

San Antonio Society of Children's Book Writer's & Illustrators March 2010 Newsletter

[SCBWI-SWTX Website](#)



Illustrator: Heather Powers

Letter from the RA

Is it spring yet? Like the joy and rebirth of the new season, change can be great for your creative career. If you are not where you want to be in your writing or illustrating journey, take stock and decide where you need to make changes. Maybe the changes are your marketing efforts, like finally starting a blog or joining twitter. Your change may be to revamp a tired plot that you've been clinging to for sentimental reasons. The change you are looking for may be a new genre. Picture book writers, now may be the time to try writing an early chapter book. Illustrators, the change may be a new medium or taking a class in a medium you've always wanted to try. The change may be in your schedule to find more time to write. Or the change may be to partner with an agent to take your career to the next level. Whatever the change you may need, now is time for bravery and to take those steps!

At the Austin conference, agent Mark McVeigh said, "The industry is in transition. Editors are less willing to take risks. They are looking for hits." He also went on to say, "Fear is a great motivator to push us towards success." The anxiety of the publishing industry may be just what we need to step up our skills and work harder to create work that a publisher believes would be a hit. He encouraged us to get out of our safety zone and that is great advice for anyone working in a creative field.

See you on March 20th for our next meeting!

Heather Powers, RA

Illustrators

Want to see your work in future newsletters? Email a low resolution JPG sample to Heather at humblearts@sbcglobal.net.

**2010 Schedule
(Upcoming SCBWI-SWTX meetings)**

March 20 – Lupe Ruiz- Flores on – **Historical Fiction (Research)** – What compels you to write about a certain topic? What is it you want to explore about it? Learn the nuts & bolts of how to discover those tiny nuggets of truth that will make your story. Join us from 10 a.m. – 12 noon at University of the Incarnate Word.

TLA in San Antonio!

April 14-17th – [TLA Conference](#)
For more information on TLA and our chapter's booth, contact Catherine Stier, Special Events Co-coordinator at info@catherinestier.com

May 15 – Annual Critiquenic
July 17 – Schmooze at Barnes & Noble, round table discussions
September 18 – 2010 Editor's Day
November 20 – TBA

SCBWI Oklahoma Chapter
[Spring Conference](#)
March 27, 2010
Embassy Suites, Oklahoma City
(405) 682-6000

**6th Annual UTSA Storytelling Festival
March 6**

This may be of interest, especially to those who currently conduct Author/Illustrator School Visits or plan to in the future.

The University of Texas at San Antonio is hosting its 6th Annual Storytelling Festival, Saturday March 6, 2010, from

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the 1604 Campus Main Building.

The event is free and open to the public. There is no advance registration and parking is free (just avoid parking in spots marked reserved). The UTSA rep wrote: "We would love to have you and your colleagues attend the Storytelling Festival, including all of the breakout sessions."

According to an informational flyer, the keynote address is by Mary Ann Blue, teacher and storyteller. There are multiple breakout sessions in two strands: "How to Tell Stories" and "Storytelling in the Classroom." There is also a book fair and food is available. For more info, visit their [website](#).
Submitted by Catherine Stier

The 2010 Pockets Fiction-Writing Contest is now underway. Guidelines and information can be found on their [Website](#). Submissions should be 750-1000 words and material must be previously unpublished. Designate **Fiction Contest** on the envelope and cover sheet. Previous winners are not eligible. Stories do not have to fit a particular theme. Contest submissions must be postmarked between March 1 and August 15, 2010. The prize: \$500 award and publication in *Pockets*. Notification of winner by November 1, 2010. Submit with SASE.

Pacific Coast Children's Writers Workshop

Eighth annual event, held August 20-22, at Pajaro Dunes' private beachfront

facilities near Santa Cruz, CA. Congenial, team-taught seminar for 30 savvy and/or published writers of character-driven youth novels, "active observers," and teen readers and writers. Faculty: Kate Harrison (senior editor, Dial Books/Penguin); Ted Malawer (agent, Upstart Crow Literary Agency); and author-consultant Laura Backes, publisher of Children's Book Insider. • Weekend theme is "A Novelist's Toolkit: Architecture, Archetypes, and Arcs." Deadlines: For the most critique options and lowest fees, apply by April 10 or asap. Limited enrollment may be open through July. For more info, contact Director Nancy Sondel or go to their [website](#).

Submitted by Laurie Brown

Member News

Opening My First Book

It was a long time in coming—perhaps making the thrill even greater—when the perfect Christmas gift arrived on December 20th at 2:15 pm—an advance copy of my very first book, ***The 12 Dog Days of Christmas in New York City***. The publisher's return address became a blur as I ripped open the dull-yellow package and caught sight of the cover's vibrant blues and gold. There was the New York City skyline, the Statue of Liberty, and looking up at me, the poignant face of the story's elusive Dachshund on a red leash.

Beautifully illustrated by Shawn Bridges, I turned one colorful page after the other, skimming the words over which I had labored so hard—and felt good that

they seemed right. I clutched the book to my chest and rocked as though protecting a new born baby, and indeed I felt like I was. There are few exact dates and times that I remember in my lifetime, but December 20th, 2:15 pm will be one of them.

When I first started out as a writer, a critique friend told me "Enter contests." She was right! I entered this manuscript in the 2004 ABC Picture Book Contest—and it won! The prize was publication by Rita Mills of ABC's Press, (ISBN 978-0-980278-3-7). She will feature it in her booth at the Texas Library Association, April 14-17.

Another thrill came last week when I saw ***The 12 Dog Days of Christmas in NYC*** on the bookshelves at The Twig Book Store and learned they will host a launch and book-signing on **April 8th**. Like I said, the book's arrival was a long time in coming—but it was worth it. Maritha.burmeister@yahoo.com



Maritha Burmeister

Bish Denham won first place in the Institute of Children's Literature *Children's Writer Fantasy/Folktale Contest* with her story "Why Dogs Beg," a retold Jamaican Anansi story. It has been published in the March issue of *Children's Writer*. Bish read this folktale at Jane Yolen's workshop in Kerrville a few years ago. You can read more about her life growing up in the U. S. Virgin Islands on her [blog](#). *Submitted by Christine Kohler*

Diane Gonzales Bertrand's bilingual picture book, *The Party for Papá Luis*, is a nominee for the 2010-2011 Tejas Star Book Award. To qualify for this list, a book must be authentic in portraying the Hispanic/Latino culture and be of high literary quality. It must also have received a positive review in one of the major reviewing sources or by the Tejas Star committee, and meet certain other criteria. *Submitted by July Woller*

People

Local author [Rick Riordan's](#) interview with *The Guardian* on his Percy Jackson series of bestselling books and movie. *From Publishers Weekly- 2/11/2010*

Publishers Weekly reports that Mandy Hubbard, author of the teen novel *Prada and Prejudice*, is joining the D4EO Literary Agency, where she will focus on YA and middle-grade fiction. D4EO was founded by Bob Diforio; it's a small outfit, but it's been around for a long time. The domain name forwards to its [Publishers Marketplace](#) listing.

View Hubbard's blog for her current [submissions guidelines](#). "Mandy is interested in a broad range of YA/MG,

whether they be contemporary or historical, fantasy/paranormal or realistic. She loves books with a heavy focus on romance, as well as 'issue books' with a strong voice. If your book has a high concept or a big hook, she wants to see it.

"If your story includes portals to fantasy worlds, wizards or dragons, it's probably not for her. Please, no chapter books, picture books, poetry, non-fiction, or books for the adult market." -- *Publishers Lunch 2/12/2010*

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Howard W. Reeves, publisher of Abrams Books for Young Readers and Amulet Books, will become editor-at-large of the company. *From Publishers Lunch – 2/3/2010*

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In the Knopf and Crown editorial department at Random House Children's Books, Michele Burke has been promoted to editor and Allison Wortche has been promoted to associate editor (*Publishers Lunch, 2/5/2010*)

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**Nosy Crow:** Children's Book Publisher Launches: Kate Wilson and Camilla Reid are launching their own publishing company, Nosy Crow. "The company will follow the traditional children's publishing model with titles for ages naught to 14 years and will also publish apps for iPhones and other devices through its Appiness division." *Publishers Lunch*

## Other News

### 'Kirkus' Sold to Indiana Pacers Owner

After [reports of the death](#) of *Kirkus Reviews* circulated in December, followed by news that the literary review magazine would [continue publishing](#) after all, the *New York Times* reported this morning that the publication has been bought by Herb Simon, an entrepreneur who made his money developing shopping malls and also owns the NBA basketball team, the Indian Pacers. *Publishers Weekly*, 2/11/2010

[Pen Panel Tracks Authors Who "Made It"](#) - read about some children's book authors who talk about their long careers and how they became successful authors. (*This article, written by Sara Antill, originally appeared in PW's Children's Bookshelf.*)

Here are the 2010 top ten best books for young adults listed by the Young Adult Library Services Association ([YALSA](#)).

## Newsletter Input

Please send any author/children's books news or member news for the April newsletter to [newsletter editor](#) by March 26, 2010.

## Southwest Texas SCBWI Advisory Board

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Illustrator Heather Powers