

KITE TALES

Illustration by [Jenny Cherry, Instagram](#)

A NOTE FROM YOUR REGIONAL TEAM

Magical. That's how many people describe this time of year. With a multitude of religious and cultural celebrations during the month of December, we could also describe this time of year as *meaningful*. But growing up with a December 16th birthday—nine days before the holiday my family celebrated—I thought the meaning behind the magic was ME. I believe I was five or six before I realized that people didn't decorate their homes for my birthday and then leave the lights, wreaths, and trees up for Christmas. I was a wee bit disappointed that all the fuss wasn't just about me. Such is the egocentricity of early childhood. Or at least MY early childhood.

Now I, like you, find myself in the business of creating magic for children through books. There's nothing quite like the magic of realizing that letters and sounds make words, and that words form sentences, and that sentences combine to create stories, and that stories fill books. There's nothing quite like the magic of turning page after page looking at illustrations weaving a tale right before your eyes. And there's nothing quite like the satisfying magic that comes at the end of a treasured book. Of course, that magic is always a little bittersweet, isn't it? The story you loved has ended, and another story is waiting to be discovered. The last page of a book is an end and a beginning. In fact, that bittersweet, magical feeling is a metaphor for many transitions a reader will experience throughout life.

Whether you celebrate a special holiday, occasion, or event this month or not, take time to find some magic. Read a book. Immerse yourself in art. Find inspiration. And record and preserve your inspiration with words and images. Each time you do, you give yourself one of those magical, bittersweet moments—as one project ends and the prospect of another begins. Of course, as you finish that project, you also may be creating a magical, meaningful moment for readers, too.

Rob Sanders, Regional Co-Advisor



Call For Good News!

We would love to celebrate good news with you. If you have career milestones to share, please [use this form](#) to submit them for the next newsletter (examples: new book contracts, upcoming book releases, magazine covers or articles, signing with an agent, book signings, etc.).

Call for Illustrations!

If you would like one of your illustrations in our regional newsletter, please submit jpgs or links to your portfolio [with this form](#).

Call for Volunteers!

Many hands make light work. We are always looking for volunteers throughout our region. If you are interested in volunteering, please [use this form](#) to let us know!

Looking for a Critique Group?

Email Mindy Alyse Weiss at mindyalyseweiss@gmail.com and she will help you!

Your Regional Team



Rob Sanders, Co-RA



Becky Herzog, Co-RA



Angela Padron, ARA



Fred Koehler, IC

FREE MEETINGS IN 2022

Beginning in January 2022, we plan to offer a rotating schedule of face-to-face meetings and virtual meetings. Our Free Meeting Facilitators in each area of the state will be planning and hosting meetings at local libraries. Each meeting will follow the health protocols of the county and library where the meeting is held. In addition, we will be working to reserve the largest rooms possible, space out seating, provide hand sanitizer, and take other precautions to keep everyone healthy. If you are unable to attend a face-to-face meeting due to health concern, do not worry. We will also be offering virtual meetings at other times. However, the face-to-face meetings themselves will not be broadcast.

The purposes of free meetings (whether virtual or face-to-face) are two-fold. Free meetings bring learning closer to our members and provide opportunities for them to grow their knowledge and craft on a regular basis. In addition, free meetings allow our PAL members to have opportunities to present in front of an audience. Many of those who have spoken at our meetings have gone on to teach online, at conferences, and to share their skills and knowledge in other ways. If you are a PAL member who is interested in being considered to speak at a meeting, please complete [this form](#).

We'll be sharing more about face-to-face meetings in future newsletters. For now, join us in thanking our Free Meeting Facilitators who will continue to help us learn and grow:

Free Meeting Facilitator Team

**Free Meeting Coordinator/
Virtual and Orlando Facilitator**
Jan Eldredge

Jacksonville Area Facilitator
Eileen Meyer

South Florida Facilitator
Mindy Weiss

Tampa Bay Area Facilitator
JC Kato

LOOKING BACK



DONNA GEHPART'S PRESENTATION INSPIRED US TO CREATE MEMORABLE CHARACTERS

"Your characters will have universal, relatable feelings along with specific quirks that make them memorable."

"Think of setting as another character. Your story's setting is important in how it affects your characters."

"Feed appearance descriptions as needed through an eyeglass. Characters aren't described. They are revealed through action, thought, and dialogue."

"No matter what other things your characters may face, the conflict is always also character vs. self. Always have the internal piece."

"To uncover your character's strengths and weaknesses, fill in the blanks of the following sentence: 'I'll do anything to ___, just don't ask me to ___.'"

[LINK TO VIDEO RECORDING \(AVAILABLE UNTIL 12/12/21\)](#)

[LINK TO DONNA'S HANDOUT](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



Holiday Roundtables

Saturday, December 11, 2021
2:00-3:30 p.m.

Please join us for our second holiday virtual roundtables event where we'll gather into small groups for some friendly socializing and fun discussions. This will be a great opportunity to share, learn, and network with some of your fellow Florida children's writers and illustrators. Feel free to wear your holiday hats, headgear, and clothing to add to the festive spirit!

Free for SCBWI members!
No registration required!

Hope to see you there!

ZOOM MEETING LINK:
<https://scbwi.zoom.us/j/7787512559>
Meeting ID: 778 751 2559
Password: Sunshine (case sensitive)

Learn more at: <https://florida.scbwi.org/free-virtual-meetings/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

FREE FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS ARE BACK!

See the side panel on this page for important safety protocols and below to find the closest meeting to you!

North Florida Free Meeting

Saturday, January 8, 2022
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEET & GREET!

Come share your good news, set new goals, discuss what you would like to see at our upcoming Jax-area meetings, and welcome our new members.

Regency Square Branch Library
Community Room A
9900 Regency Square Blvd
Jacksonville 32225

Orlando Free Meeting

Saturday, January 8, 2022
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEETING, GREETING, AND REGROUPING

After nearly two years, Orlando area SCBWI FL members will once again meet in person to greet old friends and welcome new ones. We'll participate in a group roundtable discussion where we'll get reacquainted, welcome new members, and discuss the future of our upcoming Orlando area meetings.

West Osceola Branch Library
305 Campus Street
Celebration, FL 34747

South Florida Free Meeting

Saturday, January 22, 2022
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

WELCOME BACK ROUNDTABLE CHAT

Let's celebrate, share roadblocks and tips, ask questions...and enjoy being together in-person again.

West Boca Library
18685 State Road 7
Boca Raton, FL 33498

Tampa Free Meeting

Saturday, January 8, 2022
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

BOOK HATCHINGS OF 2020 AND 2021

Come celebrate our fellow members as we discuss our successes, roadblocks, and goals for the upcoming year.

Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library
2902 W. Bearss Ave.
Tampa, Florida 33618-1828

SCBWI Florida

Safety Protocols

Free Face-to-Face Meetings

The following guidelines have been developed based on CDC guidelines, input from SCBWI headquarters, and taking into consideration the requirements of our various meeting facilities.

1. Please wear a mask.
2. All attendees should be fully vaccinated or have had a negative Covid test within 72 hours prior to the meeting.
3. If you are not feeling well, please be considerate of others and do not attend the meeting.
4. If you are unable to attend a face-to-face meeting, remember, we will have Virtual Free Meetings every other month.
5. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available at each Free Meeting location if needed.

Thank you for following our protocols to help ensure the health and safety of our faculty and participants. While SCBWI Florida has COVID-19 precautions and procedures established for our events, please know that you assume all risks associated with attending any in-person gathering.

UPCOMING EVENTS



SCBWI FLORIDA REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2022

Mark your calendar NOW!

Intensives, Friday, May 13, 2022

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Conference, Friday, May 13, 2022, 4:30 p.m. -

Sunday, May 15, 2022, 1:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCING OUR 2022 SCBWI FLORIDA REGIONAL CONFERENCE FACULTY EDITORS

Aneeka Kalia – Associate Editor, Viking Children’s Books

Brett Duquette – Executive Editor, Little Bee Books

Chris Krones – Editor, Clarion Books

Eileen Robinson – Executive Editor, Reycraft Books

TBA Editor

ART DIRECTOR

Laurent Linn – Art Director, Simon & Schuster

AGENTS

Jaqui Lipton – Literary Agent and Founder, Raven Quill Literary Agency

Miranda Paul – Agent and Author Co-Chair of *We Need Diverse Books*, Erin Murphy Literary

Saritza Hernández – Agent, Andrea Brown Literary Agency

CREATIVES

Baptiste Paul — Author

Bruce Coville — Author

Dan Santat — Author-Illustrator

Rajani LaRocca — Author

Pat Zietlow Miller — Author

ADDITIONAL CRITIQUE FACULTY

Joyce Sweeney — Agent, The Seymour Agency

Sarah Fisk — Agent, The Tobias Agency

Deena Fleming — Associate Art Director, Abrams

TBA Critique Faculty

For more information, including faculty bios, [CLICK HERE](#)

THE MAGIC OF CRITIQUES & CONFERENCES

Every year since 2004, I've paid for a critique at the Florida SCBWI conference. With each critique, I've received feedback to consider, which in most cases has improved my work. A few times, I had a nibble on a line that I thought could lead to a book deal. After two failed agent relationships and several denials at acquisitions, I couldn't sell any of my own stories. That was until the January 2021 Florida SCBWI conference. I submitted my first picture book biography about a Latina sports figure and was assigned to an editor at Lee and Low. After she expressed interest in acquiring the manuscript, I reached out to Saritza Hernández of Andrea Brown Literary Agency, who presented at the same conference. Four days later, I had an agent! That book is now under contract and scheduled for release in 2023. Saritza helped me sell a second picture book to Atheneum Books for release in 2023 as well.

So, if you start to feel doubt or frustration when signing up for a critique, just know you're not alone. It's taken me 17 years to find the right genre, style, editor, and agent who believed in the quality of my work. Register for conferences and look for the positive aspects of any critique. Then use the feedback you received to improve your work for the next submission. Believe in yourself and in the magic that one conference and one critique can bring. And somewhere, sometime, you will find the right editor or agent who believes in you, too.

Angela Padron, Assistant Regional Advisor

PAL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

John Herzog is an award-winning illustrator who also teaches illustration at Ringling College of Art and Design. He lives in Venice with his wife, Becky, two kids, a pair of geckos, a bearded dragon, and a tarantula.



[Website](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#)

JASON: Hi, John! Congratulations on the recent releases of SCAREDY CAT and CLARINET AND TRUMPET! For those of us who have not yet had the opportunity to read them, could you tell us what they are about?

JOHN: Thanks so much! CLARINET AND TRUMPET is about two friends who drift apart due to the pressures of their different social circles. SCAREDY CAT is about a cat who terrorizes other cats because of how he was mistreated by his previous owner. The catch? He's a ghost.

JASON: What fun— but very different— subjects! As an illustrator, what is the best piece of advice you have received for how to approach a particular project?

JOHN: "Just get it done." My wife Becky told me that and it echoes in my brain over and over when I'm in the trenches on a project.

JASON: I may have to tape that advice to the wall above my writing desk! What do you wish we writers better understood about the illustration process itself?

JOHN: The absolutely horrendous pressure of trying to illustrate something that lives up to the words they wrote. Maybe this is just me, but I feel like I never do the words justice with what I illustrate.

JASON: I can assure you writers feel the same. What are you currently working on that you are most excited about?

JOHN: I'm the kind of person who usually has about seven or eight ideas rattling around in my head at any given time. However, the idea I'm most excited about right now is a picture book I plan to write and illustrate that deals with the death of a grandparent from the perspective of the deceased grandparent. My dad died recently and, in a way, I'm using the book as a way to process his passing. We'll see if anything comes of it.

JASON: Thanks so much for taking the time to talk with us, John. We look forward to seeing more of your work in the months and years to come!

QUOTEABLE QUOTES

If you don't think there is magic in writing, you probably won't write anything magical. — *Terry Brooks*

Writing is not magic...it can be magical. — *Judith Briles*

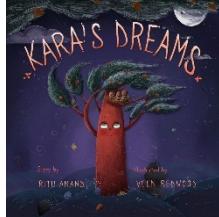
And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you. Because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it. — *Roald Dahl*

KUDOS CORNER

Debbie S. Culver published her first middle grade time-travel series, THE CANNING CELLAR SECRET. The sequel will be published soon, THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN MINE.

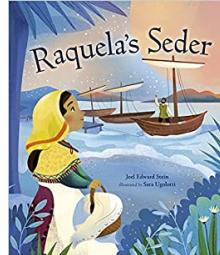


Marsha Diane Arnold's ARMANDO'S ISLAND, a picture book about a man who protects his rainforest "island," will be published in fall 2023 by Creative Editions.

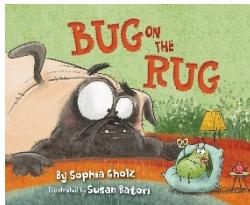


Ritu Anand's debut picture book, KARA'S DREAMS, has been acquired by PathBinder Publishing and is slated to be released Early Spring, 2022.

Joel Edward Stein's upcoming picture book, RAQUELA'S SEDER, was honored with the PJ Library Author Incentive Award. It received an excellent review from KIRKUS REVIEW and will be published in February 2022.



Sherry Bennett Warshauer's latest book, TIME-OUT FOR MATTY, has just been published by TriMark Press and is available on Amazon.



Books Grow Minds hosted the official reveal for **Sophia Gholz's** fiction debut! BUG ON THE RUG hits stands 4/15/22!

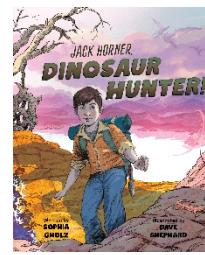
DO YOU HAVE GOOD NEWS TO SHARE?

We would love to celebrate good news with you. If you have career milestones to share, please [use this form](#) to submit them for the next newsletter (examples: new books contracts, upcoming book releases, magazine covers or articles, signing with an agent, book signings, etc.).

Ed Masessa had not one, but two new books released by Reycraft Books: THERE WAS AN OLD DOG WHO NEEDED A NAP and SNOWMAN'S BIG ADVENTURE.



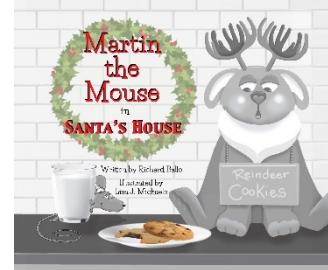
Good news! School Library Journal called **Sophia Gholz's** JACK HORNER, DINOSAUR HUNTER! "An inspiring example of how disabilities don't have to close doors..."



Linda Hansen's first picture book, OTTO THE OTTER, A BIG SURPRISE will be self-published soon. Linda's watercolor paintings are the illustrations for this book.



Marsha Diane Arnold's book about light pollution and a group of animals searching for darkness, LIGHTS OUT, was a 2021 Golden Kite Award Finalist for Picture Book Text.



Richard Ballo has been chosen as an Author in School by the Amelia Island Book Festival and his book, MARTIN THE MOUSE IN SANTA'S HOUSE, will be featured.

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Visit www.scbwi.org to renew your membership and update your email and mailing address!

CLICK TO CONNECT WITH THE SCBWI FLORIDA REGION

