


Children's Book Insider

The Children's Writing Monthly  February 2023



BEYOND THE BOOKSTORE

**HOW TO SELL YOUR BOOK
IN MUSEUMS, GIFT SHOPS & MORE!**

**ABOVE THE SLUSHPILE
SUBMISSION OPPORTUNITY:**

beaming  books

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At Presstime:

Two Upcoming Picture Book Pitch Events

#PBPitch: This Twitter pitch event for picture book authors and author/illustrators will be held **Thursday, February 16, from 8 am to 8pm EDT**. Pitch your picture books with 280 characters or less on Twitter using the #PBPitch hashtag. Pitch manuscripts only once in the morning and once in the afternoon or evening. If you are an author/illustrator, you can attach an image to your PB manuscript pitch.

Include sub-genre # if it applies: #NF = Nonfiction, #C= Concept, #L= Lyrical, #I= Interactive. Only agents and editors should FAVORITE a pitch. If they do, check their submission guidelines (and do your research) before submitting to them.

For more information, go to pbpitch.weebly.com/

2023 PBParty Annual Contest: The annual PBParty contest is organized by author Mindy Alyse Weiss on her website, mindyalyseweiss.com/ It's for **unagented** writers and author/illustrators with **finished and polished** picture book manuscripts. You submit an entry (query and first 60 – 70 words, along with 2 finished illustrations IF you are also an illustrator) on **Wednesday, March 1**, and the judges pick from those a wide variety of genres for agents/editors to read between March 20-24 and request full manuscripts from work they're interested in. Last year, PBParty had 70 agents and editors make 515 requests of the 50 finalists and 20 in the Illustration Showcase...out of almost 1000 entries. All entries will be made on a Google form. For more information, as well as info on the February New Draft Challenge and Critique Train, go to mindyalyseweiss.com/2023-pbparty-annual-contest/

Magazine Seeks Nonfiction for Ages 5-17

Scout Life is a general-interest, four-color magazine that prints 10 times yearly, with a circulation of 1 million, published by the Boy Scouts of America since 1911. Buys all rights for original, unpublished material. **Seeking queries for nonfiction only.** All material must interest boys and girls ages 5-17, with age 12 being the target. Editors want crisp, punchy writing in relatively short, straightforward sentences, and well-reported articles that demonstrate high standards of journalism.

Feature articles will run 500 to 1,200 words; payment is \$500 to \$1,200. Subject matter is broad. Covers everything from professional sports to American history to how to pack a canoe. A look at a current list of the BSA's more than 100 merit badge pamphlets gives an idea of the wide range of subjects possible. Also, study a year's worth of recent issues, which can be found in libraries and in BSA council offices, or look for the digital edition in your app store.

Departments run up to 600 words; payment is \$100 to \$600. Department headings are science, nature, health, sports, space and aviation, cars, computers, entertainment, pets, history, music — and others. Each issue uses five departments, on average.

Query with a synopsis of the article or Department idea, a short description of your research/sources, and a short author bio. **DO NOT SEND FULL, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS.** Send Feature Article queries to Managing Editor Paula Murphey, and Department queries to Associate Editor Sheniece Chappell. Query by mail only, and be sure to include your email and phone number as well as a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a reply. Mail to *Scout Life*, 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079

Page Street Publishing Forms YA-Specific Imprint

Page Street Publishing will launch its newest imprint this spring – Page Street YA – to bring all its YA titles under one roof and expand offerings of teen fiction. Accepting queries for YA fiction for ages 12 and up in all genres, with a protagonist ages 15-18 years old. Finished manuscripts should be 60-90K words long, revised and polished to the best of your ability. Page Street is especially interested in seeing proposals from marginalized creators. Queries should consist of a one-page letter that contains a book synopsis that includes your novel's pitch, word count, and classification (literary, historical, fantasy, mystery, etc); and an author bio that describes your occupation, publishing history, social media presence, and any other relevant information that pertains to your manuscript (including any endorsements, if applicable). If you are represented by an agent or plan to be, please note this in your author bio. Paste the first three chapters of your book into the body of the email following your query letter.

Email to yasubmissions@pagestreetpublishing.com with the title of your manuscript in the subject line. Responds in about 3 months if interested in seeing more of the work. Simultaneous submissions (where the author is querying more than one publisher with the same manuscript) are accepted, but please do email Page Street if you have received an offer for your book elsewhere and would like to rescind your submission.

Award-Winning Publisher Accepting Picture Book Submissions

Flashlight Press is an award-winning, independent publisher of picture books that explore and illuminate the touching and humorous moments of family situations and social interactions through captivating writing and outstanding illustrations. They are currently accepting submissions from authors and author/illustrators of fiction picture books ONLY. Manuscripts should target 4–8 year olds, be under 1000 words, have a universal theme, deal with family or social situations, and feel like a Flashlight Press book (study current titles at flashlightpress.com/our-catalog/).

Submit to submissions@flashlightpress.com. In the Subject line of your query, put "Query for [title of manuscript]." The body of the query should include: Title of Story, Word Count, Target Age, Subject or Theme of story (1-5 words), Summary (3 sentences or less), Your Name, Occupation, City, State, Country. If you have been published previously, list titles, publishers, and pub dates. Include anything else you'd like to mention.

3) Attach your manuscript as a .doc, .docx, or PDF. **Any query that includes a different file format will not be accepted.** Within a week, you should receive an automated reply that your submission has been received. If the publisher is interested in your work, you should be contacted within four months.

Agent Seeks Middle Grade and YA Fiction Queries

Kristen Terrette is the literary manager with Martin Literary and Media Management (www.martinlit.com/), and is building her list and looking for middle grade and young adult fiction. In Middle Grade she's accepting all subgenres except science fiction. She would love to see books tackling themes like abandonment, bullying, loneliness, comparison, divorce, and body image but done so by instilling hope, growth, and healing. Also stories that are creepy, horrifying, supernatural, fantastical, historical, and contemporary. For Young Adult, she's also accepting all genres except science fiction. Stories must grab her attention within the first couple of pages. Looking for books with first loves, unique friendships, interesting and/or challenging family dynamics, and hard-hitting subject matter (race relations, suicide, abuse, divorce, etc.) but with a satisfying (not necessarily happy!) ending.

Kristen is fine with books that don't fit neatly into a genre, but does not want weak female protagonists who need to be saved. Query with manuscript details, a short bio, and the first pages of your manuscript to Query Manager at querymanager.com/query/KristenTerrette

Find Your Story...continued

from my agent who'd read the first draft, and my thoughts on those notes backed up by quotes and new research. And, because I believed I had a trilogy, pages devoted to the second and third books.

I *loved* working on "The Book of Morning Glory," pawing through my bookshelves, perusing photo files, finding new connections between what my story was and what it could be, like the brain creating new neural pathways, and designing the document to look like a field guide. Thirty pages total, packed with graphics, the last page devoted to my hand-drawn map of Morning Glory. It's a lovely thing, made with love for a project that seemed dead at times and a runaway train at other times. I had it photocopied in color on high-quality paper to let the design shine. Leafing through it made my novel less a mess, a project I could revise with care.

While I'd created "The Book of Morning Glory" to help me with the revision process, I realized it had other uses. I sent a copy to my agent, so she could better understand my novel. If the book was acquired, I could send it to my new editor. After publication, I had a ready-made guide for promotion and publicity. I could expand parts of it into essays. Ultimately, my agent subbed the manuscript along with "The Book of Morning Glory" as a PDF file. Did it help sell my novel?

The editor who acquired it found the document in-depth and interesting, a window into one author's mind. Just as much had changed in writing and revising the novel over six years, discussions with the acquiring editor brought many more changes. My field guide steered me in the right direction. Though I doubt I'll be writing a trilogy, I'm glad I thought through the sequels. No work is ever wasted.

Would I make another novel field guide? You bet. I've already started one for a new book, this time in the planning stage. Even if everything changes, the process of pulling together photos and quotes and different research, typing text into layouts of my own design, is gratifying and *visible*, better than scribbled notes and a rabbit warren of computer

files.

A field guide to your novel (or nonfiction book), at whatever stage may help you think differently. Print it in color and hold it in your hands. Your book is one step closer to becoming a reality.

DIRECTIONS**Mac:**

Open a blank Pages document and go to Menu > File > Convert to Page Layout > Convert.

Google Doc:

Help in formatting, layout, inserting images:
<https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/googledocuments/formatting-text-and-adding-hyperlinks/1/>

How to insert and delete images and videos:
<https://support.google.com/docs/answer/97447?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop>

Mastering the Art of

DEEP POINT-OF-VIEW

by Jane McBride

You know what point-of-view (POV) is, but do you know what deep POV is? More importantly, are you writing it?

Think of deep POV as POV on steroids. Deep POV tears down any and all obstacles between the reader and the POV character. It amps up emotion and gives greater depth to and understanding of characters.

What keeps writers from getting into deep POV?

- head-hopping
- disembodied body parts
- buffer words
- overdone descriptive narrative
- to-be verbs

Let's take these one at a time.

Head-hopping. This is the first and probably the most obvious obstacle that prevents us from getting into deep POV. Head-hopping is when the author moves from one character's thoughts/feelings to those of another character in the same scene, sometimes within the same paragraph or even the same sentence. While this may work for big name authors who can get away with anything, it doesn't work for the rest of us. I read a particularly memorable book by a *New York Times* bestselling author where even a cow in a passing field had a POV. Such was the writer's skill that I was right there in the cow's head with her. I am embarrassed to admit that when I first started writing, I didn't know what POV meant. I certainly didn't know that I was moving from one character's thoughts to another's without any transition or even any real reason for doing so. Looking back, I realize that I had weakened the scenes where I head-hopped, detracting not only from the POV character but also from the other secondary character whose POV popped in a couple of times. Readers will feel cheated if you move from one character's thoughts to those of another without any warning or reason.

Disembodied body parts. Does this sound like a body that's been hacked up with arms and legs, hands and feet, floating around without any connection? Maybe a serial killer is involved. Take heart. Disembodied parts refers to body parts acting independently of the character.

Example: *She felt a sob rising in her throat.* Here, we have two obstacles to deep POV. "She felt" and "a sob rising in her throat."

Fix: *She sobbed.*

Example: *A blush filled her cheeks.*

Fix: *She blushed.*

Buffer words. What are buffer words? Any word that distances the reader from the main character and the action is a buffer word. The words "she thought to herself" is a buffer phrase. Just who else would the character be thinking to? Other buffer words and phrases include, he/she felt like, it felt as if, it seemed. **Anything that distances the reader from deep, genuine feelings can be seen as a buffer word.**

Compare the following. The set-up is a sixteen-year-old girl, Chelsea, and her seventeen-year-old boyfriend, Ryan. The girl comes from a working class neighborhood where most of the men work at a factory and the women work at one of the area's three beauty salons or clean houses of the factory bosses. Ryan comes from money. His father owns the factory, the biggest employer in town. The day before Ryan and Chelsea had run into his parents at an ice cream parlor, with awkward results.

Example A:

Chelsea thought of how Ryan had referred to her as *just a friend from school* to his parents. She was more than that. She felt it when he held her in his arms. When his strong arms closed around her, she felt as

Mastering the Art of Deep Point-of-View...continued

though she were the most important person on earth to him. She felt it with every fiber of her being. Now she felt like he was ashamed of her. She wondered if that was how he really thought about her.

Example B:

How could Ryan have referred to her that way? Telling his parents that she was *just a friend from school*? Yesterday, before they'd run into his parents, he'd told her that he loved her, that she was everything he'd ever wanted.

Example A:

- Contains 83 words
- Uses the word *felt* four times as well as the words *thought* and *wondered*, distancing words.
- Uses excessive overwriting, i.e. "every fiber of her being."

Example B:

- Contains 36 words, a difference of 47 words.
- Goes deep into Chelsea's POV with the first sentence.
- Employs tight writing. In today's world, where readers are accustomed to the sound-bites of media coverage, the constant action of video games, and the nearly instant gratification in everything from ordering food and having it delivered in a half-hour to buying an item online and seeing it delivered within two days, short and tight is almost always better than long and lyrical.

Too much descriptive narrative. Some descriptive narrative is essential in a book. Readers not only need to be grounded of where they are, they also want some description of the surroundings. Notice my use of the word *some*. What do I mean by that? "Some description" means just enough. It does not mean describing every tree in the forest on a camping trip. Nor does it mean describing every stuffed animal on a little girl's bed. Descriptive narrative (DN) can anchor a scene as well as create a mood.

If DN is so good, why should we limit it in our writing?

- It slows the pace.
- It dilutes the important parts of a scene: the interaction between characters, the dialogue, the conflict.
- It takes the reader out of deep POV and makes her an observer of the action, rather than a participant in it.

If you are unsure about which passages of DN in your book should be cut, ask yourself questions:

- Does the description move your story forward or does it postpone the action?
- Is it merely a repetition of earlier paragraphs? In writing one book, I was so enamored with my description of the hero's grief over his brother's death that I failed to realize that I had written the same thing over and over, only in different words. It wasn't until the editor pointed it out to me that I was able to see it as repetition. Now, go back and read the closing sentence of the first paragraph about buffer words? Did the repetition jump out at you?
- What is the purpose of the DN? Does it hint at what is coming? Does it deepen characterization? If you can't establish the purpose of a particular passage of narrative, consider cutting it.

To-be verbs. Not sure what to-be verbs are? Anything with *was*, *is*, *are*, *were*, *could be*, *would be*, *should be*, etc. is a to-be verb. Some of these constructions are necessary. (There. I just used a to-be verb.) But too many such words create space between the reader and the action. Moreover, they create distance between the reader and the character. To be in deep POV, you want your reader to feel what the character is feeling, not from a vantage point outside the character but from deep within. To-be verbs usually don't contain a visceral reaction or evoke a response.

Weak writing: Sandi was devastated when her father told her and her brother that he was divorcing their mother.

The fix: Grief rose up to choke her at her father's announcement.

Weak writing: Chad was elated that the coach had chosen him for the first string in football.

The fix: Chad high-fived his friend at the coach's announcement.

WRAPPING UP

Writing deep point-of-view takes time and thought and (in my case) many revisions. It takes reading your work aloud. It's amazing what you can pick up by doing so. You will probably have a learning curve as you practice and practice again. If you keep improving your craft, to give the absolute best writing you are capable of, you will master this important skill.

Andrea Hall

SENIOR ACQUISITIONS EDITOR



interview by Lynne Marie

Andrea Hall is a Senior Acquisitions Editor at 1517 Media for the Beaming Books imprint. Previously, she spent 6 years as an editor and related positions at Albert Whitman Books. Prior to that, she worked at Pearson Education for 5 years and was a book reviewer for the Ohioana Quarterly. When she came to Beaming Books in May of 2021, she brought with her a host of knowledge and experience in the publishing business. We are super excited for the opportunity to feature her here!

LYNNE MARIE: A year has passed since you first transitioned from an editor at Albert Whitman to a senior editor Beaming Books. How has your job, and your job responsibilities, changed during that time?

ANDREA HALL: As with any job change, there are new programs and processes to learn. But much of what I do is the same—acquiring and editing manuscripts. At Beaming Books, I do have more involvement in the selection of the illustrator and the art for each book.

LM: With the change in publisher, how have your book publishing needs changed? How have they stayed the same?

AH: A lot of my needs have stayed the same! I still primarily focus on picture books, but I've been excit-

ed to acquire several chapter book series for Beaming Books, the first of which launches this fall. I'm also learning about the progressive Christian market, which is new for me.



LM: How would you describe Beaming Books' vision? To your knowledge, has that changed at all over the past few years? In what ways?

AH: The vision of Beaming Books is to publish books that help kids thrive socially, emotionally, and spiritually. We're committed to publishing stories that allow every child to see themselves in a book. It's a mission I very much connect with and drew me to the company.

LM: How might what you are looking for in a book differ from what the other editors are looking for? Or is the acquisitions process such that everyone must be on board? Please share the acquisitions process, and how it is decided who will edit a certain book.

AH: Each editor at Beaming Books acquires, so we're all reviewing and editing manuscripts. While our individual tastes vary, we're all working to the same goal of finding books that fit our mission. We meet as an editorial team to discuss projects we like. If we agree the project is a good fit for our mission and list, we move the manuscript forward to pitch to

Andrea Hall...continued

the sales and marketing teams. If they're on board with the project, it goes to acquisitions!

LM: Currently, Beaming Books only accepts agented submissions or author submissions from any pitches favorited during a pitch party. But you're offering our CBI subscribers a special Above the Slushpile opportunity this month. What do you want to see in a submission in addition to the elevator pitch?

AH: I always appreciate seeing comps included in a query, as that tells me the author has done their market research and knows how their book would fit into the current competition. An author's relevant experience or tie-in to a project is great, as this showcases how the story is personal to the author.

LM: One of the books you have previously edited, *Still a Family*, by acclaimed author Brenda Reeves Sturgis, became a Top 100 Book for the New York Public Library. What made this story feel important? What in particular, led you to acquire it? Please tell us a little bit about it.

AH: This book looks at homelessness through a child's eyes. Many people may not be aware that families can be separated into different shelters (men in one shelter, and women and children in another). But even when separated, a family is still a family. It's a powerful story!

LM: The first of the books you've acquired at Beaming Books was Charlesbridge Editor Julie Bliven's *Sometimes Shy*, a SEL (Social Emotional Learning) book which explores "one child's sense of quiet vs. shyness, and how shyness can be situational." What drew you to this book in particular?

AH: The lyrical language drew me immediately, and the way this story looks at inanimate things as being shy. This was an interesting and engaging way

to look at the topic—and one I hadn't seen before. A shy person myself, the positive takeaway for readers resonated!

LM: What should be the author's mission or goal when gearing a book to Beaming Books? Name five adjectives that would describe the content and spirit of the submissions you are looking for.

AH: When gearing a book to Beaming Books, an author should be sure the project fits with our mission and the type of books we publish. Inclusive, diverse, social-emotional, engaging, and fresh.

LM: What are the most important aspects of a Beaming Books story – character, idea, story arc, physical change, emotional growth, theme, message?

AH: It depends on the story one is trying to tell! I am drawn to layered stories, which have multiple of these elements working together.

LM: How would you differentiate a theme and a message? Please explain.

AH: The theme is the subject or topic of the story, and the message is the underlying point the author is conveying about that topic.

LM: Beaming Books has a mix of fiction and nonfiction books. What would you say the breakdown is? What are you looking for in nonfiction?

AH: I would say about a third of our list is nonfiction titles. In nonfiction, we're looking for stories that focus on nature/environmentalism, activism, navigating emotions, mental health, bullying, faith, and strong female bios.

LM: Beaming Books features both spiritual and secular books. What would the breakdown between these sub-genres be? What are the current needs



Andrea Hall...continued

with regard to spiritual books? Is the direction moving away from spiritual books or toward or remaining static?

AH: We publish books for the progressive Christian market as well as secular stories. Roughly a fourth of our picture books are spiritual/religious. We're seeking more stories with a progressive Christian focus on topics of God's love, defining/explaining God, how to connect with God, faith in the world, and Easter or Christmas stories about diverse holiday traditions.

LM: Please share a little bit about yourself and your editing style. What can an author expect from working with you and this publisher?

AH: I work collaboratively. I ask authors a lot of questions, as I want to ensure that I'm understanding the story in the way they're conveying it, to ensure readers do too. Authors can expect to work with a wonderful team of people at Beaming Books! We're a smaller publisher, and that gives us the opportunity to get to know each author and support them and their books.

LM: Tell us a little bit about yourself and what drives your passion for kidlit.

AH: I've always been a bookworm. Stories have been an escape for me since childhood, and I'm passionate about creating stories that reflect the reality we live in, in hopes that every child will see themselves in stories. I also want readers to gain empathy and understanding by reading about others who have different experiences from their own.

LM: Please share your wish list.

AH: [Andrea Hall | The Official Manuscript Wish List Website](#) This seems to cover it!

LM: To give our readers a sense of the publication process, please tell us how far out you are acquiring.

AH: Currently, we're acquiring for spring 2025!

Andrea Hall is offering a special **Above the Slushpile** submission opportunity for CBI subscribers. Until **February 28, 2023**, you can submit a 350-character pitch/synopsis of a [fiction or nonfiction picture book, fiction chapter book, or middle grade nonfiction manuscript](#), along with other information, via the online form at bit.ly/ATSFeb23BB. Andrea will read all pitches and respond to those she's interested in by May 31, 2023. If you haven't heard back by the end of May, consider it a pass. NOTE: Before submitting, be sure to study the current Beaming Books titles at beamingbooks.com, and Andrea Hall's Manuscript Wish List page at manuscriptwishlist.com/mswlp/andrea-hall

---Please Read Before You Proceed---

For a detailed explanation of the Above the Slushpile submission form, as well as tips for writing your pitch, see cbiclubhouse.com/clubhouse/slushpile-new/

To watch Laura's Kidlit Social interview about how to know when your manuscript is ready to submit, go to writeforkids.org/blog/kidlitdistancingsocial70/

Before you submit your manuscript please run the following checklist. This will ensure that editors will continue to offer us Above the Slushpile codes:

- You've chosen one manuscript to pitch for each Above the Slushpile opportunity. If the editor or agent shows interest in that submission, you'll have the opportunity to mention your other work.
- You've studied the submission guidelines and verified that your manuscript falls within those guidelines.
- Your work has been critiqued by a beta reader, critique partner/group, or a freelance editor.
- You have thoroughly revised and polished your manuscript so it is ready to submit should the editor ask to see the entire work.

Brian Jud, Author and Book Marketing Consultant on Getting Into Non-Bookstore Markets

interview by Sharon O. Blumberg

Brian Jud, bookmarketingworks.com is a man of many talents and hats. Among them, he's an author, book marketing consultant, speaker, leader of seminars, television host, President of Book Marketing Works, and a partner in Premium Book Company that sells books to non-bookstore buyers on a non-refundable, commission basis. In addition, he's the Executive Director of the Association of Publishers for Special Sales (bookapss.org).

Brian is the author of *How to Make Real Money Selling Books (Without Worrying About Returns)* This is the ultimate do-it-yourself guide to selling your books to non-bookstore buyers in large quantities, with no returns. He also wrote *Beyond the Bookstore* (a Publishers Weekly® book), a primer on non-bookstore marketing.

Brian has also written and published five titles on career transition that are distributed internationally. He is a prolific writer of articles about book publishing and marketing. He is the author of the eight books with *Proven Tips for Publishing Success* and the contributing editor to the monthly newsletters, *Book Marketing Matters*, *The Sales Informer*, *The Authority* and *Bound to Sell*. He was the host of the television show, *The Book Authority* that aired for 13 years.

SHARON BLUMBERG: Could you please tell us about yourself, and how you came to your current position, that of author, book marketing consultant, and more?

BRIAN JUD: After being laid off from my corporate job, I decided to change careers and become an author. How hard could it be to write a book? I soon found

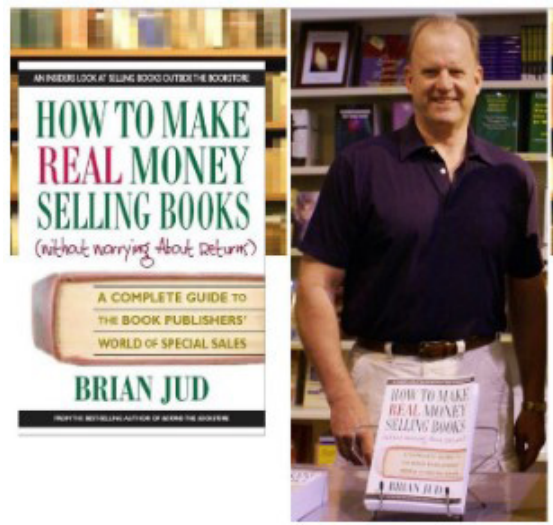
out that was the easy part. After writing and self-publishing my job-search book, I also quickly learned that bookstores were not a good place to sell books. Fortunately, my corporate marketing experience paid off and I asked myself an important question: "Who else can use the content in my book?" That led me to college students, state Departments of Labor and other niche markets in which I could contact buyers directly, bypassing the bookstores and selling on a non-returnable basis. Once I had the system down, I began doing that for authors and publishers, forming the foundation of my new career.

SB: Could you please tell us about your authored books?

BJ: My first books were on career topics. *Job Search 101* was my first, and I had it translated into Spanish. Then I wrote *Coping With Unemployment* to help people deal with the negative aspects of prolonged unemployment. This sold well through the Brown Wrapper Bookstore – a catalog selling non-pornographic books people did not want to be seen purchasing in stores. Next came *Help Wanted: Inquire Within* to

help people find jobs not listed in the newspapers (this was pre-Internet). Then I wrote and produced a video program, *The Art of Interviewing* and wrote a series of 32-page booklets purchased by colleges to give to their students. This segment gave me access to an annual new group of buyers with 1.5 million college students graduating every year. I sold over 2,000,000 of these books and booklets in the first few years.

I had much experience getting on and performing on over 1200 TV and radio shows to market my books, in addition to hosting my own TV show for 13 years. I used that knowledge to create a video program, *You're*



Getting Into Non-bookstore Markets...continued

On The Air bundled with two books, *Perpetual Promotion* and *It's Show Time*.

Next, I created a series of eight books with *Proven Tips for Publishing Success*, sponsored by Bowker. These covered the book-marketing topics of niche marketing, planning, product development, pricing, distribution and promotion, particularly for non-bookstore markets.

Finally, I produced my current product line beginning with *Beyond the Bookstore* (a *Publishers Weekly*® book), a primer on non-bookstore marketing. Then I worked with Square One to publish *How to Make Real Money Selling Books (Without Worrying About Returns)*. This is the ultimate do-it-yourself guide to selling your books to non-bookstore buyers in large quantities, with no returns.

SB: Could you please tell us how can authors contact/approach the gift shops of parks, zoos, and museums? [Note to readers: You can approach non-bookstore markets on your own if you're self-publishing. If you have a contract with a publisher, be sure to contact the publisher's special sales department before reaching out to these markets to sell your books.]

BJ: Today's gift market is experiencing dynamic growth as consumers buy more gifts and home decorating products. These products are gaining more exposure to consumers through a wide-range of shopping venues including the national retail chains as well as department stores, mass merchants and the Internet.

In the face of these new outlets, gift shops offer an excellent opportunity to sell more of your books. This category includes major accounts such as Hallmark Stores and Spencer Gifts. It also includes regional chains, local card and gift stores as well as hotel and hospital gift shops.

How to reach the gift market:

1) **Direct marketing.** Timing may be as important as content in gift-store mailings. Once you locate your target companies, implement your direct-mail campaign well before the major holiday period for which your title is appropriate. Create a high-quality catalog listing your titles that are appropriate for the gift trade and include it in your mailings and personal visits. Be prepared to leave behind sample books with the potential buyers. Payments are typically made in net 120 days, but you can try to negotiate more favorable terms.

2) **Sales-representative groups.** There are independent sales rep groups that sell books to the gift trade throughout North America. While there are some national organizations, most cover a territory comprising several states. They usually seek a 15 - 20% commission on all books sold in their territory. Authors can search groups of sales representatives such as manufacturers Representative Profile (www.mr-pusa.com) and Rep Hunter (www.rephunter.net).

3) **Trade shows.** Your distributor's rep group may exhibit your titles at the top trade shows, but you should attend anyway for the networking opportunities. The major shows are national or regional in scope and include: National Stationery Show, Boston Gift Show, California Gift Show, New York International Gift Fair, Dallas International Gift & Home Accessories Market, The Gift Fair in Atlanta, The Gourmet Products Show, San Francisco International Gift Fair, Toronto International Gift Fair and the Washington Gift Show.

The second way to reach buyers in this segment is through third-party retailers that acquire books and other products for the gift shops. In essence, they buy for the venues instead of selling to them. Eastern National, the Western National Parks Association, and Event Network are three of the major third-party retailers. Eastern National and the Western National Parks Association serve the national park system, while Event Network operates gift shops at zoos, museums, aquariums, science centers, and botanical gardens.

Event Network (www.eventnetwork.com) acts as an institution's retail partner, creating and maintaining each store with which it works. It delivers a compelling assortment of merchandise by evaluating and purchasing new products for the gift shops it operates. Event Network is not a distributor; rather, it works with its partners to extend its guests' experiences. Event Network's stores vary from single-subject venues, such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, to multi-subject venues, such as science centers, zoos, and aquariums.

When you contact Event Network's book buyer, be sure to point out the venue for which your book is most suitable, as well as the reasons why it would be a good fit for that particular venue. This is because the products Event Network purchases for, say, the Seattle Aquarium are different from those chosen for the Pacific Aviation Museum, which are also different from those acquired for the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles.

Getting Into Non-bookstore Markets...continued

SB: Is there more than one way to do this?

BJ: There are two ways to reach buyers in these market segments. The first is to contact them directly. If you choose to sell directly to these stores, approach them as you would any other business. Find out the buyers' names, which are usually available on their companies' websites, and make appointments to meet with them. The other is through middlemen as described above.

SB: What would be the process/steps involved in doing this?

BJ: A major decision criterion for gift shops is the fit your title has with the store's image and customer base, and the types of books that sell well vary by the chain's image. For example, Hallmark generally deals in sentiment, Spencer Gifts in adult humor and Urban Outfitters in hip products for men and women. Titles that generally do not do well in gift stores are scholarly, text-driven and fiction titles.

It is not appropriate to send galley to gift-shop buyers since they make their decisions on the finished product. They want to see your book's cover design, size, text and its general overall quality. People buying products in gift shops typically purchase on impulse. Therefore, price is important. Your book should be priced under \$10 to penetrate the gift market. Although there is no standard size that sells best, hard-cover is generally more acceptable.

Gift-store sales are seasonal in nature, and if your title is appropriate to one of the major holiday periods you stand a better chance of acceptance. Buyers at key accounts will begin looking at seasonal titles six months before the holiday. Purchasing agents at local stores may purchase your books up to one month before the event. In most cases, distributors will accept submissions at all times. Send them a sample of the finished book with a marketing plan and a summary of your sales to date.

Your submission package should include a copy of the book and a sell sheet describing the data needed to make a decision. This includes the author's name as well as his or her credentials as an expert source of the book's content. It also includes all of the data surrounding your book such as its list price, page count, ISBN number, and more. Additionally, your submission package should include a cover letter that has a brief description of why your book is relevant. How is it different from or better than what the institution already has on its shelves?

SB: If potential clients are self-publishing, what kind of discounts do these places generally ask them for?

BJ: One of the major benefits to selling to gift shops is that books are sold on a non-returnable basis. Typically, retailers want a 50% discount.

SB: How can children's authors sell their books to daycare centers and preschools?

BJ: Daycare centers or preschools could purchase books to read to the children or to resell to parents. Desirable forms and topics include board books, activity books, coloring books, books with puzzles, and various fiction and nonfiction titles. Books in Spanish and bilingual books may sell well in the United States, too. Books on religious subjects may be sold to preschool centers run by churches. Here are other possible sources of sales:

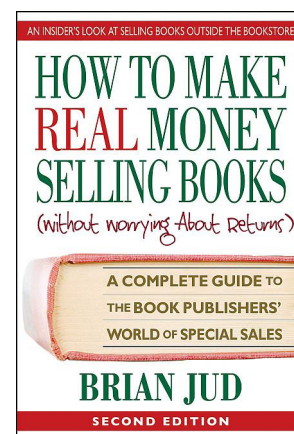
- A Child's University (achildsuniversity.com)
- KinderCare (kindercare.com)
- La Petite Academy (lapetite.com)
- Primrose Schools (primroseschools.com)

SB: What would be the process or steps?

BJ: The process would be pretty much the same process as I mentioned above, regarding selling one's authored books to gift shops, parks, museums, and etc.

SB: Is there anything else you would like to add, that I have not yet asked you, regarding yourself or this topic?

BJ: There is much more to say in each of the answers above. More complete responses to your questions (and much more information) may be found in my book *How to Make Real Money Selling Books (Without Worrying About Returns)*.



Exploring the Two Halves of a Picture Book with Author Amanda Henke and Illustrator Anna Daviscourt

interview by PJ McIlvaine

Debut children's author **Amanda Henke** (*Not a Book About Bunnies*, Starry Forest Books, February 2023) loves to explore nature while dreaming up travel plans, dinner wishes, and book ideas. She sees bunnies hop around often but has yet to spot an actual porcupine in the wild! A graduate of Hamline University's MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults, she lives near St. Paul, Minnesota with her family. Henke "mostly" writes books about animals who are sometimes brave, making friends, getting into pickles, or discovering their own fluffy, prickly, or scaly identity while usually having a good time. Learn more at amandahenke.com

PJ McILVAINE: Did you always aspire to be a children's writer? What was the first thing you ever wrote? What was your favorite book as a child?

AMANDA HENKE: No, but I have always loved children's books. Even in high school and college, I would get lost in the library aisles reading old fairy tales. I'm sure the first thing I wrote was a poem.

When my son was born we read endless picture books which were so clever, funny, and heartwarming, I had picture book envy and I wanted to try and write some myself. I applied to the MFAC Program in Writing for Children and Young Adults at Hamline and happily, I was accepted. The program was wonderful, and it invited/obligated me to write in earnest. I am proud to say I graduated in 2019.

My favorite book as a child was *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* as read to my brother Matt and me by my Grandma Grace, as many times as we wanted her to read it, no matter how sleepy we all were.

PM: You say you mostly write about animals getting into trouble or humorous situations. Why does that appeal to you in terms of story and readability?

AH: I love funny picture books about animals, and so many picture book authors write animal humor so well: Eija Sumner, Jon Klassen, Dev Petty, Julie Falatko, Amy Dyckman and so many more. It's fun to read a picture book about an animal overcoming a problem because they make a dramatic situation lighter and more approachable. Plus, illustrations of animals invite comedy. It's hilarious to me to see an alligator grocery shopping or a crocodile ordering pizza on a cell phone. Not everyone loves anthropomorphism but I sure do! I'm usually inspired by my son who has a lot of questions and animal fun facts up his sleeve. I like to fall down a rabbit hole researching a particular animal, find some obscure facts about them, and build from there.

PM: Where did the inspiration for *Not a Book About Bunnies* come from?

AH: While I was studying at Hamline I was writing about a lot of sweet, typical picture book characters: bunnies, bears, butterflies...and I thought, hey, I should write a book that's not about bunnies. The title popped into my head, and I wrote the story over the course of the next four years.

PM: Was that always the title?

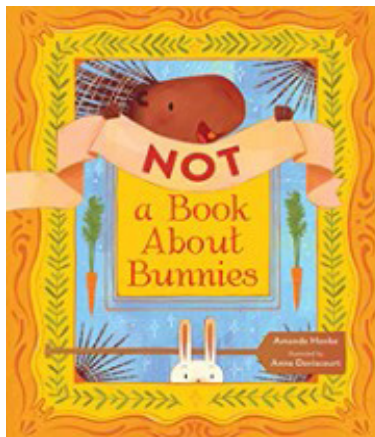
AH: Yes, but the main character wasn't always a porcupine. It was originally an oyster!

PM: Did you have it professionally edited?

AH: Yes, Emma Dryden (drydenbks.com) was very helpful and later, [my first editor at Starry Forest Books] Allison Hunter Hill helped me shape the story.

PM: When did you know the story was ready to query?

AH: I didn't know if it was ready, but I was proud



Exploring Two Halves...continued

of it and it made me laugh, so I put it on #PBPitch. Lucky for me, it got a heart <3

PM: From the first draft to publication, how long did it take? What advice would you give to those in the query trenches?

AH: I wrote the first draft in April 2018, and it will be published on February 7, 2023, so nearly five years! I am taking a break from searching for an agent myself, so I'm not sure I have any good advice for people in the query trenches, per se. I send out a few queries at a time, no more than 5. I make sure I have researched the agents to see if they are a good fit for my story and for me. If I get a rejection, I send another letter out to a different agent so I have the same number of live queries out there at any given time.

PM: Has anything surprised you about the publication process? What advice would you have given your younger self about writing?

AH: I had no idea how complex the publication process is, or how many edits I'd go through before my final draft. I bet I have 200 or more versions of my book.

If I'm speaking to myself as a kid, I'd say keep a journal and make entries a daily habit, no matter how short they are. Save the journals for later on, because Future Amanda will get a lot of use out of them. Also, write more postcards to your family members and friends while you are at camp, ask them to save them, and return to you when you decide to take up writing.

I would also tell my recent younger self to take writing for fun more seriously. I am most proud of my work when I have had a lot of fun writing it. Write more and read more, always.

PM: Did you have any input regarding the artwork? Did you include art notes in your drafts?

AH: Yes, just a little bit here and there, but not until Anna was well into her illustrations. I'm so glad that the artwork was mostly up to her because she did a stellar job. I included a couple of brief art notes in my manuscript, but only where they were necessary to explain something happening in the story if that was not already clear.

PM: What are you working on currently? Do you

plan to expand to other genres? Where do you see yourself, writing-wise, in five years? What is your ultimate goal?

AH: I'm working on picture books, mostly. Funny picture books are what I like to write more than anything. I'm interested in writing essays geared toward adults and I am also slowly plotting out a middle grade.

In five years I would like to be publishing more books, or at least still writing them. As for my ultimate goal, I think it would be great to have an agent, to write and publish more books that make people laugh and inspire kids to read, absolutely. But I have to say, if I'm still able to write, able to make myself laugh, and get that glowy feeling of accomplishment that comes from a day of good work, I'll be happy.



PM: How do you balance work and family?

AH: I have begun to delegate little jobs. Just little ones, not the big ones that only I can be trusted with! has helped a LOT.

Some excellent advice I once heard from the brilliant Nina LaCour is to make your writing time less precious. Instead of lighting a candle and brewing a cup of tea before sitting down at your perfect desk designed for endless wordsmithing, squeeze it in when you can. Maybe write for 20 minutes while waiting in the car at the school pick-up line, or record a voice memo and write it down later. This goes hand in hand with another tip of hers, "Some Words on Most Days." This takes a lot of pressure off.

PM: And the cute dog on your website—is that a French Bulldog?

AH: That is Jiffy! He was a half Frenchie and half Boston Terrier. Jiffy was my first dog ever. He is in the Great Dog Beyond now. I miss him so much but I hope he's still doing what he loves: snacking, snuggling, and snoring.

Exploring Two Halves...continued

Anna Davis court hails from Portland, Oregon, and loves to blend whimsical design and storytelling to create magical images that transport the viewer. Her daily work includes writing, illustrating, and streaming her design process online. She has previously taught at the Pacific Northwest College of Art and online with the Society of Visual Storytelling. She also hosts other creatives on Adobe Live—a broadcast about design on Behance.net. Her passions include watching animated movies, baking, sculpting, crocheting, and any random things that catch her fancy. Check out Davis court's website at www.annadavis court.com/

PJ McILVAINE: Have you always shown an aptitude for art? Did your family encourage you to pursue a career in the art field? What was the first thing you ever drew?



ANNA DAVIS COURT: I believe that everyone has an aptitude for art, I just chose to dedicate a lot of time to developing mine. My family is very artistic and encouraged me to create in any medium—particularly my Mom. She has the tools for any kind of project you could think of. My family was completely supportive when I told them I wanted to become a professional artist and they think it's amazing that I have published books with my name in print!

I don't remember my first drawing, but I recall loving coloring books. I would also color pictures that my dad drew—usually of goofy characters—and I remember wishing I could draw like he did. Now I draw pictures for my nieces to color in, so it's really come full circle!

PM: How did the collaboration on *Not a Book About Bunnies* happen? How long did it take you to do the art for this book? Did the author have input or suggestions? For those of us who can't draw a stick, what is a picture book dummy? Which part of the process do you like the best and the least?

AD: It all began with Amanda's manuscript, which I read and immediately imagined the vibrant world and characters. I spent about 8 or 9 months working on *Not a Book About Bunnies*, and it all started with character sketches for me—who they are, what they do, and how they are depicted—that is the heart of

the story.

Amanda's words offered so much opportunity for collaboration with imagery, so I took the ball and ran with it! The story always informs the images, but sometimes the images can inform the story. The creative process is a back-and-forth, where both sides inspire something more out of the other, and *Starry Forest Books* really understood and encouraged this kind of collaboration. I also worked closely with the book designer, Susanna Chapman, who pulled the entire project together beautifully!

A book dummy (which despite the name, is very smart!) is just words and loose sketches—maybe a finished illustration or two if you're trying to sell it. For any aspiring artists, I would suggest focusing on communicating the story effectively in the dummy stage to avoid making massive changes to finished paintings. The sketches don't need to be pretty, they just need to be understandable.

I love the sketch phase because it has so many possibilities and is the most immediately satisfying. I get really into planning how the images and words sit on the page, and how the pages compositionally flow into one another from spread to spread, moving the reader's eye around the pages. Illustrated books are such a wonderful opportunity to give the reader a feast for their eyes in a way that only sequential storytelling can do. I definitely start getting antsy toward the end of a project, but it's all worth it to hold the final product in my hands!

PM: Since you're also an author/illustrator, what are your criteria for working on someone else's book? Do you have to be as passionate about that idea as your own? How does the text inspire you to run with the art and create something totally unique and suited to that particular story? Since you're proficient in multiple art styles, how do you decide which illustration format goes best with a story? Is it a case of trial and error? Is there one format you prefer over another?

AD: The first criteria I think about when choosing to work on a project is can I clearly imagine it. If I read a manuscript and it sparks my imagination—a beautiful setting, a lovable character, a unique concept, hilarious moments—then I'm interested. I always want to bring something of myself to a project, and I look for

other creators who do the same.

Once that spark is there, I write down any ideas I have immediately, just small notes and doodles to make sure I don't forget. Then, as I progress through the sketch phase, I look to my favorite books and artists to find inspiration for storytelling techniques. One person may use composition to guide the eye while another uses colors to convey emotion—could I combine those techniques to add drama to a turning point in my story? Those are the questions I ask myself, but it also helps that my partner is also an artist, so I've always got someone to bounce ideas off of!

I'm constantly exploring my artistic style. I take inspiration from many different places, so I imagine it's like following will-o-the-wisps further down a path, never really catching them, but continually moving onward. Every project I've worked on has come at a different point in that journey and I learn so much from each new story.

My sketches for Porcupine and Bunny looked completely different in the beginning, but once I painted one of the pages fully, their designs became clear. I wanted to paint lush, detailed scenery, so the characters became more simplified and graphic. That change came about organically, but it also helped to have a team that was open to that kind of spontaneity.

Every book is different, so I don't have one preferred format. It comes down to what art best elevates each unique story. I'll always keep moving as an artist, so I look forward to working on projects that welcome that creative growth!

PM: Do you prefer to create art on a computer or by freehand? What do you think of current applications that allow artificial intelligence to create art?

AD: I really love painting traditionally (and drawing, sculpting, crocheting...) as well as creating digitally. I don't see that much of a difference between the mediums, but so far I've only worked digitally on books. I hope to experiment with more mediums in the future, but again, it's up to the story!

My knowledge of A.I.-generated art is recent, and it's still a developing technology, so I don't want to speak out of turn. I see several ethical issues with it, mainly that artists aren't giving their consent before their work is used to "train" the A.I. I also worry that some industries already treat creatives as machines, so they might be willing to replace working artists.

I'm sure there are many more points of discussion surrounding this topic, and I am by no means an expert, but I do think it's important that we talk about these things as a community, so thank you for the question!

PM: Where do you draw your inspiration from? Do you juggle multiple projects?

AD: Every creative derives inspiration from anything and everything. I watch TV, read books, follow creators online, and try to stay curious about life. One wonderful thing about working creatively is that the more interesting your life is, the more interesting your work will become! Your work reflects your experiences, so I try to keep my eyes open and live a full life.

I prefer working on several projects at once so that I can bounce between them, although I know that's not for everyone. When I balance it correctly, one project can become a reprieve for another. Every project brings something unique to the table, so they can also feed into each other sometimes. It's all about chasing that balance.

PM: Looking into the future, what's on your bucket list?

AD: I have a growing bucket list, but travel has to be at the top right now. I want to write and illustrate comics or books about my adventures, and grow my appreciation for different cultures and lands.

I also dream of having a home with a studio nestled into a glorious garden, with several animal companions to keep me company! I also hope to learn a ton of random skills—ceramics, tiling, singing, felting—basically anything that catches my interest. I find a lot of things interesting, so the list is getting longer by the day!

PM: What are you working on currently? Do you have a pet project?

AD: Right now I am working on my own writing projects. I have one completed book dummy, but I want to make a few more to get a little library going before picking the best ones to shop around. My other recent endeavor has been opening an online store as a way to sell the art I create in my personal time, and that has been wildly rewarding. I love getting my work into the hands of people who enjoy it, so that's the goal of all my projects!

Two Kinds of **CONFLICT** and Why Your Story Needs Both

by Jane McBride

If you've been writing for any length of time, you know about the two types of conflict: external and internal. You probably also know that external conflict is what happens outside of the character and internal conflict happens inside the character. Simple, right?

Not so much.

Though the conflicts exist independently, they are (or they should be) connected and affect each other.

Both kinds of conflict are vital to a story. What are the characteristics of good external and internal conflicts?

Raising stakes. Every story, even those for the youngest readers, needs the conflict that needs to be solved “or else.” The teenage boy needs a passing grade in calculus. The stakes rise when he fails the most recent test. The stakes rise when his coach tells him that he will be cut from the football team if he doesn't get at least a “C” in the class. The middle school girl, Zara, discovers that zombies have invaded her school and need to be stopped. The zombies want to make everyone their minions. The stakes rise when they threaten to kill all of the students and teachers if they show the slightest resistance. The little boy who becomes separated from his dad at the store needs to find his parent. The stakes rise when somehow he becomes part of a crowd that has moved out of the store. Though he doesn't know what the “or else” is, he is certain that it won't be good. The stakes in each of these scenarios are getting higher and higher.

Tension. Imagine the tension the teenage boy from

above feels when he fails his most recent test. The pressure he experiences is intense. He knows his father, an ex-football player and now a member of the school's booster club, will be furious if he is cut from the football team. His mother, a scientist, will be equally furious if he fails calculus. The uncertainty he feels makes the reader want to keep turning the pages to see what happens next. Will he pass the mid-term? Or will he fail?

Character arc. As a character strives to overcome the obstacles preventing him from reaching his goal, he is tested in ways he never thought to be tested. The middle school girl (in the raising stakes example) has been tasked with taking out the zombies because she was the only one who didn't run away in fear when the monsters first appeared. Now she must improvise weapons and rally the other students and teachers to join her in the fight. She never thought she would find herself in this situation. After all, she's only 13, but she refuses to shirk from the fight. She finds a strength in herself that she didn't know she possessed. That strength grows with every new challenge, such as when the zombies prove that they can shape-shift into looking like students. She has to find a way to distinguish between the genuine students and the zombies.

HOW TO USE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONFLICT TOGETHER

Turn both types of conflict into obstacles.

Zara, our middle school heroine, prides herself on her independence. The daughter of a single mother,

Two Kinds of Conflict...continued

Zara is accustomed to single-handedly taking care of other people. She maintains a straight A average, goes home directly after school to care for her diabetic little brother while her mother goes to work, and oversees the house and meals during that time. When her mother gets home from work, Zara makes sure to hide any problems and remain upbeat, because her mother is susceptible to anxiety attacks that can send her to bed for 24 hours. Zara's internal conflict, having to ask for help while protecting her family, even for such an apocalyptic event as an invasion of zombies, goes against her nature. Her external conflict is obvious: keeping the zombies from taking over the school. The two are at odds with each other: to save the school (external), she must ask for help (internal).

Imbue characters with opposing conflicts.

Let's continue with Zara's story. What if her best friend, Suzanne, also 13-years-old, is deathly afraid of the zombies. She wants to gather everyone into the gymnasium, barricade the doors, and wait until help can come. Suzanne has an abusive father and is frightened of just about everything. Unlike Zara, Suzanne is very dependent. Can you see how the two best friends would clash over how to handle the zombie invasion?

Have more than one external and/or internal conflict.

One of Zara's personality traits is taking charge. Some would call her bossy. It is hard enough for her to ask for help, but when she does try to rally the other students and teachers to work together, they resent her take-charge attitude. How dare she put herself in charge, they ask her. The teachers are especially resentful. She's just a kid; she shouldn't pretend to know more than they do, even when they are cowering behind their desks. For Zara's part, she is annoyed, even angry, at the others who should be working with her. How can she save her school if she can't get the others to work with her? Somehow she has to find a way to invite cooperation rather than resistance. Even though Suzanne is the exact opposite of Zara in terms of meeting danger head-on, she, too, resents Zara telling everyone what to do. This creates friction between the two friends until Zara tells her

friend just to go hide if that's what she wants to do.

Resolve the differences in conflicts between the characters.

Near the end of our zombie story, Zara realizes that she can't fight the zombies on her own. She must admit to her classmates that she was wrong to order everyone about and apologizes. Only together, she tells them, can they defeat their common enemy.

When developing your plot and characters, think about how your internal and external conflicts can clash, even from the beginning of the story. Can a 16-year-old with absolute moral integrity agree to be a fake reference for a friend who needs a job to help his single mother pay her bills? Can a nine-year-old be happy for a best friend who is getting a great step-mother and a new house with a pool, even if that house is two hours away? Conflicts that clash and make a character uncomfortable, unsettled or even miserable force that character to grow.

WRAPPING UP

External and internal conflicts heighten a story's appeal as the character(s) work to solve the conflict and come to terms with their own weaknesses and flaws. Make your character imperfect but determined and see where they take you.

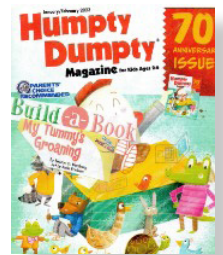
Let's Celebrate!

CBI MEMBER PUBLICATIONS



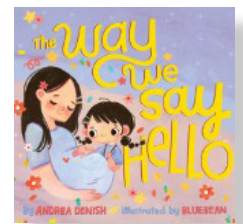
Happy Ranch Wife Productions proudly presents *The Noisy Ranch*, and *What Do Ranchers Do?* by author/illustrator T.L. Fladager. Mrs. Fladager and her husband ranch in Northeastern Montana, where she gets her story ideas. Follow along with Nick as he feeds the animals in the barn with his dad in *The Noisy Ranch*. Or be lead through the seasons on the ranch in *What Do Ranchers Do?* Both books are available on happyranchwife.com or on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). Be on the look out for *Carol Drives a Tractor*, *Grandma Marlas's Chickens*, *Koltiska Pumpkin Patch* and *Cowboy Clayton Digs a Dino* coming in 2023.

Sharon O. Blumberg, frequent contributor to *Children's Book Insider*, was recently published in the latest issue, Jan./Feb. 2023 of *Humpty Dumpty Magazine* for one of their features, "Build-a-Book, "My Tummy's Groaning." The story reads in picture book format, once children assemble it for their viewing. (In the photo, the feature title is superimposed over the magazine cover for sharing.)



Marta Magellan (martamagellan.com) announces that her newest book, *Bee Catastrophe: We'll Miss Them When They're Gone* came out in paperback in January. In March or April, it will be available in hardback. Available at Eifrig Publishing and [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Andrea Denish (andreadenish.com) is proud to announce the release of her new picture book, *The Way We Say Hello*. Published by Starry Forest Books and illustrated by Blue-Bean, *The Way We Say Hello* follows a young child on a journey around the globe in search of the best greeting to welcome a new sibling. Readers learn languages, greeting gestures and a little bit of history in this beautiful, rhyming story that ensures all of your greetings will be delivered with love. Available at your favorite bookstore and 24/7 online at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).



Patricia Toht is pleased to announce that her two most recent picture books will be published on February 13. Signed and dedicated copies can be ordered through Coalesce Bookstore in Morro Bay, CA -- coalesce-bookstore.com

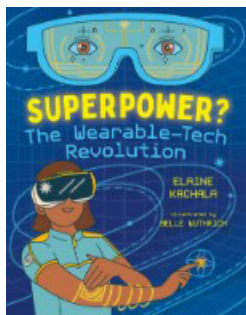


Together With You is a big-hearted story of the love between grandparent and grandchild. The pair spend time together through the four seasons and, in the end, discover that "No matter the weather/ whatever we do/ every day's better/ together with you!" An ideal gift from grandparent to grandchild (or the other way around). Available at independent bookstores and [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Pick a Perfect Egg is the third book in the holiday series from Patricia Toht and Jarvis. This cheerful Easter-time read-aloud captures the joy of the holiday, especially the magical transformation of a white egg into an Easter egg. The story culminates in a festive egg hunt. Available at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) and independent bookstores.

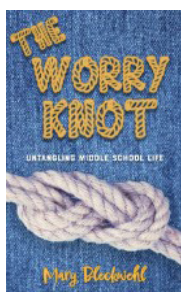
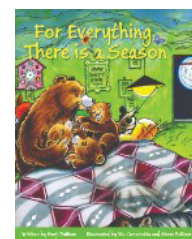


OTHER GOOD NEWS



Elaine Kachala (elainekachala.com) is excited to announce that her debut nonfiction book, *SUPERPOWER? The Wearable-Tech Revolution*, illustrated by Belle Wuthrich and published by Orca Book Publishers (October 18, 2022), is listed on best book lists. *SUPERPOWER?* is on the National Science Teaching Association & The Children's Book Council's - Best STEM Books for K-12 Students (2023), The Children's Book Council Hot Off The Press, November 2022 and Tinlids Best Books for Schools & Libraries, Fall 2022. *Written for ages 9-12, this new STEM/STEAM explains what wearable technology is, how it works, the exciting ways wearables are improving our lives, but also the very real challenges and dangers that lie ahead. Readers meet engineers, scientists, designers, and young inventors exploring technology's pros and cons and navigating this new frontier of wearable computing.* The book is available at bookstores and online, including [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Marji Pulliam's self-published picture book, *For Everything There is a Season* (Sept. 2022), reached #1 in three categories on Amazon: Children's Inspirational & Personal Growth, Children's Baby Animals Books, Children's eBooks on Maturing. For ages 3-7, this book allows readers to follow an endearing little bear cub who tries to resist the inevitable hibernation "nap" and eventually must succumb. Order the book online at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).



Mary Bleckwehl (marybleckwehl.com/) author of *The Worry Knot* (Jan 2022 Immortal Works Press), is thrilled to announce her debut middle grade book has won four awards: Book Excellence finalist for pre-teen books; Moonbeam Award for pre-teen fiction; Purple Dragonfly for Middle Grade Fiction and also for Special Needs/Disability Awareness. The story focuses on the worries of a seventh-grade boy and his compassion for his older brother who has special challenges of his own. *The Worry Knot* is available wherever books are sold, including [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Judy Bradbury (judybradbury.com) was featured as guest columnist in the November/December issue of AASL's *Knowledge Quest*. The theme of the issue was civic engagement, and her column was titled, "Chapter Books Can Make a World of Difference." You can read the column [here](#).



Send us your good news! If you'd like to announce a recent publication (book or magazine, traditionally or self-published), please send a short description of the project (title, publisher, age range, pub date, and 1-2 sentence description) along with a JPEG of the book cover or, if available, the magazine cover/spread of article. Also include up to two links (your website, Amazon listing, etc.) Please note that we don't have the staff to hunt down any details that you forget to include. We'll print what you send us, so you may want to wait until you have a book cover and firm pub date to take best advantage of this announcement. **If you'd like to share other good news** (you found an agent, started a blog, finished revising your manuscript, were invited to speak at a local festival, etc.) please send a brief description of your news, up to two links you'd like to share, and, if desired, one related image as a JPEG. (NOTE: If you sign a contract for a book, you can announce the signing under Other Good News, and then send more details and the book cover near the publication date for CBI Member Publications).

Email all material to mail@writeforkids.org, and put "Celebrate" in the subject line. All material must be received by the 20th of the month to appear in the following month's issue.