



Society of Children's Book
Writers & Illustrators EASTERN PA
CHAPTER

PENN & INK

EASTERN PA SCBWI CHAPTER SEPT 2007

HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ Interviews with authors Deborah Heiligman, Jennifer Reed, and Jerry Spinelli!
- ❖ Showcase your work at the ALA! p. 10
- ❖ Should you lower your standards? p. 6

THE GOOD NEWS:
OUR FALL PHILLY CONFERENCE HAS BECOME VERY POPULAR, THANKS TO THE EXCELLENT SPEAKERS, FACULTY, AND PLANNING OF ITS DIRECTORS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS.

THE BAD NEWS:
THE FALL PHILLY SOLD OUT EARLY & A LOT OF LONG-TIME ATTENDEES MISSED OUT.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO REGISTER AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE TO ENSURE A SPOT — LITERALLY MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

THE SPRING 2008 POCONOS RETREAT WILL BE HERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, SO CHECK OUR WEBSITE WWW.SCBWIEPA.ORG OFTEN FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTER EARLY.



ARTWORK BY MARY PALADIN

ASSISTANT RA'S MESSAGE

By Marilyn Hershey

This is crazy! This is supposed to be an easy task for me. I write a monthly column for a dairy magazine, keep up with a weekly blog for Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association, freelance for local newspapers; and I have writer's block for "just a few words" in Penn & Ink. It's made me realize that I might be a bit more nervous about Laurie stepping down next May than I originally anticipated. Laurie's leaving an awesome chapter in my hands and I hope I can do half the job that she has in the past years.

Raising four children, owning a dairy farm, and having one-on-one critiques with editors have taught me that change is not always easy, but it is good. In the upcoming months, the changes happening in the chapter will not be effortless and will require extra patience (hint); but I also have confidence in being surrounded by great people who are doing an amazing job in the chapters many activities.

In other words, when you volunteer for events, even if it seems like a small task, it makes this chapter run more smoothly. Besides, Laurie is just an email away and she has already promised to

WELCOME AUTUMN!

answer my pestering questions for a long time.

We have an exciting year ahead of us, the retreat is being finalized, another awesome Illustrator's Day and Meet the Editors Day are in the works, and our chapter has the opportunity to participate in the American Library Association's big event. A lot going on; but together we'll get it done.

After hearing about the passing of a wonderful mentor in the children's writing world, Madeleine L'Engle; I can't help but leave you with a quote from *A Ring of Endless Light* as mother spoke to John and Vicky about changes:

"We can't stop on the road of Time. We have to keep on going. And growing up is all part of it, the exciting and wonderful business of being alive."



ARTWORK BY: LAURA BROWN

FROM RHYMING PICTURE BOOKS TO GALAPAGOS BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIES: AN INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH HEILIGMAN

by *Ellen L. Ramsey and Jane Resides*

Deborah Heiligman, author of numerous books for children, including *From Caterpillar to Butterfly*; *Fun Dog, Sun Dog*; and *High Hopes, A Photobiography of John F. Kennedy*, was one of the speakers at the April 2007 SCBWI Poconos Retreat.

Q. What was your first book?

My first book was a rhyming picture book, *Into the Night*, which is now unfortunately out of print. It's a lot of people's favorite book of mine. It's the story of a little boy and his mom as they recount their very special day. The book starts, "Into the night we go, into the darkness, steady and slow. Over the trees and through the stars, and up to where the night winds are."

Q. How did you make the transition from a rhyming picture book to doing your very, very many nonfiction books?

I started out working for Scholastic News magazine and that work was almost all nonfiction, although I did write a couple of plays for them. I was very accustomed to writing nonfiction for kids and to writing about all kinds of topics – from Pacman to nuclear war, for first graders to sixth graders.

I really loved reading biographies when I was a kid. One of my early ideas was to do a biography about Barbara McClintock, the geneticist. I heard about her when I was working at Scholastic—and she had recently won the Nobel Prize. My first book had just been published, and I was working on *From Caterpillar to Butterfly*, my second book, which is still in print. It's my best seller and it's being made into one of those big books and will be coming out next year in this format.

Q. How did you come to be interested in writing a biography of Paul Erdős?

Paul Erdős was a mathematician, not well known outside the math community, but he's like a god in the math community. My older son is very much of a math guy. He told me about Paul Erdős and I said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." Then my younger son, who isn't as much of a math guy, came home from middle school and told me about this guy Paul Erdős who didn't have a home and traveled everywhere and did

math. Now I was paying attention. It is a crazy idea for a children's biography because Erdős did such high-level math, but he was also very much a child-like character. I just went for it.

As I said in my workshop, I strongly believe you can write about anything for children. You just have to know how to do it.

Q. What kind of math concepts are you going to include in the book?

The main thing I am hoping to include is Erdős's interest in prime numbers. (Note for the non-mathematically inclined: prime numbers are numbers [e.g., 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, etc.] whose only whole number factors are 1 and the number itself.)

What I am hoping to do is not to describe the specific math, because that is just too complex, but just to give a feeling for it in both the words and the art.

Q. Do you have other books in progress?

I do, I do. I'm working on a book about Charles Darwin and his wife Emma. It's a themed biography and it's basically the story of their marriage. My agent sold the proposal to Henry Holt, and my deadline is this fall so the book can come out in 2008. It's a YA biography.

Q. What kind of presentations do you give for school visits?

I do an interactive assembly where I talk about writing fiction and nonfiction and about doing research. To make the presentation interactive, I ask lots of questions, and I use my books as examples.

I talk about doing many drafts, and I use *Fun Dog, Sun Dog* as an example because I did many, many drafts for this book. I also have some funny stories about rejection letters from editors. When I talk about research, I discuss very specific things about different books that I think kids will be interested in. I allow time for lots of questions – which is always one of my favorite parts – because kids ask such great questions.

Heligman Interview cont'd

Q. Have you done a lot of travel to research your individual nonfiction books?

Back before the Internet, I did a bit more travel. For example, I went to the Barbara McClintock archives in Cold Spring Harbor. Now that the Internet is such a great resource, traveling is not as critical as a research tool. But it's great to travel to get a sense of the places where a person lived and worked.

As background for my Darwin book, I had already been to Darwin's house in England and to the Galapagos Islands. Visiting the Galapagos was utterly, utterly magnificent. Iguanas, blue-footed boobies, and sea lions come up to you because they are not at all scared of people. So you can get kissed by a sea lion or walk right next to an iguana or see any number of birds – it's amazing.

Even though I've already visited Darwin's house in England, I made the trip before I had decided to do the Darwin biography. So I'd like to go back and walk where he used to walk and look at the children's bedrooms. I'm really hoping to go back, but I have such a tight deadline, I don't know if I can or not.

Children's books tend not to pay you enough to travel a lot. When I did the book on Mary Leakey, people asked, "Did you go to Africa?" And the answer is no.

Q. Is there one question about writing you've wished that someone would ask you and no one ever has?

Not really. Except maybe the question, "Could I pay you a billion dollars to write a book?" And the answer is "yes, of course!"

*Books to Look Forward To--*In addition to Deborah's book on Charles and Emma Darwin (due out in 2008), her biography of Paul Erdos, *The Boy Who Loved Math*, is projected for publication in 2009. Deborah is also working on a sequel to *Fun Dog, Sun Dog*, called *Cool Dog, School Dog*, which will be published by Marshall Cavendish.



LEADING THE CHARGE

By Kelly R. Fineman



*I spend my weekends on dew-wet grass,
watching combatants advance and retreat.
No ladies allowed: only warriors.*

*I watch them race toward the net,
ponytails waving.
They kick at the ball with armored legs
like crabs, or Rockettes.*

*The playing field is not level,
but girls are used to playing uphill.*

They cannot be kept from their goal.

EASTERN PA SCBWI MEMBER SUCCESSSES

Debbi Michiko Florence reports that she's been busy with a number of author interviews (including the Jerry Spinelli interview on p. 5) and keeping up her website. Check out Debbi's very 'juicy' and interesting site at <http://www.debbimichikoflorence.com>.

This spring, the West Chester Public Library honored **Jen Bryant** as one of their "Literacy Heroes." She was interviewed at the Brandywine River Museum on Comcast Cable TV and received her award at a Longwood Gardens event hosted by Action News anchor Karen Rogers. Authors **Jerry & Eileen Spinelli**, who received the award the previous year, were also recognized.

Jen also attended a live performance of a musical based on her novel *THE TRIAL*, written by students at Elkins Park Middle School and performed by professional singers/actors from Broadway. Her recent novel, *PIECES OF GEORGIA*, set in Chadds Ford, PA, was chosen as a CBC Notable Book for Social Studies, a VOYA Top Shelf Pick for Middle Grades, and a Bank Street College Best Book of the Year.

Jen's third novel, *RINGSIDE, 1925: VIEWS FROM THE SCOPES TRIAL* will be published by Knopf in February. Jen's fifth picture book, *A RIVER OF WORDS*, a lyrical biography of the poet-doctor William Carlos Williams, will be published by Eerdmans in 2008 and is illustrated by Melissa Sweet.

Kay Winters has 3 books under contract. *COLONIAL VOICES* (Dutton), illustrated by Golden Kite Award-winning artist Larry Day, is coming out in spring 2008. Kay is also doing a lift-the-flap Halloween book designed by her daughter, Linda, and illustrated by Jeanne Winston (Harcourt Aug. 2008). Kay also has a back-to-school book, *THIS YEAR WILL BE THE BEST*, in the works with Dutton.

Gene Barretta reports that he is thrilled that his book, *NOW & BEN: THE MODERN INVENTIONS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*, won the 2007 Carolyn W. Field Award from the PA Library Association. Gene will attend the awards luncheon at State College on October 16th.

Susan Katz has some good news to share: she has two new books coming out in September, *OH, THEODORE! GUINEA PIG POEMS*, illustrated by Stacey Schuett (Clarion), and *WHEN THE SHADBUSH BLOOMS*, co-authored with Carla Messenger, illustrated by David Kanietakeron Fadden (Tricycle). Susan was pleasantly

surprised when *Kirkus Reviews* included *WHEN THE SHADBUSH BLOOMS* in its 2007 BEA/ALA Big Books Guide of "buzzworthy" new releases.

Elizabeth Phillips-Hershey also has 2 books coming out this November: *MIND OVER BASKETBALL: COACH YOURSELF TO HANDLE STRESS* coauthored with Jane Weierbach (Magination Press) and *AN INTERGENERATIONAL LOVE AFFAIR, CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE COFFEE LOVER'S SOUL* (an adult book by HCI Press).

Anita Nolan has a work-for-hire historical novel out this month. *WHEN THE DUST SETTLED*, geared to 4th graders and about the 1796 U.S. election, is published by a small, educational press, Homecourt Publishers.

Wes Loder has 2 books out – an academic tome, *THE NIKON CAMERA IN AMERICA: 1946-1953* (McFarland Publishers, Nov. 2007) and a YA-crossover novel, *THE GOLDEN HORN* (PublishAmerica), set in the Balkan country of Starnovia.

The play version of **Sandy Asher's** *TOO MANY FROGS!* is out this fall in Dramatic Publishing Co.'s catalog and is being performed in several states. The book's sequel, *WHAT A PARTY!*, has been signed to Scholastic book clubs & fairs. Sandy also signed a contract for a 3rd book with Philomel. Sandy'd love to consider linking other writers' websites from America Writes 4 Kids - <http://usawrites4kids.drury.edu> - just email her at sandyasher@earthlink.net.

Arlette Braman's book, *KIDS AROUND THE WORLD PLAY!* has been published in Spanish. The foreign language rights were sold to Editorial Limusa/Wiley in Mexico and the book is now available.

Jordan Sonnenblick is busy promoting his 3rd YA novel, *ZEN AND THE ART OF FAKING IT* (Scholastic). His 1st novel, *DRUMS, GIRLS & DANGEROUS PIE*, is in print in 11 languages. His 2nd, *NOTES FROM THE MIDNIGHT DRIVER*, received starred reviews in *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Kliatt*. Jordan also has a MG, *DODGER & ME*, coming out (Feiwel & Friends 2008). He's working on several other books under contract. If you see Jordan at the Poconos Retreat, feel free to hand him a cup of coffee, he'll need it!

I hear from **Wendy & Leroy Latty** that they are healthy, thriving, and busy with ten-month old daughter, Zayda, who they describe as a joy to watch, teach and learn from. They send best

EASTERN PA SCBWI MEMBER SUCCESSES CONT'D

wishes to everyone and their dreams, goals, decisions to make the world of children's literature a better place. They add that their desires for this same purpose are on the back burner but far from abandoned.

Lori Laniewski reports that her educational company, TOUCHE' EDI will release a children's music CD this September entitled, *SPIDERS, BATS, AND WOLVES...OH MY!* The CD features Mr. Arachnid--a very misunderstood spider. The cover illustrations (see p. 9) were created by **Jim Grabowski**.

Marie Lamba has just published her 1st novel, a YA called *WHAT I MEANT...* (Random House). The novel, about a 15-year-old girl, is a homegrown book - set in Doylestown with a few Philly scenes. Check out Marie's website, www.marielamba.com.

Congratulations to Marie & all our local success stories!

INTERVIEW WITH AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR JERRY SPINELLI

By Debbi Michiko Florence

About EGGS: David mostly lives with his grandmother, but tries to spend as much time away from her. His mother died last year and his father spends the week working away from home. When David meets Primrose, they form an unlikely friendship. He's 9, she's 13. He doesn't have a mother and wants her back, she has one she wishes would go away. Together through nighttime forays of scavenging for junk, they discover they have more in common than they thought - and try to fill the missing space in their lives.

Can you share the story about the publication journey EGGS took? Over a decade ago I wrote a book. My editor turned the ms back to me with many issues and problems. I attacked them. After a month I began to lose my zest for a job that figured to continue for many more months. So I put that ms aside and started a new one--which became *WRINGER*--and never went back to the old one. Ten years later my wife Eileen said "Let me see that old manuscript you never finished." I found it, she read it and said it looked good to her. I sent it to Alvina Ling at Little, Brown and over ten years after I wrote it *EGGS* was finally published.

My heart ached for David and Primrose. What was the spark for their stories? No particular event or person. I've just always liked to put contending characters together and see what happens.

I love all the little details - David's talent with the yo-yo, Primrose's special room in a broken-down van, and Refrigerator John's lifestyle. How do you get to know your characters? Well, in this case it was a matter of situation. David's situation was a dead mother and a resented grandmother; Primrose's was a mother she

almost wished were dead. Many paths led naturally from those two situations.

The title, *EGGS*, is perfect - since David and Primrose both have experiences with eggs early in the story and because their emotional lives are as fragile as eggs. **Do you come up with your book titles before or after you write the story? Do they come easy to you? (I ask because I struggle with titles.)** Sometimes a title is the first thing to come, sometimes the last. Ten years ago the problem ms was called *WHO CARES*. I was never crazy about the title. What that happens, one approach is to look back into the story itself for the title. That's where I found *EGGS*.

What's your favorite way of eating eggs? In descending order: poached--pickled--sunny side up.

I haven't had a chance to read *LOVE, STARGIRL* yet. As a huge fan of *STARGIRL*, I'm thrilled. Did you have a sequel in mind when you wrote *STARGIRL*? No, I had no sequel in mind. Then Eileen suggested I write a short, gifty, holiday book about *Stargirl*. I tried, but it ran away from me and became a full-length sequel.

Any other news you'd like to share? In Sept I'll be doing a 3-week national book tour for *LOVE, STARGIRL*, from San Francisco to Boston. Check my website jerryspinelli.com for details. And we have a new film deal for *STARGIRL*.

What are you working on now? The first book to be co-authored by Eileen and me. It's non-fiction and will be published by Random House.

See Debbi's previous interviews with Jerry Spinelli on her web site at: www.debbimichikoflorence.com

POETS' ADVICE TO WRITERS: LOWER YOUR STANDARDS!

By Jen Bryant

Many unpublished writers expect too much too soon. I know I did 18 years ago when I was starting out. I did not have the patience to write through a lot of bad first, second and third drafts in order to arrive at the next good one. It is true that no writing is wasted; each of our sentences, paragraphs, and chapters has something to teach us.

It is equally true, however, that not all of our writing is publishable—or even good. Many years ago, when a young writer asked the famous poet William Stafford “What do you do if you’re not writing anything good for a while?” . . . Stafford, a Midwesterner with a Zen-like peacefulness about him, replied: “Well, then, I just lower my standards.” As a huge fan of Stafford’s poetry, I have taken that advice to heart and applied it during those times when I find myself judging my work too early in the writing process.

Another of my favorite writers, Annie Dillard, puts it this way: “There is neither a proportional relationship, nor an inverse one, between a writer’s estimation of a work in progress and its actual quality. The feeling that the work is magnificent and the feeling that it is abominable, are both mosquitoes to be repelled, ignored, or killed, but not indulged.” Like Peter Elbow, whose pioneering book for college students: *Writing Without Teachers*, Stafford and Dillard underscore the idea that it is through **wrestling with language on a daily basis** that we come to know our best thoughts, ideas, and stories. In his lectures and talks on various university campuses, Stafford in particular advocated what he called “venturing forth into the material,” without a pre-conceived outline, verse form, or literary genre in mind.

I believe that this is good advice for all of us in the children’s field as well. Too often at conferences I hear of a beginning writer who has suddenly stopped his or her story because “I’m not sure if it’s a novel or a short story or a chapter book.” Stafford’s answer to this would be “it doesn’t matter . . . keep writing and the story will find its own form.” I would also add: “And if it doesn’t, and it’s an excellent piece of writing, then any good editor will see that and suggest a form.”

Another American writer, Richard Hugo, believed in **allowing the process of writing to lead**, and that the ideas, stories, images, will follow. In his book “The Triggering Town” he observes: “If you write every day, you will stay in shape and will be better able to receive those good poems and stories, which [seem to be] a matter of luck, and get them down. Lucky accidents seldom happen to writers who don’t work. You will find that you may rewrite [a story] or a poem and it never seems quite right. Then a much better story or poem comes along rather fast and you wonder why you bothered with all that work on the earlier one. Actually . . . the hard work on the first one is responsible for the sudden ease of the second. If you just sit around waiting for the easy ones, nothing will come. Get to work!”

Children’s author Jerry Spinelli puts it this way: “Attitude is everything, the right one being JUST DO IT. The idea is breathtakingly simple: If you really want to write, you will . . . the key is to stick at it day after day, even if all you can manage is minutes. Consider this: 30 minutes per day is 150 hours per year. At a page per hour, that’s 150 pages—possibly long enough for a book. And that’s a pretty a minimal investment of your time. Most people watch TV for six times that long each and every day!”

So—in order to get to “the good stuff” in our writing, we must resolve to have a positive outlook and realistic standards, *and* we must also discipline ourselves to write something almost every day. Like an athlete who puts on a uniform and cleats, performs a series of warm-up exercises, and gets herself to the field or track at a certain time, writers also need to adopt a lifestyle that gives writing its fair share of attention and allows those essential literary muscles to strengthen. Just as not every workout is an Olympic record, not every session at the desk will yield a best-seller. But several months of disciplined writing will certainly move you closer to your best work. ***

BREAKING INTO THE NONFICTION MARKET: AN INTERVIEW WITH CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JENNIFER REED

By Dianne Ochiltree

Jennifer Reed is a savvy writer who has targeted her talent and editorial experience at a lucrative, and often overlooked, marketplace: nonfiction books published for the school and library market. From her home office in Darlington, Maryland, she juggles her book-writing projects with her duties as creator/editor of the popular online children's magazine, WEE ONES (<http://www.weeonesmag.com/>). She also teaches Writing for Children and Teens at the Institute of Children's Literature as well as 'Creative Writing and the SAT Essay' at her local high school. She recently took time from her very busy day to talk to us about writing nonfiction for kids, a topic in which she's quite the expert!

Q. How, and why, did you start writing nonfiction for children?

A. *I'd worked on several magazines and newspapers as an editor and a staff writer before I got involved in children's writing. I'd written a lot of nonfiction pieces and really enjoyed it. When I started having my family, I decided I wanted to stay home and become a children's writer. Although I'd submitted both fiction and nonfiction for publication, it was my nonfiction that sold first. SKIPPING STONES accepted an article I'd written called, "Springtime in Japan", and I was paid in copies, not cash. However, the letter I received from the editor was awesome. She told me it was beautifully written and I finally got the encouragement I needed to continue pursuing writing for children. I realized early on, too, that it was easier to sell nonfiction. This was in 1998, when the market really started to open up to nonfiction writing for children.*

Q. How did you make the transition from writing magazine pieces to nonfiction books for kids?

A. *After I'd sold several nonfiction articles to different children's magazines like HOPSCOTCH, BOYS' QUEST, and others, I got a job as a regular contributor to CRINKLES MAGAZINE. The magazine was just being launched, so I got in at a good time. I wrote for every issue for two years, and I think this experience---not to mention the 30 additional nonfiction articles added to my clip file during this time---is what got me my first book-writing jobs.*

Q. What was your first nonfiction book for kids, and how did you get that first publishing contract offer?

A. *My first book contract was with Chelsea House. I actually wasn't thrilled about writing a book on the Love Canal (a hazardous waste site in New York State) but they needed writers for this particular series, and I felt I couldn't turn my back on this opportunity. The pay wasn't bad for a first-time author, either. It was hard work and required a lot of research but I got the book written under a tight deadline. It was published in 2002, and I've done several more for them since---as well as for other publishers targeting the school and library market.*

Q. How do you go about getting your book contracts, in general? For example, do you put together a book proposal? How do you find out what a particular publisher is looking for?

A. *The nonfiction publishers I write for work a bit differently than trade publishers. They usually have series for which they must find authors. I've never proposed an idea to a publisher. Instead, the editors have given me a list of topics needed in a given series and asked me to choose which ones I'd like to write about. My initial contact with a new publisher is to send a letter and resume, along with samples of my work. I usually get a standard response of "we'll keep your resume on file." If I've not heard anything from a publisher after a few months, I'll send another letter reminding them that I'm still interested in writing books for them. It's important to remind editors of your availability and make sure it's done in a nice, professional way. The 'squeaky wheel' theory has paid off for me!*

Q. Speaking of that, how many books have you had published to date?

A. *I've published 15 books to date, including one novel and one picture book. Thirteen titles are nonfiction titles from Chelsea House, Enslow, Kidhaven Press and Capstone. In addition, I have seven books under contract with Enslow, Capstone and Tangerine Sky. For more*

Reed Interview cont'd

information about all my books, you can check out my author website, www.jennifer-reed.com.

Q. How do you do your research? Is it fun, or frustrating?

A. *Research is hard and time-consuming. I always use the Internet to get started. But, as you know, it's not always reliable or complete. I use my local library to dig out more information. Every publisher I've worked for wants primary resources, which often includes my own experiences. For example, my second book contract with Chelsea House, on the royal Saudi family, was offered to me in part because I'd lived a brief time in the Middle East. I also interview a lot of different people, sometimes famous people, in order to get facts and perspective on my book subject or topic. For example, my biography of Paula Danziger couldn't have been done without contacting her immediate family, and friends, many of whom are well-known children's authors themselves. That was great fun. Research is only frustrating when you can't find enough of it.*

Q. What do publishers expect to see submitted along with the finished manuscript?

A. *A professional bibliography is a must. This usually means following the publisher's guidelines. Also, I always keep my CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE on hand for quick reference. I use www.easybib.com to cite my references. It's this simple: authors must include all the information necessary to document facts with the manuscript in the bibliography. Anything less only frustrates the editor, makes you look unprofessional, and can jeopardize your ability to get another book contract with that publisher.*

Q. Are there resources on the Internet, or on the bookshelf, to help beginning writers learn more about this genre and marketplace?

A. *The various market guides, such as CHILDREN'S WRITER'S AND ILLUSTRATOR'S MARKET, often list publishers who are interested in nonfiction. I go through the listings and make note of the ones I want to write for the most. Then, I hit the library and check out books they've published to get a good idea of their formats and style. I always visit their websites, too.*

Q. What were the financial considerations you had to weigh in targeting this type of writing marketplace versus others?

A. *I didn't really weigh any financial considerations. I wanted to write and publish books, and for me, someone who loves nonfiction, the decision seemed easy enough. The more experience I've gained, however, the better the pay has become. Most books I write are work-for-hire, while a few have been for an advance payment and royalties. Of course, like anything in this business, author payment arrangements vary from publisher to publisher.*

Q. How does the marketplace for school and library books differ from the traditional trade market?

A. *If you're a nonfiction writer wishing to submit to the trade market, you need to know what kinds of books they publish and follow their submission guidelines. Manuscripts most likely will be formatted the same way you submit nonfiction work to a magazine, though: the text of the book comes first, and then any back matter. 'Back matter' is defined as your bibliography, extra information for sidebars, index, and so on. It's hard to choose or propose a topic to a trade publisher unless they specify somehow that they're looking for books on a particular subject. Basically, you write what you know, follow their guidelines, submit and hope for the best. I think trade publishers are looking for good nonfiction, too. Don't be afraid of submitting to smaller publisher---they are often better to work with.*

Q. What's the most rewarding thing about writing nonfiction for kids?

A. *I get to teach kids about things they might not otherwise care about. It's challenging to write nonfiction. You have to entertain while telling the facts. You have to write to a given word count, and for a specific target reader age. But knowing that my books might encourage young children to read is awesome!*

Q. What advice would you give other writers wanting to try their hand at writing nonfiction books for children?

A. *I'm convinced that a nonfiction publisher won't take any writer seriously unless you have experience in some sort of nonfiction writing. The best place to do this is through magazine work. One way to get started is to look up magazines*

Reed Interview cont'd

that have theme lists, and write a piece for submission. Magazines like COBBLESTONE, FUN FOR KIDZ, and many others, publish these themes in market guides and on their websites, and are eager to buy solid nonfiction. Magazine publishers will want to know that you can write for a specific target age, within a given word count, and can make factual information engaging and fun. It might take you a few years to get established, but it's worth it.

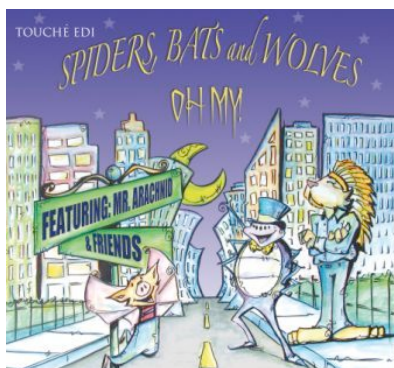
Q. Besides magazines, are there other markets looking for children's nonfiction?

A. Test publishing in another area in which authors who write nonfiction for young people are needed. Since the 'No Child Left Behind' act was initiated, test publishers have grown in number and they need articles to fill their test pamphlets. I got a job with Educational Testing Services to write nine passages, 350 words each for various age levels. That was an amazing experience, and a challenging one, too. In this sector, my work has been sold to Harcourt, SIRS, Houghton Mifflin and others.

Q. One last question: has your experience as editor of WEE ONES magazine influenced your own writing?

A. Yes! In the seven years that WEE ONES has been online, my work as editor has taught me how necessary it is to be able to sharply focus your writing on whatever target age, or specific word count, is required by the publication. My own writing has definitely improved because of this. I know how to look for redundancy, wordiness or sloppiness.

Dianne Ochiltree is a member of SCBWI/Eastern PA and an author of books for the very young. For more information, go to www.ochiltreebooks.com.



**NEXT PENN &
INK DEADLINE:**

DEC. 15TH

EMAIL SUBMISSIONS TO:

cheriwidzowski@msn.com

FALL POEMS BY CAROLE MOHR

BOO

On Halloween, I'm not me,
I'm a ghost you can see
floating out from the tomb
of my own bedroom,
ready to "trick or treat"
everyone that I meet.

Boo.

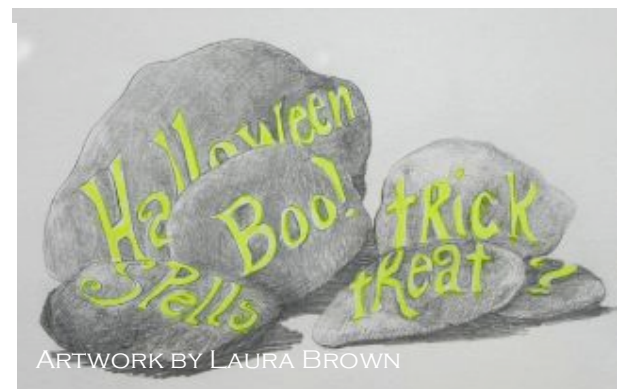


SUMMER'S END

When vacation began,
I wished it would last,
But the free days outdoors
Have passed terribly fast.

It's already time for
New shoes and new books,
And I'm wondering how
My new classroom looks.

Despite my wishes
for summer to rule,
I really can't wait
To go back to school!



ARTWORK BY LAURA BROWN

ALA EXHIBITING OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLISHED SCBWI EASTERN PA MEMBERS!

*From Laurie Krauss Kiernan and Dianne Ochiltree
(ALA Booth Coordinators):*

We're thrilled to let you know the great news for our chapter, and our published members! As you may know, the **American Library Association** is hosting its annual midwinter meeting right here in **Philadelphia** at the Pennsylvania Convention Center **January 11-14, 2008**.

For the first time ever, SCBWI Eastern PA will have a presence at this important show, where an expected 10,000 librarians from around the country will congregate, and where announcements on the highly anticipated Newbery, Caldecott, and Michael L. Printz awards will take place.

SCBWI Eastern PA will be exhibiting throughout all four days of the conference in a modest-sized booth (#1058). We are opening up our booth to 33 published members interested in taking advantage of this stellar opportunity to promote themselves as speakers for library visits. Qualified participants will be selected on a **first-come, first-served** basis.

SCBWI Eastern PA and SCBWI International are delighted to have this opportunity to support our published members in such a big way. There is a nominal cost to those who are accepted to participate – **just \$100**, which gleans the following benefits:

* Two hours in the booth during an assigned time period. (Although we will ask for your top three day/time preferences and do our best to accommodate them, there is no way to guarantee a requested time period. Your understanding and flexibility will be appreciated!)

* A large graphic of your latest book cover, which

will be prominently displayed in our booth.

* Your name and book title(s) on a large poster, which will include the time that you will be in the booth.

* Access to a prime audience of librarians.

* Space to provide author visit demonstrations or sneak peeks of ARCs or F&Gs, to show off your illustrations, or to sign books if you're willing to organize the bookselling details on your own.

* Added publicity/readership for your book, if you desire, through inclusion in an autographed book basket raffle our booth will be conducting for conference-goers.

If you're interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, **act fast!** Applications and your check for \$100 must be received to our P.O. Box in Kemblesville. Qualified applicants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as determined by date of postmark.

Complete details and the downloadable application package are on our website, www.scbwiepa.org.

WHITETAILED, LATE SUMMER

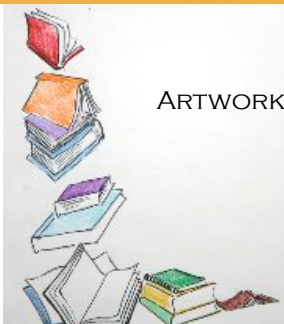
By Jen Bryant

The sun sends down its gutters.
In single file they wind through the trees
their hooves crunching fallen hickory leaves.

The thick-necked buck steps out,
then the does with dark eyes large
as Easter eggs, ears swiveling.

Beside them, the fawns: half-grown,
their spots forsaken, their bellies fat
with summer grass. Velvet knobs sprout

between pea-pod ears. They pause to graze.
A dog barks in the distance. The buck stomps.
White tails flag as they melt into sunlight.



ARTWORK BY LAURA BROWN