning kidlit author **Cynthia Leitch Smith**, is a one-stop shop in writing and publishing for young people. “The posts are always interesting and insightful with brilliant guests and valuable information, plus she offers links to some of the most interesting posts on children's writing from all over the web.” [cynthialeitchsmith.blogspot.com/](http://cynthialeitchsmith.blogspot.com/) (*Institute of Children's Literature eNews* 10/25/18)

**FOR BETTER FOR VERSE** from the **University of Virginia**, is a great tutorial for better understanding the meter in rhyming picture book manuscripts, so that you can be sure what you've written uses an even, repeated metrical pattern. Using this interactive on-line tutorial, you will learn to scan traditionally metered English poetry, and you'll get practice and instant feedback on analyzing and developing an ear and a feel for accentual-syllabic verse. [prosody.lib.virginia.edu/rules-of-thumb/](http://prosody.lib.virginia.edu/rules-of-thumb/) (*ICL eNews* 11/22/18)

**Purdue University's** online writing lab, **PURDUE OWL**, has amazing resources for writers, especially for those struggling with basic grammar issues or for those who need help in properly citing nonfiction sources. The OWL includes a fantastic primer on passive verbs, as well as the basics for fiction, nonfiction, and poetry writing. [owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](http://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) (*ICL eNews* 11/29/18)

Children's book author **Rachelle Burk** curates an extensive list of online resources for writers who aspire to be published. The **RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN'S WRITERS** blog offers helpful articles and information to improve your writing and expand your network of children writer's contacts on the path to publication – everything from legal advice to help with cover letters and an introduction to writing poetry. [resourcesforchildrenswriters.blogspot.com](http://resourcesforchildrenswriters.blogspot.com) (*ICL eNews* 12/27/18)

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.

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SCBWI, [scbwi.org](http://scbwi.org) • Kansas/Missouri, [kmo.scbwi.org](http://kmo.scbwi.org)