

Children's Book Insider

February 2018

The Right Way to Connect with Editors and Agents at a Twitter Pitchfest



Plus: Submissions Opportunity - Flashlight Press

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Published 12 times/year by Children's Book Insider, LLC,
901 Columbia Road, Ft. Collins, CO 80525-1838.
970/495-0056.
ISSN 1073-7596
mail@CBIclubhouse.com
<http://www.writeforkids.org>

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Children's Book Insider, *The Children's Writing Monthly* is an electronic monthly newsletter that is included in the paid membership to the Children's Writing Knowledge Base (<http://www.CBIclubhouse.com>). The cost of membership is \$49.95 per year, or \$5.49 per month if billed monthly. For more information, go to <http://writeforkids.org/come-join-the-insiders/>

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Children's Book Insider makes every effort to verify the legitimacy of small and new presses and literary agents before printing information in "At Presstime." However, authors and illustrators should always proceed with caution when approaching publishers or agents with whom they are unfamiliar, and read contracts carefully. All "At Presstime" listings are current at the time of initial publication. Members are urged to verify listings past the month of publication.

Dear Insider:

Welcome to the February 2018 issue of *Children's Book Insider*!

Before I tell you about what's in this (very packed) issue, let me share some exciting news:

On Tuesday, February 13, we'll be introducing a tool that many of you have eagerly awaited: It's **Manuscript Magic**, the first true "guided revision" program. It's a comprehensive online tool that allows you to revise your manuscript at a much higher level than you can possibly do alone, and it will save you thousands in editing and critique fees.

Manuscript Magic takes a revolutionary approach to revision by first allowing you to diagnose specific problems in your work on three levels, and then directing you to the exact fixes for those problems. The revision process is broken into small, manageable steps led by Bonnie Johnston, a world-class editor who leads you through the process with a video and PDF for each step. You'll learn to edit your manuscript the right way, in the right order. Your diamond in the rough will become a manuscript that sparkles. And, I dare say, it actually makes the revision process fun. (There's something I never thought I'd say!)

This is a true game changer and a real gift for all fiction writers. And we want you to get in on the excitement.

On February 6, I'll be hosting a free webinar called *The 3 Levels of Revision - and Why You Must Know Them*. Simply knowing these will put you way ahead of the vast majority of writers, who often have no clue how to really analyze a manuscript. This is vital information, and I'll teach it to you on the 6th.

It's completely free and there's no obligation whatsoever. You'll also get a spot on our VIP list and guarantee your spot in the *Manuscript Magic VIP Launch Webinar* on February 13, where you'll be among the first writers to see inside this revolutionary tool. And you'll get you a very special, limited-time price on this extraordinary product (and a massive bonus bundle, too).

Right now, go to <https://writeforkids.org/3levels> to reserve your spot for the free webinar on February 6. (Even if you can't make it live, register so you can view the replay and save a spot for the big launch event.)

Exciting, right?

Now, let's talk about this issue. It's packed with submission opportunities, from PJ McIlvaine's "Pitchfest 101" to Lynne Marie's interview with Shari Dash Greenspan, editor at Flashlight Press (be sure to note what she likes, and what she doesn't like in this informative piece), to Sharon Blumberg's profile of Phillip Chipping, founder of the small press Knowonder, which is making inroads into some interesting, underserved markets. And of course, At Presstime delivers more submission opportunities with agents and publishers.

I often meet aspiring authors and illustrators who aren't familiar with the *Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market* published annually by Writer's Digest Books. If you fall into this category, be sure to read Kimberly Hutmacher's article "Getting the Most Out of Your 2018 Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market" for tips on how to use this tremendous resource. (Hint: It's NOT "start at the beginning and submit to every publisher listed".) And remember, even though this guide is updated each year, publishers' needs change constantly, so it's essential that you double-check current guidelines on publishers' websites before submitting. Ditto for agents.

Rounding out the issue is an interview with the ever-enthusiastic and inspiring author Sharon Chriscoe about how her picture book series came to be, and a Mini Blueprint on how to reveal the essence of your characters to your readers.

Enjoy the issue, and we'll see you at the webinar!

All the best,

Laura Backes

At Presstime:

Two New Agents Accepting Submissions

Linda Camacho is a new agent with Gallt & Zacker Literary Agency (<http://www.galltzacker.com>). She's held various positions at Penguin Random House, Dorchester, Simon and Schuster, and Writers House and Prospect literary agencies. Linda is open to middle grade and young adult fiction, all genres; select graphic novels; and select picture book author-illustrators. Send a query with your last name/title of the manuscript in the subject line. In the body of the email, include a query letter with your bio (and link to your website if you have one); a synopsis of your manuscript; how you came to write this story/create these illustrations; and why you are querying Linda. Also paste into the email a sample of your work (up to 2000 words). If you are an author/illustrator or graphic novelist, include a link to your website or online portfolio. If you do not have an online portfolio, you may attach a PDF with sample illustrations or the manuscript dummy. Linda tries to respond to all queries within 4 weeks. Send to QueryLinda@galltzacker.com.

Wendi Gu is an Associate Agent with Janklow & Nesbit (www.janklowandnesbit.com). She has represented picture books, middle grade, and young adult titles with a special interest in girl power, family relationships, and the immigrant experience. She likes stories that root for the underdog. Her favorite books have voices that range from warm and lyrical, to witty and deadpan. For illustration, she enjoys elegant and eclectic color palletes, and looks for nuanced character expression and dynamic composition. She is very interested in unconventional illustration mediums like cut paper and photo illustration. Wendi is always on the lookout for nonfiction picture book biographies on little-known heroes in history. You can find her tweets at [@wendilulugu](https://twitter.com/wendilulugu).

For middle grade and YA fiction submissions, send an informative cover letter, a brief synopsis and the first ten pages. For nonfiction submissions, send an informative cover letter, a full outline, and the first ten pages of the manuscript. If you are sending an email submission, please include the sample pages in the body of the email below your query.

For picture book submissions (seeking author-illustrators only), send an informative cover letter, full outline, and include a picture book dummy and at least one full-color sample. If you are sending an email submission, attach a picture book dummy as a PDF and the full-color samples as JPEGs or PDFs.

You can mail your submissions (with a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want the material returned) to Wendi Gu, Associate Agent, Janklow & Nesbit Associates, 285 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. You can also email the submission to submissions@janklow.com with Wendi Gu in the subject line.

Publisher Seeks Classroom-Tested Materials from Teachers

Creative Teaching Press publishes a wide variety of products for grades PreK–8, including teacher resource books, bulletin boards, borders, emergent readers, and charts. The publisher is always looking for new ideas that have been classroom-tested by teachers. The greatest area of interest is in the PreK–4 grade range. While CTP does publish a line of emergent readers, the company does not typically publish other children's books. Recent titles include Instant STEM Activities Workbook for grades 1-6, Build-A-Skill Instant Books series such as Irregular Vowels, and Highway Letters, Numbers and Shapes workbook.

Submit a cover letter that includes a brief description of the material (including grade level) and a synopsis of your background as an educator. Your idea is more likely to be considered if you have identified a specific need in the educational marketplace and an explanation of how it is unique or different from the competition. Also include a table of contents and at least one chapter. If the book is not complete, you may send an outline and representative sample of your writing. Send with a signed Submission Form (found at <http://www.creativeteaching.com/CTP/SubmitAnIdea/CTPSubmissionRelease.pdf>) and self-addressed, stamped envelope. Creative Teaching Press, Attn: Idea Submissions, 6262 Katella Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630-5204.

Magazine for Ages 6-12 Accepting Submissions

Jack and Jill is a magazine for ages 6-12 published by U.S. Kids Magazines. Looking for high-quality stories, articles, and activities with a broad health and fitness focus. Health topics should be incorporated into the story or article, not be the focus of it.

Accepting fiction (600-800 words) with a fun and engaging tone. Stories should hook readers immediately. Humor is important. Dialogue should be witty instead of just furthering the plot. The story should convey some kind of positive message. Possible themes could include self-reliance, being kind to others, appreciating other cultures, and so on. Stories should appeal to a broad audience. Subscribers are girls and boys located across the United States and beyond. Focus on telling a good story over teaching a lesson. The message—if there is one—should come organically from the story and not feel tacked on. Payment: \$25 and up.

Also accepting nonfiction manuscripts of 700 words or less. Especially interested in features or Q&As with regular kids (or groups of kids) in the *Jack and Jill* age group who are engaged in unusual, challenging, or interesting activities. The material should start at a basic level but include a sprinkling of more advanced information. No celebrity pieces. Payment: \$25 and up. Seasonal material should be sent at least 8 months in advance.

Mail or email the entire manuscript to: U.S. Kids, Jack and Jill, P.O. Box 88928, Indianapolis, IN 46208 (include self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want material returned). Email: jackandjill@uskidsmags.com

Study recent back issues before submitting. Many libraries carry the magazine, or you can get a sample copy by writing to U.S. Kids, PO Box 88928, Indianapolis, IN 46208 or by emailing editors@uskidsmags.com.

Purchases all rights including web use and pays on publication. Simultaneous submission are allowed but should be noted as such. One-time book rights may be returned when the author has found a publisher and can provide an approximate date of publication.

Publisher Seeks Fiction/Nonfiction with Educational Themes for All Ages

Barron's Educational Series publishes children's and young adult fiction and nonfiction books, as well as study guides, parenting books, and adult nonfiction. Children's book categories include board books; picture books with an educational theme (fiction and nonfiction); unique craft and activity books, nonfiction for ages 8 and up on science, history, pets, the environment, and self-help; unique fiction for ages 7 and up (such as *Fairy World*, which explores the legends and mythology of fairies for ages 10 and up). Wants new book and series ideas that fit with the Barron's list, but don't duplicate what's already available. Barrons is also currently looking for experienced authors of Test Prep books.

If you want to query by email, send a query letter only with a synopsis of the project, author credentials/bio, and a summary of the market for the work. Queries may be sent to Wayne Barr, Acquisitions Manager, at waynebarr@barroneduc.com. Emailed queries are the preferred method of first contact from an author. You can also mail a longer submission that includes a query letter with a synopsis of your work, the intended age group, and length of complete manuscript, and up to 5 sample pages of the work (for fiction). Nonfiction mailed submissions can include a table of contents, two sample chapters, and a cover letter with a brief synopsis and an overview citing the market being targeted. For all submissions, include a sample illustration if the author is also an illustrator. Send to Wayne Barr, Acquisitions Manager, Barron's Educational Series, 250 Wireless Boulevard Hauppauge, NY 11788. Replies in about two months. For current titles, go to <http://barroneduc.com>.

PITCHFEST 101

by PJ McIlvaine

Let's face it, being in the query trenches is no walk in the dog park on a Sunday afternoon. Meticulously researching agents, perfecting the perfect query, sending it off into the great unknown, then waiting weeks, months, sometimes years for a response--the best scenario being that you even get a response. Often no response is the answer. No wonder most writers liken the query process to a fate worse than the Chinese Water Torture.

So what if you could avoid all that stress and anxiety by pitching your work directly to agents and editors in real time? Thus the popularity and rise of what is known the industry as "pitch fests". Basically, you can be in your pajamas or at Starbucks, and on the designated day and time, you pitch your work to agents/editors who then scroll through the feed and "heart" pitches that they're interested in. When they do, then it's up to you to submit or not.

As a co-host of [#PBPitch](#), the premiere Twitter event exclusively for picture book writers and artists, I can attest that while a pitch fest is fun and exhilarating, it's also nerve-wracking. The main reason why pitchfests have become so popular, aside from the possibility of making an agent match, networking and cheering your fellow writers on, is that it works. Many agent-writer matches have been made, resulting in launched careers and book deals.

Each pitch fest has their own rules and format, but there are certain truths that can be applied to each one. The pitch should be short and pithy; it's not meant to be a long-winded synopsis or a boring book report. Just because Twitter made their tweets longer (now 280 characters vs. the previous 140), doesn't mean it's a license to add unnecessary verbiage. Agents sift through hundreds of pitches; don't make it easy for them to pass yours by because it lacks sizzle or is bogged down by details.

Generally, writers can pitch as many manuscripts as they want during the fest, but most usually have a limit on how many times you can pitch each work during the event. For example, in [#PitMad](#), which is open to all genres, there's a limit of three pitches per project through

out the specified time period. In [#PBPitch](#), you can pitch as many projects as you wish, but each one only twice, preferably once in the morning and once in the afternoon/evening. I would advise spacing the pitches out through out the event. Since each contest is different, it's best to scope out the details by checking out each contest's website.

Probably the most important thing to remember in a pitch fest, especially if it's taking place on Twitter, is to use the correct hash tag (ie [#PBPitch](#), [#PitMad](#), etc.) in the pitch itself. That's probably one of the biggest fails I see in pitch parties, where a writer will eagerly scour the fast and furious feed and is crushed when their tweet doesn't appear because the proper hash tag wasn't included. My advice is to always do several practice tweets in advance. And remember to count all the characters in tweets, including the hash tag; don't forget to include the genre hash tag as well ([#MG](#), [#PB](#), [#YA](#), etc.). Also, change the wording on each pitch, otherwise the application might think it's a duplicate. And it's not necessary to include the word count of your manuscript.

Another great tip for Twitter events is to schedule your tweets in advance; this is a Godsend if you live in a different time zone or can't be glued to the computer all day to hit the send button. While there are several applications, including Twitter, that allow you to do this easily and efficiently, probably the most popular one in terms of being user friendly is Tweet Deck. (www.TweetDeck.com). At first glance, it might seem a bit daunting, but once you get the hang of it (you can find tutorials on line to guide you), it's not that difficult.

Other timely pitch tips: pitch only completed, polished material. Keep in mind that agents aren't looking for works in progress or that great idea for a YA novel you dreamed up the day before.

Remain professional in your interactions. I get that it's disappointing when your passion project fails to garner agent interest; we've all been there. Don't take it personally.

Pitchfest 101 continued

And while it's awful tempting to "heart" or like other writer's tweets, "hearts" are reserved strictly for agents/editors. I can't stress that enough. I can't tell you how many times a writer excitedly reports that they got a "heart" only to discover it was from a marketing outfit and not a publishing professional.

While the value of retweeting is debatable, it's always permissible to send positive vibes and/or show support by commenting on tweets. Just don't "heart" them.

When you do get a "heart" from an agent/editor, please follow their submission guidelines. As my #PBPitch co-host Debra Shumaker points out, "do your research. If an agent/editor is not a good fit, do not submit." And no, they don't expect you to email your work to them the second after they like your pitch. It's okay to take your time and make sure your work is in the best shape possible.

I know that some writers are squeamish about posting their work on social media, fearing that their work might be "stolen". Admittedly, putting yourself out there for the entire world to see can be intimidating. I personally don't have an issue with it (ideas are a dime a dozen, and it's all in the execution anyway), but I do know of writers who delete their posts after a contest is over.

www.kidlit411.com, run by Elaine Kiely Kearns and Sylvia Liu, is a great resource for keeping on top of upcoming contests and pitch fests. The site has an extremely active Facebook group and publishes a weekly newsletter highlighting events.

The best piece of advice I can give to anyone planning on participating in a pitch fest or contest is to keep your expectations low. If you don't get any agent/editor love this time out, it's not the end of the world. You can always pitch the old fashioned way. It's impossible for the agents/editors to see all the posted pitches, so if you feel your material is a good fit, query away! Pitch fests and contests are only one path to success, and who knows, you might be the next success story.

UPCOMING PITCH FESTS/CONTESTS

#PBPitch (www.pbpitch.com):
three times a year, next event February 22, 2018, 8am-8pm EST.

#PitMad (www.pitchwars.org):
March 8, June 7, September 6 and December 6, 2018, 8am-8pm EST.

#PitchWars (www.pitchwars.org):
open for submission July 2018.

#DVPit (www.dvpit.com): TBA

#PBParty: (www.michelle4laughs.com):
TBA but sometime in March 2018.

Ashley Franklin, who made an agent match at #PBPitch and subsequently sold a picture book to Harper Collins (Not Quite Snow White, 2019), shares her winning pitch: "#PBPitch: Will Layla still wear her hijab with pride when challenged by the sun and moon?" It's easy to see why this pitch snagged an agent. It's short, it's to the point, and you can see the book and the potential for illustrations.



Cheryl Kim got her agent with this successful tweet thanks to #PBPitch: "While Japanese-Americans lived in internment camps, WATARU MISAKA defied all odds to become the first player of color in the NBA."



SHOW YOUR READERS THE ESSENCE OF YOUR CHARACTERS

by Jane McBride

How do you so effectively describe a character that your reader immediately forms an impression of him? Your reader need not see every freckle on your character's face, but he does need to gain the essence of the character. You, the writer, do this by choosing the right words, the right actions, the right imagery.

Let's make up a story character, an eleven-year-old boy named Aubrey. His name alone could tell us something about him, or at least about his parents. Aubrey is frequently thought of as a girl's name, but our Aubrey is totally boy. He lives to disprove that Aubrey was ever a girl's name by participating in every sport there is. Aubrey also makes it a point to cause more than his share of mischief, both at home and at school. Basically, Aubrey is a good kid, despite all of this. Aubrey has a strong, outgoing personality with a strong sense of empathy as revealed in the following passage:

(Set-up: Aubrey sees a small boy being bullied by a group of bigger boys. One boy in particular is being especially threatening.)

Aubrey strode to the center of the group and fixed his gaze on the group's leader. Sizing up the situation, Aubrey widened his stance. "You think you're so big. Let's see you take on someone who isn't half your size."

The bully didn't so much as blink.

Neither did Aubrey. He kept his hands loose at his sides, though they longed to form in to fists. The bleating of the smaller boy, whose lip was cut and eye blackened, momentarily caused Aubrey to flinch. Not in fear for himself but in sympathy for the boy and anger at the bully.

The bigger boy swaggered up to Aubrey, planted meaty hands on his hips. "What makes you think you can tell us what to do?" he asked, a wide smirk on the hard slab of his face.

Aubrey held his ground. "This." He drilled his fist into the boy's gut.

Notice the words used to describe Aubrey .. and the words not used. There is no physical description of him, but we have an impression of strength, of courage, of energy with such words as "strode", "fixed," "longed," "drilled." Through word choice, we also have an impression of the other two boys involved. The smaller boy who is being picked on is described as "bleating." The bully "swaggered."

Now let's take our character, still an eleven-year-old boy named Aubrey, and imbue him with an entirely different personality and set of circumstances.

(Set-up: Aubrey is trying to stand up for his mother who is being bullied by his step-father.)

Aubrey swatted away the fly that buzzed around his head with annoying persistence. Too bad he couldn't swat away the sour feelings that curdled in his stomach.

"You're a wuss," his step-father said. "Can't stand up for yourself worth spit. Just like your worthless ma."

Aubrey hung his head. Was the man who had married his mother only last year right? Was he really a wuss? He wanted to slam his fist into his step-father's face so bad that he could taste it. He glanced at his mother cowering in the corner of the kitchen, saw the pleading look on her face, and knew he couldn't say or do anything.

"Sorry. Sir." He tacked on the second word at the last moment, hoping to buy a reprieve from the anger that stuck to the man like a burr clinging to a wool sock.

This Aubrey has been beaten down by his step-father's anger, meanness, and size and the ever-present threat of violence to Aubrey's mother. Notice the verb "swatted." It sounds ineffectual, doesn't it? That's how Aubrey feels: ineffectual and humiliated by a bully. We get a taste of Aubrey's fury with the words "He wanted to

Mini Blueprint continued

slam his fist into his step-father's face ..." Aubrey isn't a coward, but he is trapped in to trying to keep the peace for his mother's sake. His step-father uses words such as "Can't stand up for yourself worth spit" to demean Aubrey. We can only imagine that he uses his fists just as easily.

So how do we go about showing the essence of character in our writing?

STEP 1: Use strong verbs. In the first example, Aubrey didn't walk to the center of the group. He "strode." Likewise, the bully didn't walk toward Aubrey; he "swaggered." Aubrey didn't just look at the bully but "fixed his gaze" on him. Similarly, he didn't "hit" the bully; he "drilled his fist into the boy's gut." In the second example, Aubrey "hung" his head. As noted above, he swats at the fly just as he wanted to swat at the sour feeling in his stomach.

ACTION: Take a look at a scene from your work-in-progress (WIP) and see if you can identify places where you've used a weak verb rather than a strong one. Try to come up with a stronger verb. "Sauntered" instead of "walked." "Grasped" in place of "took."

STEP 2: Give reactions of the main character and the supporting characters.

ACTION: Use action and imagery to show feeling. Rather than saying that the boy being picked on was scared, I used the word "bleating," a word often used to describe a lamb or a sheep, animals we tend to think of us gentler and weaker than others. Try to avoid naming emotions. Instead, use a simile or a metaphor such as "... the anger that stuck to the man like a burr clinging to wool socks." Another way to show emotion is to use a physiological response. Rather than saying a character is afraid, say something like, "The spit dried up in his throat so fast that he forgot he'd just put down a huge soda."

STEP 3: Write in the active voice, rather than the passive, whenever possible.

Active voice occurs when the character is acting, doing. For example, "Sherry wrote the winning essay which earned her a scholarship to the college of her choice." Passive: "The winning essay was written by Sherry and earned her a scholarship to the college of her choice." Note: Sometimes the passive voice is preferred, such as the following: "The soldier was presented the Medal of


Honor by his commanding officer." Here, the soldier is clearly the more important character in the sentence and is named first.

ACTION: Go through your WIP and determine if you have used a large number of instances of the passive voice. Whenever possible, change these passages to the active voice.

STEP 4: Show, don't tell. I've saved this for last as it is really a culmination of all of the above. Using strong verbs, action, imagery, and the active voice are integral parts of showing rather than telling.

ACTION: Go through your WIP once again, this time looking for places where you have told instead of shown. Of course there will be times when it is necessary to tell, but you will probably find others where re-writing from a "show standpoint" can be done to great effect.

Revealing the essence of character is not accomplished with one bold stroke. Rather, it is a series of little things that, when added together, yields big results.



writing blueprints

Each month, we will be incorporating Mini Blueprints into CBI, which are based on the step-by-step way of learning in our full Writing Blueprints. If you're not familiar with our longer Writing Blueprints that take you through the process of writing, marketing, or self-publishing your book, go to www.writingblueprints.com

Shari Dash Greenspan, Editor FLASHLIGHT PRESS

interview by Lynne Marie

Started in 2004, Flashlight Press's vision is to “explore and illuminate the touching and humorous moments of family situations and social interactions through captivating writing and outstanding illustrations.” After 13 years in business, and with over 24 books that have garnered several awards and honors each, Flashlight Press continues to take on new authors and grow. Editor Shari Dash Greenspan shines a light on this small indie publisher.

Lynne Marie: What is the very first book you published with Flashlight Press, and what made you decide to run with that book?

Shari Dash Greenspan: Flashlight Press launched in 2004 with four titles: *Holly Bloom's Garden*, *The Ring Bear*, *Carla's Sandwich*, and *The Only One Club*. These attracted us because they were appealing stories with both great illustration potential and a nice message. Our distributor, IPG, had counseled us to produce “issue” books with themes like these, but in recent years our focus has changed to general trade books with universal themes.

LM: You've worked as the weekly Story Lady at your library for about twenty-five years, reading 6-8 picture books to a crowd of little ones, and letting them vote on their favorites. What do these books have in common?

SDG: The books I read at story hour all have an opening that instantly draws kids in, multiple characters whose dialogue can be read in varied voices, a riveting plot, excellent pacing, humor (whether laugh-out-loud or the quieter sort), strong emotional pull, and a satisfying conclusion. Fantasy creatures are always a draw, but even without a magical element, intriguing plot and stellar writing can yield a winning read-aloud. These are the same elements that we look for in the stories we acquire.

LM: Pacing seems to be an overlooked element in many submissions to publishers, agents, and in critique groups. Please take a moment to share your take on what pacing is, and why it is important.

SDG: Pacing is what it sounds like—the pace and rhythm at which the story is told or events unfold, whether it slows down or speeds up and when. Pacing is part of what keeps the reader absorbed in the story, and can be controlled by plot, page turns, and even punctuation.

LM: I've noticed that the family situations and social interactions highlighted in your books feature illustrated children, rather than anthropomorphized animals. Is there a conscious reason behind this decision?

SDG: That was the case for many years because the stories that resonated with us featured human children in home or school situations. But our newest book, *No More Noisy Nights*, features a genteel mole who deals with some noisy neighbors. Now that we've opened the door with *No More Noisy Nights*, we are considering some manuscripts with animal characters. However, I'm not a fan of anthropomorphized objects, talking trees or chairs or vegetables...

LM: Do you accept submissions of picture books with holiday themes?

SDG: We accept submissions on any theme, but since we're very small, we need to be extremely selective, and we tend to gravitate toward stories that will sell year-round to as broad an audience as

possible.

LM: Please share your thoughts on how prevalent a story “message” should be. Do you have any tips for our writers on how to “meter” the message?

SDG: Our early books were message-driven, dealing with important subjects like peer pressure, individuality, being a late bloomer, anti-bullying, dementia, grief, etc. Now we've turned toward more general humorous situational stories that don't have an obvious lesson. If a book has a message, it should be subtle and should be told through a great story.

LM: All of your books to date have been fiction picture books. Do you have any plans to work on some non-fic-



Shari Dash Greenspan continued

tion, chapter books or other genres in the future?

SDG: We're going to keep focusing on picture books, but we do have some stories in our pipeline that straddle the line between fiction and non-fiction. An upcoming book, *The Mess That We Made*, explores the subject of ocean pollution through a cumulative tale.

LM: In your writer's guidelines, you ask for the author to discuss the target audience. What is the reason behind this request?

SDG: When an author describes their target audience, it allows me to get a feel for their understanding of their story, and it can easily tell me whether the book is even a fit for us. Our submission guidelines are very clear, but I still seem to receive queries for chapter books and even novels! I ask for word count for the same reason. We prefer stories of 1000 words or less, but I still receive stores with 5,000 or 50,000 words. I'm comfortable hitting delete on those email queries without reading another word.

LM: What kind of marketing and promotion does Flashlight do, and what is the author's responsibility?

SDG: We send out review copies to all of the major review journals, and to many newspapers, magazines, and bloggers. We also submit our books for awards. We use every social media tool we can (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.), and send out bi-monthly e-newsletters to our subscribers. Our website has free printable activity pages for each book, and we print a new catalog each fall. Our distributor, IPG, works with wonderful salespeople who present our books to indie bookstore buyers, large chains, and to educational markets. Our authors are responsible for booking their own appearances at schools, libraries, bookstores, on the radio, or via Skype. We rely on them to keep us updated about their activities on behalf of the book, and ask them to take an active role in posting on Facebook.

LM: What kind of print runs do you initially do? If the book sells out, what will the 2nd run be, typically?

SDG: Initial print runs vary for each book, but are generally between 5,000-10,000 copies. The size of subsequent print runs is determined by market demands.

LM: You have a wide distribution in many countries through IPG. Do all your books get international distribution, or do you choose certain ones? If so, what are the criteria?

SDG: All of our books get equal treatment in terms of distribution. IPG works with distributors outside of the United States, and all of our books are available to all of

those distributors.

LM: Please shine a light on something new coming out from Flashlight Press in the future. What made you decide to pursue this particular project?

SDG: We have a few things in the pipeline. This spring, we're publishing *La nevera di Maddi*, a Spanish translation of *Maddi's Fridge* by Lois Brandt, so we can bring this important book about childhood hunger in America to a wider audience. *Maddi's Fridge* won the 2015 International Literacy Association (ILA) Children's and Young Adults' Book Award, in the primary fiction category.

Another upcoming title is *The Mess That We Made* by Michelle Lord, dealing with ecology and pollution, which I mentioned earlier. It is crucial to teach kids about how plastics are damaging our oceans, and how they can help by reducing, reusing, and recycling.

LM: One of your titles, *Maddi's Fridge*, is being released as a play. Congratulations! Please share the details as to how that came about.

SDG: An agent that we were working with told us about an excellent theater in Arizona that was interested in *Maddi's Fridge*. The playwright worked closely with the author to expand the 32-page picture book into an hour-long play for children.

LM: What percentage of the authors you work with would you say are new authors? Do you often do a second book with the same author? If so, what would this decision be based upon?

SDG: More than half of our authors are first-time authors. The decision to publish a second book by an author would depend on the success of the first book, as well as on the merit of the new story.

LM: Is there any topic currently on your wish list that you would like to see submissions on?

SDG: I don't have any specific topics on my wish list. I'm open to seeing anything, but I'm looking for gems. When I read a submission, I need to sense that it feels like a Flashlight book, and that there is great potential for re-readability, delightful illustration, broad audience appeal, and of course the bottom line, sales.

Here's a link to Flashlight Press' submission guidelines. There is no special submission code required from CBI subscribers.

<http://flashlightpress.com/submission-guidelines/>

A Pinch of Dreams, a Dash of Good Luck and a Heaping Tablespoon of Talent

interview by PJ McIlvaine

They say writers are born, not made. Well, in kid lit author's Sharon Chriscoe's case, one could also say that writers are baked with a lot of dough (the bread kind, not money). Chriscoe's stars aligned when she landed her dream literary agent, which in turn led to a three book deal about sleepy race cars, bulldozers, and fire trucks in record time. Chriscoe makes her home in North Carolina with her husband, family (and precious new grandbaby), and an assortment of pets. (*Bedtime For Bunnies*, anyone?).

PJ McIlvaine: As a kid, who were your favorite authors? Favorite books?

Sharon Chriscoe: Wow, that's a hard question to answer because I have to limit myself and just pick a few. Hmm . . . favorite authors as a kid: Judy Blume, Beverly Cleary, E.B. White, Don Freeman, Dr. Seuss (of course!), and Katherine Paterson were some of my all-time favorites.

As for favorite books: I think my most special, favorite book as a child was *A Pocket for Corduroy*. There was always something so sweet and lovable about the stuffed bear that went on the hunt to find himself a pocket and wound up getting lost. I must have read that book a million times!

A couple of my other favorites, *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* because of its silliness and totally cool concept of raining down food. *Little Bear*, I loved the story of him pretending to go to the moon, but all of the *Little Bear* stories are fantastic I read them many, many times.

PJ: I understand your husband Ricky was the impetus for you to write your first story. (That's it, blame the hub-

by!) How did that come about?

SC: Haha! Of course we have to blame the hubby. What fun would it be if we didn't? But seriously, he truly was the impetus for me writing my first ever story, and for that I will forever be grateful.

When our three children were small, we had a stray cat that decided to have her litter of kittens at our house.

Once they were old enough to run around, the mama cat and her kittens discovered our back porch. One day, as they were romping about on the porch, my husband said, "You should write a story about those kittens playing. They're so funny." My kids jumped at that idea and thought it would be the coolest thing ever. So, the next day I sat down and began writing a story about four mischievous kittens. Soon I discovered that writing was a passion I never knew I had before. And I never looked back. That was in 2005, and I have been writing ever since.



Before that day, writing had never been a part of my life. In fact, I hadn't even given it a thought. I guess that just goes to prove that not all writers are born, sometimes they're made.

PJ: How has your family inspired and encouraged you?

SC: My family is amazing! I am so blessed by the wonderful support and encouragement I receive from all of them. From their willingness to listen to me ramble about an idea, to reading what I've written, to supporting me and attending my book events, one thing's for sure, I can count on my family to love me and support

Sharon Chriscoe continued

everything that I do.

It's also nice to have their support for the not-so-fun stuff, like rejections. My family always lifts my spirits and keep me going.

I am a true believer that books, book events, and all things book related are more enjoyable (and successful) when the entire family is involved. Everyone participates, and it really makes it fun.

PJ: Where did the idea for *Race Car Dreams* (Running Press Kids, 2016) come from?

SC: A few years ago while I was reading the very talented Jane Yolen's *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?* for around the tenth time, I found myself wanting my very own unique twist on a bedtime story. After much brainstorming, and some trial and error, it hit me . . . full throttle! A race car! Kids love race cars and I had never read about a race car getting ready for bed. I spent the next few weeks in my mobile office drafting those first words.

Yep. That's right, my office is not only mobile but it's the passenger seat of a bread truck where I work alongside my super supportive husband on our bread route.

PJ: How did the subsequent titles in the book series develop?

SC: My super savvy editor, Julie Matysik, was a key person in deciding what book two would be about. Julie and my publisher had a fun discussion about what types of vehicles would make for a great book two. They sent me a couple of titles and *Bulldozer Dreams* was one of them. When I read that title, my instant thoughts were "A Bulldozer! YES! I want to do that!"

Immediately, I knew how I wanted the book to end. I wanted the little bulldozer in the book to dream about dozing a clearing that would be used to create a playground. I also wanted the same familiar rhythm and

bedtime routine that *Race Car Dreams* had in it. I got to work on it right away and within eight days I had a story that I loved! Happily, my agent and editor loved it as well.

As for *Fire Truck Dreams*, when it came time to present our option book to Julie, my editor, I pitched a couple of titles to Jessica, my agent, and this time it was Jessica who said "A fire truck! YES! Do that one!" After some great collaboration with Jessica and my critique partners, *Fire Truck Dreams* was ready to roll out of the station and straight into Julie's heart.

PJ: From first draft to publication, how long did it take?

SC: It took almost a year from that initial idea and first draft to a submission worthy book. Then, thanks to an agent referral from a wonderful friend (Thanks PJ!) I sent *Race Car Dreams* off to Jessica Sinsheimer of The Sarah Jane Freymann Literary Agency and I'm happy to say she loved it! After speaking with her on the phone, I knew she was the agent for me. Jessica is very editorial and has a great eye! She suggested some revisions, which I made, and then she began submitting *Race Car Dreams* to editors. It sold incredibly quickly and was published about seventeen months later.

PJ: How many drafts did you do until you knew it was the one?

SC: Nearly fifty in total! No kidding. The very first draft was in rhyme and laid out more like a list of questions which didn't work. At one point, I even tried writing the story in prose, but it never felt right. So, I went back to the rhyming version and revised and revised until it finally was exactly where I wanted it to be. I never could have done that without the help of my wonderful critique partners and the amazing members of the SCBWI Blueboard. They not only pointed out where the story wasn't working, but they encouraged me to persevere. With their help, I was able to get *Race Car Dreams* all polished and shined and that landed me with



an amazing agent who believed in me and my book.

PJ: I understand that RCD had multiple offers very quickly after only being represented a short time by your agent. How did that come about and what was it like, knowing that several publishers were interested in your work?

It was awesome! I still remember it vividly. Well, kind of. I was actually asleep when Jessica sent *Race Car Dreams* out on submission on March 18th, 2015. Right away, our little race car received a lot of interest. One editor responded in thirty-five minutes with “I’m taking this to ed board.” I could hardly believe it! Our race car was already breaking land speed records.

The next couple of weeks were super exciting and busy! Busy for Jessica, not me. There was nothing for me to do at that point but squee with excitement with every update.

On April 1st, we were thrilled to have Running Press Kids as our publisher. Yes, it was most definitely not April Fool’s Day at the Chriscoe house. The entire process took two weeks. Gotta love a fast race car!

PJ: How long did it take you to find an agent? Any tips on querying?

SC: I had been on the hunt for an agent on and off for about five years. During that time, I submitted and sold my first picture book, *The Sparrow and the Trees*, on my own directly to Arbordale Publishing. I initially started querying agents around 2010 but with other books, not *Race Car Dreams*. None of those books had the spark (ha! Pun totally intended) that *Race Car Dreams* did. *Race Car Dreams* had only been out on submission to agents for a few months before I signed with Jessica on March 10, 2015.

As for tips on querying, the key word is ‘persevere.’ Keep reading, keep writing, and keep revising until you finally have that book that makes you stand up and cheer “This is THE ONE!” Trust me, you’ll know it when that book comes. It’s a feeling you’ll never forget.

PJ: The second book in the series, *Bulldozer Dreams*, was released on October 3rd, 2017. What have you done in terms of marketing?

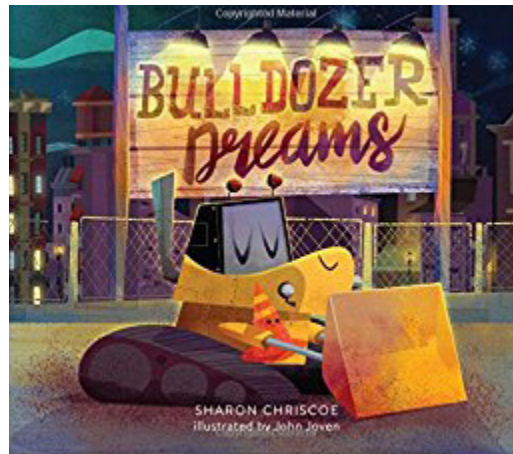
SC: For *Bulldozer Dreams*, I held five events (more will take place in early 2018!).

It was a busy, busy fall, for sure!

My husband and I found a little remote-control bulldozer and had a friend who owns a collision and repair shop turn him into the Bulldozer character from my book. We did something similar with *Race Car Dreams*, as well. These toys are fun marketing tools and draw a lot of attention at local events, and my blog posts during their transformation created extra buzz for each book surrounding its launch.

I also did giveaways through Goodreads and Amazon, as well as some blogs.

In addition to that, *Bulldozer Dreams* was featured in Carolina Country magazine in October. Carolina Country has over 700,000 subscribers, so that’s a lot of people who got to see Bulldozer’s adorable cover. And Running Press Kids and I are super happy that Target Stores have decided to carry *Bulldozer Dreams*!



PJ: You’re one of the few authors I know who doesn’t have a big social media presence (Twitter, Facebook, etc.). What are your thoughts on that? Your website (www.sharonchriscoebooks.com) is adorable. Do you enjoy blogging on that platform?

SC: I do! And thank you so much!! I wish I could take credit for my website, but that credit goes to the very talented Donna Farrell! She is amazing!

I think it’s as simple as this: Do what’s comfortable for you. Being an author doesn’t mean (at least in my opinion) you have to be on every sort of social media there is. My preferences are my website and my blog (which I did design myself) where I update all things book related pertaining to me and my books, as well as agent interviews, and some of my favorite picture book picks. You can check out my blog at www.sharonchriscoe.wordpress.com

Sharon Chriscoe continued

I'm also an active member of SCBWI and a Moderator for the SCBWI Verla Kay Blueboards . . . if you're an author, you know how awesome this board's content, members, and information are!

PJ: What are you working on currently? Do you plan to write in other genres besides picture books?

SC: I just finished up a revision on a picture book I started about three years ago. It's been through three complete rewrites (yes! One per year) and I'm happy to say this rewrite has that "This is THE ONE!" feeling to it, and I'm thrilled that my agent agrees. She just sent it out on submission!! YAY!

I also have an upper middle grade that is in the works and almost ready as well as a new picture book idea I'm toying with. On the back burner, I have a lower middle grade that is still in its first drafting stage and a chapter book that is at the revision stage.

Yes! I totally love to multitask! And I really enjoy stretching my creativity into different genres.

PJ: I know you have a precious granddaughter. Has being a new grandma inspired you?

SC: Awww! Thank you so much! Sophia is just the most adorable, sweet, determined, and super smart baby ever! (and yes, I am totally biased but as her Nana that's allowed) Being a new grandma has definitely given me such a new wonderful, positive outlook on all things that are kid friendly. I've always been a kid at heart, I suppose, and I do love the cuteness in toys and preschool tv shows. But now, when I see a toy, or an adorable tv show that Sophia enjoys, my thoughts instantly go to "Hey! That's an awesome PB concept!"

Reading stories with Sophia gives me such great pleasure. She adores books and loves to pat her little hand on them while you read to her (that is when she isn't grabbing at the pages ---which explains why board books were made in the first place!). And I do have to admit, reading to her from my very own books fill my heart with joy and pride.

PJ: You haven't given up your day job (a bread route with your husband), at least, not yet. How is that working out with juggling writing and family?

SC: Ha! Yes, we are still hard at work on the bread route

in the wee hours of the morning and throughout the day to deliver fresh bread and sweet cakes to our local stores and restaurants.

Like most writers, it's a challenge to juggle work, writing, and family. To adapt to the long work hours of the bread route and still find time to write, I combined my work and writing time together. That's right! I write from the passenger seat of the bread truck! In fact, I've turned the bread truck into my very own mobile office so to speak by packing it full of books, magazines, papers, pencils, and a mini laptop that I take with me each day. Much of my plotting takes place inside of my head while stocking bread and buns in the bread aisle. As soon as I get back to the truck and my laptop, I write down those ideas while we're on our way to our next stop. There are times when I'm afraid I'll lose my ideas, that's when I jot down scenes, lines, or some snippet of information on the notes app on my phone, a slip of paper, or even my hand if that's all I have with me.

I think in some ways, the constant activity of the day keeps the wheels in my brain turning and by the end of the day, we have fresh bread delivered and I have sparkly new words.

By combining my work and writing time, I've freed up my home time to be spent with my family. So, it's a Win-Win! for me and my family.

PJ: Where do you see yourself five years from now?

SC: Well, as much as I'd like to say retired and living at the beach, that just isn't going to happen. However, in five years, I do hope to see many more of my books on stores shelves. I'll still be writing my books from the passenger seat of the bread truck and I'll still be inhaling as much knowledge about writing as I can. I'm a true believer that learning never stops and I hope that each lesson I learn along the way helps me to become a better author year after year.

Getting the Most Out of Your 2018 CHILDREN'S WRITER'S & ILLUSTRATOR'S MARKET

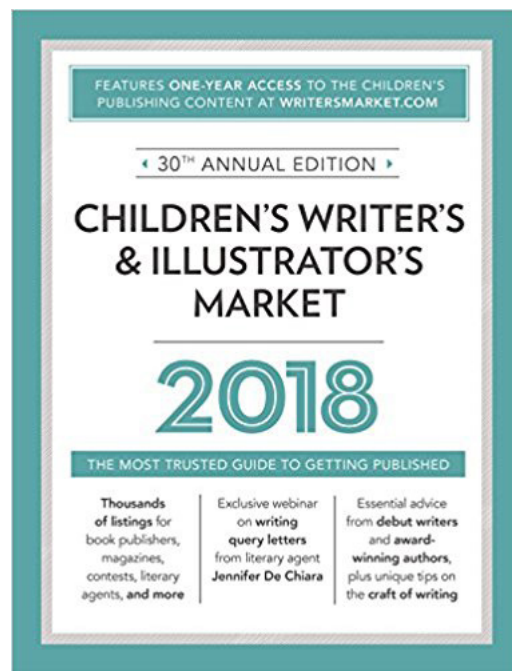
by Kimberly M. Hutmacher

One of the many tools for a writer to keep handy in his or her toolbox is a current volume of the *Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market* (Writer's Digest Books). This latest edition is no exception, but coming in at 400+ pages, it can be daunting for the first time reader. They may wonder, do I need to read it cover to cover? If not, where do I begin?

If you're new to the world of writing for children, be sure to read the section Before Your First Sale. These pages cover very basic information on formatting, targeting, and submitting your work. Also, if you haven't joined a writer's group, be sure to fast forward to the section Clubs & Organizations. An enormous amount of writing education can be gained from a critique group, and the camaraderie and support given and received is vital in a business where rejection can be a daily occurrence. Many of the organizations listed, like the Society of Children's Book Writer's and Illustrator's and the Author's Guild, can put you in touch with local writing/critique groups in your area.

Writers of every level will find the Conferences & Workshops section to be useful. Though a degree in writing is not essential for success in this business,

it's important for all of us to have a willingness to learn and grow. Conferences and workshops offer classes dedicated to craft, creativity, and business. They also provide an opportunity to network with fellow authors, illustrators, editors, art directors, and agents.



Maybe you're a little farther along in your writing journey. At this point, you might have several pieces ready to submit. Now it's time to use the Magazine and/or Book Market sections of the book to do some research. You will use these sections to properly target your work. As you read about each publisher, be sure to pay attention to what genres they publish, length of average work, terms of publication, how to contact, and any other tips provided. Note whether or not they require exclusive submissions. If so, you will need to decide if you're willing submit exclusively or focus

on publishers that allow simultaneous submissions (manuscripts submitted to more than one publisher at a time). If the information is included, note what percentage of their books are by first time authors. It may be easier to get your foot in the door at certain publishing houses who are more welcoming to debut authors.

As you start making your list of places to submit

your manuscript, be sure to note each potential publisher's website, and use it. Browse their online catalogs. Go to the library and check out a stack of books that they have published. Read and study those books. Just because they publish picture books, does not mean they will publish any picture book. Do they publish books written in verse? Only prose? Do they tend to like longer picture books or shorter ones? Do they seem to focus on particular themes and/or subject matter? Lastly, ask yourself if your book will be a good fit. Do the same kind of research for magazines as well. Also, the submission guidelines on publisher's websites are often more detailed than what you will find in the guide. Be sure to strictly follow each publisher's formatting and submission requirements.

The market sections also usually names one editor per publishing house. The problem with this is that most of the larger publishing houses have numerous editors and editorial assistants. They all have different likes and dislikes. For your editor-specific needs, I suggest that you reach for a few other tools in your toolbox. Read the latest market information in your copies of *Children's Book Insider*. Look at the About section of the publisher's website to see if it lists other staff members. Google these editors to find their blogs and/or Twitter feeds, and follow them. Some publishers also have a company blog linked to their website that features posts from different editors. Read them.

In your search for a publisher and editor, you may find that some of the publisher's you're most interested in aren't open to unsolicited submissions. Those conferences and workshops mentioned above are a great way to get a free pass to submit to these houses if one of their editors is speaking at the conference. CBI also regularly interviews editors and agents who give CBI readers an Above the Slushpile submission code.

Maybe you've been writing and/or illustrating for a while, and you want to attempt to acquire an agent. Skip ahead to that portion of the guide. Target agents the same way you would target potential edi-

tors. Study their guidelines and their websites. Find out who they already represent. Study those books. Target carefully. Do not waste your time or their time by submitting a picture book text to an agent who only represents middle grade and YA authors.

The 2018 CWIM also offers articles and interviews offering insight into the ever-changing world of children's writing and illustrating. Topics include everything from creating unforgettable characters and effective dialogue to changes in the picture book market, breaking into nonfiction, and figuring out what agents are looking for. It also includes the always inspiring Debut Authors Tell All section.

If you purchase the 2018 CWIM, be sure to activate your online subscription as well. The online guide is updated throughout the year, and there are more tools, articles, and interviews for your reading pleasure.

In closing, the *2018 Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market* is a great tool to add to your writer's toolbox, and I hope this article guides you in using your new tool well.

Small Press Fills Important Niche for Children and Parents

interview by Sharon O. Blumberg

Let's meet Phillip Chipping, founder of *Knowonder* since its inception in 2009. *Knowonder's* mission is to eradicate illiteracy and improve children's education. This goal is accomplished through effective content that is accessible and affordable. In addition, another goal is to educate parents on best practices to enrich their children's reading.

Sharon Blumberg: How did you become the founder of *Knowonder*?

Phillip Chipping: I am a father of four, I am a serial entrepreneur, I have loved reading ever since I was young, and I absolutely love children and literacy! While living in England with my family for business, I knew I would soon be leaving back to the States. I pondered over what I could do that I love. My thoughts turned to my children. I thought about how I was trying to come up with a new bedtime story each night—a very challenging task for any parent! I thought how amazing it would be to have access to a huge collection of short stories. One for every day of the month, so as a parent, you would always have something new to read aloud to your child every night. I became so excited about this, I had a hard time falling asleep that night, LOL. That was the birth of *Knowonder*!

I am very passionate about early language acquisition, early childhood development and literacy development. I'm a huge believer that the single-most important thing parents can do for their children is to engage in proactive speaking with/to them, and reading aloud to them.

SB: How many books do you publish each year?

PC: We are a small publisher and publish about one book every couple of months. However, we are upping our game this year and hope to be publishing a new

book every month! We already have nine under contract, so we're making progress.

SB: On your website you have several product lines. Could you please tell us about each category listed below and explain their writer's guidelines?

PC: DyslexiAssist Books: These books are geared toward children who suffer from dyslexia, and it is our current focus. Our DyslexiAssist books use a special font and layout. This has been shown to have dramatic effects on almost any dyslexic who tries reading this way. Our goal is to build a huge library of products for these children—some books that come from us, and many others that come from other publishers, published in the DyslexiAssist format. This is to provide these children with more options to enhance their success. We create the DyslexiAssist books from the other content people submit to us. This includes the short story collections, the early reader chapter books, and the middle grade books.

Short Story Collections (4-8 yr. Old):

This is where it all began for us—collections of short stories. We still accept short story submissions. We love to put together collections of short stories for parents to read to kids at bedtime, or for children to read independently. Short stories provide benefits to listeners and readers. This goes above and beyond the more traditional children's picture books and longer chapter books. They used to be a mainstay in children's literature, but have been out-shone by more exciting (and better money making) products. We are most interested in short stories ranging between 500-1000 words, written on a 1st-2nd grade level, or a 2nd-3rd grade level. We pay \$25 per story. We will also consider stories up to 2000 words, but no extra compensation for longer stories.



Small Press Fills Important Niche continued

Early Reader Chapter Books (2nd-3rd grade): We love literacy development through all elementary ages. That's why we are interested in featuring content in this category. Please look at our submission guidelines for more detailed information.

Middle Grade Books (4th-6th grade): Since we foster literacy development through all elementary ages, we are interested in featuring content in this category. Please look at our submission guidelines for more detailed information.

Child Genius 101 (for parents): This series was developed for the purpose of bringing a greater awareness to the greatest study ever done. This refers to the world of early language acquisition—a study that shows how researchers can already tell by the age of four if a child will succeed in school. Despite the overwhelming evidence on this, it is still not well known outside the world of academia. Our desire with these books is to present information from the study, but also give parents the tools to implement the findings in their homes, to enhance their children's success in life.

Although we've also enjoyed doing a few **picture books** in the past, we will not be publishing any more in the near future. They are extremely expensive to create, and since this is the direction children's literature has gone for decades now, we feel it's more important to spend time on our other efforts. Having said that, we still hope many children will enjoy our current books for years to come.

SB: Where are your books sold/distributed? Do you publish hard copies, ebooks, or both?

PC: We publish soft copies of our books, as well as ebooks. Most books are published first as print-on-demand books. But as our audience in the dyslexic world increases, we expect that to change. This will change to full print runs of 1,000-2,000 copies per new title.

SB: What makes a short story or book perfect for *Knowonder*?

PC: Action! Adventure! Danger! Fun! Even though some adults don't like the "entertainment" side of the publishing world, a child requires two things to succeed at reading: a topic they're interested in, and a book that's on their reading level. When they have these two things, the learning happens magically. New words are learned, new concepts are encountered, new moral dilemmas can be presented, choices between

right and wrong can be contemplated—in short, whole new worlds, ideas and ideals can be explored and ingrained! Some of the most powerful lessons we have as a society come from stories, so don't underestimate the power of a good story. Having said that, we, as writers, need to keep our stories engaging! Action, adventure, fun and danger are some of the best ways to do that.

SB: What are some common mistakes you see in submissions that lead to rejecting the manuscript?

PC: The most common mistake is when people blindly send us submissions without reading what it is we're looking for. Our needs change at times, so know what it is we want! Also, just because an author thinks their story is good for kids doesn't mean it's something we'll publish. We get a lot of boring stories, stories that don't move quickly enough for young readers. We also get a lot of stories that are trying to teach a principle. Hitting a child over the head with a principle is not nearly as fun, or effective, as weaving it into the story subtly, allowing parent and child to discuss it later.

SB: What type of marketing do you do for your books? Do you expect authors to help with the marketing?

PC: Most of our marketing efforts at this time are focused on our DyslexiAssist books. Because it is so hard and expensive for writers to sell much of their work to compete with traditional publishers, our efforts are best spent focusing on a defined target market. This is done with a clear plan. This is great because I am passionate about helping ALL kids with literacy development. My own now 14-year-old boy was a struggling reader for years. It is amazing to see him love reading now!

We participate in blogs, forums, Facebook groups, and pages to build awareness of our books. We are also working with other established publishers to publish their works in the DyslexiAssist format. Press releases will be sent out from both sides to announce the partnerships. The first partnership has been finished and we are working on that release as we speak. These partnerships will build awareness in the community about our efforts, and help sell all of our offerings. We find even our older titles sell well in this arena, because of the lack of materials for these children.

We are also working on a new website that will employ a better funnel (marketing conversion tactics) so we can start buying traffic, sending them to our site, offer them a free book, and then up-sell more books.

Again, because of the unique nature of the people we serve, we expect this to be an effective and scalable way to increase sales for our authors. We also teach our authors how they can market their own books to help increase sales. Authors are often the best marketers of their own work. Therefore, we provide them with many resources on how they can effectively do that.

So, currently, we are still small, but we are growing!

SB: Do you pay a standard advance/royalty or a flat fee (or both, depending on the project)?

PC: We do not pay any advances for book submissions, but do pay a competitive royalty. We do pay \$25 flat fee per short story.

SB: How much editorial guidance do you give to writers once you've accepted their manuscript?

knowonder!

Knowonder is currently accepting short stories and chapter book manuscripts. Guidelines and submission information can be found at:

<https://knowonder.submittable.com/submit>

To sign up for updates on new calls for submissions and other news for authors, go to:

<http://www.knowonder.com/authors/>