



COYn

Newsletter for the North/Central California Region of the SCBWI

TRICK OR TREAT ISSUE

Author Profile

By Patricia Newman

J. B. Cheaney

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Anybody reading this?
 IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT
 THE ACORN, WANT TO SUBMIT AN
 ARTICLE OR ART, OR JUST WANT
 TO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK
 ABOUT THE JOB WE'RE DOING FEEL
 FREE TO SHOOT US AN EMAIL AT
 LBOYDEN@CHARTER.NET OR
 GIMME.A.MOCHA@GMAIL.COM

J. B. Cheaney has written two young adult novels about Shakespeare and Elizabethan England, but doesn't like reading Shakespeare. In Cheaney's opinion, the way to enjoy Shakespeare is to watch his plays performed on stage. Cheaney loved everything about the stage and wanted to be an actor. "Growing up, I was an inadequate communicator," she says. "I felt that I couldn't express myself as me." But she loved acting and Shakespeare helped her find her voice. "I've had three specific encounters with Shakespeare in my life," she says.

The first was in her backyard when she was about eleven years old. Cheaney's older sister loved everything Roman and decided they would perform Julius Caesar for their friends and family. Adapting the script from Richard Armour's Twisted Tales from Shakespeare, Cheaney and her sister roped in their friends, held rehearsals, and manufactured daggers and shields from cardboard and aluminum foil. Cheaney played Cassius, a role she frequently reprises now in presentations about her books. At schools, Cheaney drapes an old sheet around her body in toga fashion and selects a student volunteer to play Brutus to her Cassius in the scene where Cassius draws his dagger and asks Brutus to kill him. "Very dramatic," says Cheaney.

In Cheaney's second encounter with Shakespeare, she played Helena in a college production of A Midsummers Night's Dream. Cheaney learned to appreciate Shakespeare's mystique and the way in which his plays were subject to flexible

interpretations. During school visits, Cheaney re-drapes her old sheet like a Grecian garment. Playing Helena, Cheaney drafts a boy from the audience to play Demetrius. "The kids love it when I fall to my knees at his feet and say, 'Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me, neglect me, lose me. . .'"

In Cheaney's last encounter with Shakespeare, she took her children to see a production of Henry V. "I'd forgotten how good Shakespeare was and fell in love all over again," she says. At the time, Cheaney had written four adult novels that were turned down by publishers. She was homeschooling her two children and had just finished writing three Wordsmith writing workshop books (Common Sense Press). "I wanted to get back to fiction," she says. After watching the play, the first inklings of The Playmaker (Knopf, 2000) began forming in her mind. "The subject was so rich and had so many possibilities," she says. In fact, Cheaney continued mining the richness of the period in her second book, The True Prince (Knopf, 2002), a sequel to The Playmaker.

Her next book, a middle-grade novel entitled My Friend the Enemy (Knopf 2005), is set in Oregon. Cheaney used to live in Vancouver, Washington, and visited Oregon frequently, becoming acquainted with the climate and the culture. But setting alone isn't enough to start a story; a group of ideas must converge into a plot or a character. Her son's new job as a silhouette artist for Disneyland Tokyo piqued her interest in Japanese culture, specifically the way in which World War II is commemorated in Japan. The 9/11 terrorist attacks reminded her of the attack on Pearl Harbor. She tells students at school visits, "Your great-great-grandparents remember Pearl Harbor, but you remember 9/11. It was a lot like Pearl Harbor-we were attacked without warning by people we didn't understand and who didn't understand us." Cheaney describes her newest middle-grade novel, The Middle of Somewhere (Knopf, 2007), as another "happy convergence of a number of ideas that I had over the

CHECK OUT "CHEANEY" ON THE NEXT PAGE

Cheaney

years." About 15 years ago, Cheaney traveled through Kansas with some friends and visited the Chalk Pyramids-pyramid-shaped mounds of chalk shaped by the wind on the vast plains of western Kansas. Combined with articles on wind prospecting and a human cannonball, and the desire to write about a dysfunctional sibling with a challenging behavior or illness, Cheaney massaged all of these elements into her story.

Cheaney endows her characters with traits she finds admirable. Sometimes these traits are the best parts of her personality. Hazel Anderson from *My Friend the Enemy* is a dreamer like Cheaney was at the same age. Other times they are traits Cheaney wished she possessed. Her shyness as a child contrasts with Hazel's plucky courage to act on her imagination, and Victoria Sparks's proactive attitude to shape her destiny (*The Middle of Somewhere*). After completing a book, Cheaney knows what each of her characters will accomplish with their lives. "That's why I got into fiction in the first place," she says. "There are a whole lot of people out there to meet." After 23 moves, Cheaney and her husband finally settled in western Missouri. Writing from her home, Cheaney works about four hours a day, beginning in the early morning. When starting a new story, she writes the entire novel in longhand on college-ruled binder paper, double-spacing her lines for easy editing later.

One of Cheaney's favorite memories is returning home after a visit to the main library in downtown Dallas. Cheaney curled up on her bed with her stack of newly borrowed books. Her folks were in the kitchen frying up hamburgers and potatoes and Cheaney was hungry-hungry for adventure. "I feel tremendously blessed to be able to write," she says. "The world is so full. So much gets away. . .I wanted to catch a little of it between my fingers."

HOW TO CONTACT J. B. CHEANEY

Website:
www.jbcheaney.com

SELECTIONS FROM J. B. CHEANEY'S LIBRARY

The Middle of Somewhere,
Knopf, 2007.

My Friend the Enemy,
Knopf, 2005.

The True Prince, Knopf,
2002.

The Playmaker, Knopf,
2000.

Patricia Newman is the author of *Jingle the Brass* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Her newest book, *Nugget on the Flight Deck* will be available from Walker & Company in the near future. Visit her website at www.patriciamnewman.com.



What I Learned From Writing Book Reviews

By Leslie Wolfson

In the 1980's, I had several book reviews published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch, a large city newspaper. I'd met the book editor through my supervisor at the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library, where I worked as a writer and publicist. Naturally, I was thrilled when the editor asked if I'd write some book reviews for her.

I had already written perhaps four or five reviews without receiving payment. I was young - in my 20's - and this was my first time working with a city newspaper. Unbeknownst to me, their policy was that they paid their freelancers after the story was published. I made a huge mistake by sending the editor a bill for my services. The editor blew a fuse, and wrote me a letter saying she no longer needed my services; obviously I didn't understand how the newspaper business worked, and I was out! In spite of my trying to make amends, she refused to discuss it or change her mind. My ignorance (and her moodiness) had cost me a great writing gig. I vowed that someday I would write book reviews again, and not offend any more editors.

Fast forward to 2006. I heard that Children's Literature, an on-line review service, was looking for reviewers. Children's Lit requires their writers to read and review five books per month (reviewers can choose what genre), and the pay was..nothing! Still, the competition was stiff; only 10% of would-be reviewers were accepted.

To make a long story short, I contacted Children's Literature, took their "test" (reading and reviewing five YA books; 150-300 words each) and I passed. I was back in the reviewer's saddle.

Being a book reviewer is excellent training. It taught me to be pithy, and I had to "sandwich" my reviews by starting with something positive, followed by kindly worded constructive criticism. I also had to be objective about the book; even if I hated it, I had to put myself in the readers' shoes when constructing my review. For instance, I am not a big fan of fantasy books or graphic novels. And yet, when reading them, I had to ask myself: would kids who read fantasies and graphic novels

CHECK OUT "REVIEW" ON THE PAGE AFTER THAT

Remainder Book Blues

By Linda Joy Singleton

When my first book had been out for two years, suddenly I was told it was out of print. No one warned me this would happen or offered the chance to order remainder copies at a discount.

After this happened a few times, I learned to ask my editor in advance for the chance to buy my books before they were remaindered. Still in a few cases I wasn't notified in time -- even when a clause in my contract stated I would have the opportunity to buy remaindered books. Often things happen quickly and if you wait to be notified, it may be too late to order your books.

If you suspect your book(s) may go out of print, here's some advice:

* Ask your contacts at your publisher about remainder discounts. Don't wait till January AFTER they've cleared their warehouses. The larger publishers seem to be the quickest to clear their stock. Hint: If your returns numbers are higher than your sales, your book may be at out-of-print risk.

* Before you buy boxes of your remaindered books, ask about shipping costs. When authors buy their own copies usually the shipping is included, but not so for remaindered books. I was shocked when \$100 worth of books came with another \$100 shipping cost. Just be aware so you know the total cost.

* When initially signing your contract, ask about the publisher's remainder policy. Then check on this regularly so you won't be disappointed with the news your book is out of print and out of stock. Even if you have an agent, you may need to stay on this yourself as agents tend to be busy. You are your best advocate.

* Be sure when you sign your contract there's a clause for returning your rights to you once books go out of print. This can get complicated because of electronic rights and the definition of being "in print." However, it's standard policy for most publishers to return rights to authors if an author or agent sends in a request.

* Make a "Forever" box to keep copies of your books that you will never sell or give away to be given to your descendants. An author I met when she was in her seventies complained that she couldn't find any of her books for her

family. Her books were at a high cost at bookstores and she couldn't afford to buy them. Luckily, her fans helped her find the books. This inspired me to keep a clear plastic box with 3-5 copies of each of my books that I will never sell.

Linda Joy Singleton
www.LiveJournal.com/users/LindaJSingleton

http://www.myspace.com/lindajoy-singleton

Contests & blogs at:

www.LindaJoySingleton.com

Ghosts Whisper to Psychic Medium, Sabine, in THE SEER series:

#1. DON'T DIE, DRAGONFLY

#2. LAST DANCE

#3. WITCH BALL #4. SWORD PLAY

#5. FATAL CHARM (07)

INTO THE MIRROR (Blooming Tree Press/2008)

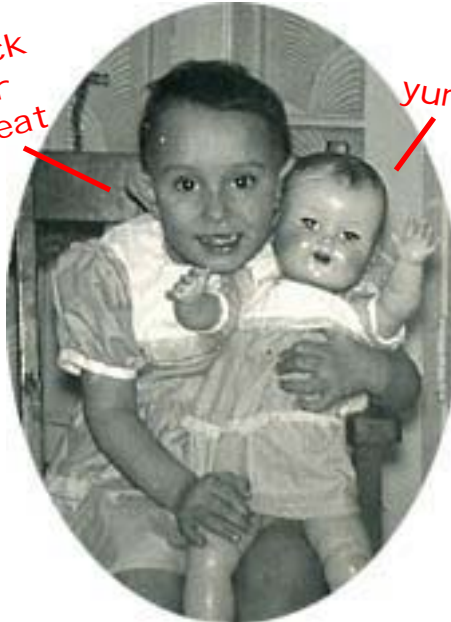
DEAD GIRL Trilogy begins Fall 08/Flux

One Switchback at a Time

By Linda Boyden

trick
or
treat

yum!



When a friend of mine turned sixty, she learned to play the cello. She bought a life-sized model of her inspiration, Yo-Yo Ma, sat in front of it and practiced. She said tackling something new was the best way to stay young. It impressed me as a cool thing for an "old" person to do--bear in mind, I was only fifty at the time and didn't know any better.

Fast-forward nine years. Sixty glares at me, but remembering my wise friend's advice, I decided to try something new: I would

See "SWITCHBACK" ON THE FOURTH PAGE

Review

enjoy this book? Is it well written in terms of plot construction and character development? Is the story compelling? If it's a sequel, would someone who hadn't read the previous novels be able to follow along?

I wrote reviews for Children's Literature for about nine months. With my busy schedule, it became increasingly harder to finish five YA books and reviews every month, so I reluctantly resigned my unpaid post. My reviews were published on the Barnes and Noble website (alas, most without my byline) and on the Children's Literature website (which one can't access without a subscription).

One thing that struck me as I read these books was that I was unimpressed with much of the writing.

After hearing from editors at SCBWI conferences about how difficult it is to get published, I expected to be blown away by what I was reading.

"I can write better than that," I told myself.

"Someday, an editor will recognize my talent and sign me to a book contract."

Was it worth it reviewing all those books for free? You bet! It was a great learning experience, I can tell people that I reviewed children's books, and I have more to add to my writing resume. For anyone who is interested in being a reviewer, contact www.childrenslit.com. Just don't send them a bill.

SWITCHBACK

climb Mt. Lassen.

I am not a mountaineer. I have a bum left knee, a bad right foot and diabetes, but I also have a husband-in his mid-sixties-who agrees to almost anything I suggest, which is an excellent quality for a husband to have. On August 17, 2007, we started.

Mt. Lassen, a beautiful, dormant volcano, rose ahead of us 10, 462 ft. Sure, there are higher and tougher mountains, but from the perspective of two Redding, CA. residents with its elevation of 530 ft., Lassen loomed.

We started the Lassen Peak trail early in the day. A sign informed us the five-mile round trip would average two to three hours. On the ascent, however, we found we had to take it one switchback at a time. We huffed and puffed, then sat and waited for our breathing to regulate and our hearts to stop thumping.

Other climbers sprinted past: youngsters in their thirties and forties, older guys at a trot, a pack of shirtless teenage boys, and I swear, one family of mountain goats. They were a father and young son followed by a mom who back-packed a preschooler! We had met a few men carrying preschoolers on their shoulders, but this lithe woman who weighed less than one of my thighs, toted a kid half her size!

We made it up and back not in two, but in seven hours and lived to tell about it, albeit the following week was very painful for me. Muscles revolted. Feet wept and toes actually cursed every time I put on shoes.

So what does this have to do with writing? A professional writing life is a mountain you need to take one switchback at a time.

Switchback#1: learn the art, the craft of it. Often this must be self-taught. We attend classes, workshops, conferences. We read how-to books as well as everything in and out of our genre. We haunt libraries and bookstores to glimpse the most currently published works. We volunteer at schools to observe real kids in action and speech.

From these labors, we create believable characters, fling them into substantial, multi-layered plots, then reel them into a satisfying ending. If we write picture books, we must accomplish this in 1, 000 perfect words (more or less) that will appeal to both children and adults, but be rich enough in imagery to inspire a stranger-the illustrator-to create the companion story within our story.

Switchback #2: getting published. Daily, it seems, less publishers accept unsolicited manuscripts. At the same time, there is an unlimited supply of competition-very talented competition. Please don't get me wrong. I am not slamming the industry I love nor am I trying to discourage anyone. The truth is a writer must be tough enough to endure the ascent.

Switchback #3: rejection. Nothing is tougher to endure than rejection. Whether it's your first rejection letter or your hundredth, rejection stings. With experience, though, most writers view these letters like the sore muscles you get from a climb: they prove you are living your art and will make you stronger.

There are more switchbacks-marketing, promoting, working unrewarding jobs to pay pesky bills-but as you live through these challenges, remember that every mountain is conquered one switchback at a time.



Come Write Your Own Story

by Genny Heikka

"Come write your own story" was the invitation the SCBWI table gave to children who attended the Target book event at Sacramento's Fairytale Town, September 29th and 30th. And come they did. Children of all ages

stopped by and spent time turning their ideas into words and pictures--into books they could take home with them. Some children came back to our table two and three times...future SCBWI members? We thought so!

Authors and illustrators also stopped by throughout the weekend, either to say hi to fellow members, or to inquire about our organization if they weren't already involved. People interested in writing or illustrating picked up a brochure, and teachers and librarians came by to grab flyers and information about SCBWI authors and their books.

One of the best parts of the weekend, other than seeing children create their own books, was seeing authors and illustrators (many of them SCBWI members) do presentations and book readings. It was a time of sunshine, smiles, creativity and inspiration, and SCBWI was glad to be a part of it.



ACORN SUBMISSION DEADLINES

The Acorn is a tri-yearly publication. Issues will be posted on the SCBWI NorCa website

<http://www.scbwinorca.org/news/newsletter1.htm>

on or around the middle of January, May, and September of each year. The deadline for submissions is one month prior to each publication date.

Please contact Linda Boyden about submission due dates or for more information.

Good News:

By Genny Heikka

Jim Averbeck's picture book *IN A BLUE ROOM* (coming from Harcourt in April 2008) was chosen as a Junior Library Guild selection.

Linda Boyden's second picture book, *POWWOW'S COMING* (University of New Mexico Press) which she also illustrated, will be released in November. She was chosen as the first SCBWI storyteller to perform at the Mustard Seed School. She also has been hired by Shasta County schools' Project Share After-Care program as an enrichment teacher, providing participating schools with either storytelling sessions or the Young Writers Club where elementary grade students write and make their own books.

Deborah Davis's novel *NOT LIKE YOU* (Clarion, 2007, ages 13 & up) was released in July. It has received very positive reviews from Booklist and the School Library Journal.

Lisbeth Dermody's article on sea snail venom will be in the January, 2008, issue of *ASK* magazine, a Carus Publishing magazine.

Margarita Engle is scheduled to receive the Americas Award at the Library of Congress, for her book, *THE POET SLAVE OF CUBA*.

Debbi Michiko Florence's book *CHINA: A KALEIDOSCOPE KIDS BOOK*, an activity book, ages 7 - 12, will be published by Ideals Publication/Williamson Books, in 2008. Debbi also just signed a contract with Williamson Books to write a second series book, this time on Japan. It will be filled with facts about the history, culture, food, wildlife, and art of Japan and provide hands-on activities.

Connie Goldsmith has two new books out from Lerner this fall: *CUTTING-EDGE MEDICINE*, part of a science series for 4-5th graders, and *MENINGITIS*, for older readers from Twenty-First Century Books (a Lerner imprint), and is part of the teen nonfiction series, *The Medical Library*. In addition, reviews from the School Library Journal and Booklist for Connie's book *SUPER-BUGS STRIKE BACK WHEN ANITBIOTICS FAIL* have been very positive.

Genny Heikka received Honorary Mention in the 2007 Smartwriters W.I.N. contest for her mid-grade novel, *GIVE AND TAKE*.

Pamela Jungerberg's picture book manuscript, *LITTLE HIPPO*, was chosen as runner-up for the Barbara Karlin grant.

Sara Kahn recently attended the "La Documenta", the famous art show in Kassel, Germany, and then headed to India where she presented a paper, *Traditional Storytelling Techniques in Iran*. The paper was presented at the International Storytelling Conference in New Delhi, India September 17-19. They invited Sarah based upon the presentation she did in CHLA Winnipeg Conference two years ago.

Sara was one of 15 artists who were asked to depict a special childhood place for the book, *On My Block*, published by Children's Book Press, San Francisco, 2007. Sara wrote about her grandma's garden and its 32 stray cats. In September the illustrators were invited to a special event at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco for a special presentation of their work. Sara built a diorama of the garden without the cats, and people in the audience fashion clay cats for the garden.

Patricia Kaspar is now a story-time leader for the San Mateo Library branch children's librarian. She will be doing 2 sessions every other Friday: one for babies up to 23 months, followed by one for toddlers 2 to 4 years old.

Heidi R. Kling's debut novel *SEA*, the story of a California teenager's life-changing three-week romantic adventure at a post-tsunami Indonesian orphanage, recently sold to Penguin Putnam. *SEA* will debut most-likely summer '09 in hardcover.

Becky Levine is co-writing a children's nonfiction book for Adams Media, to be released spring of 2009. The book will be the first book in a new series, a subset of the Everything Kids series, and will be titled *THE EVERYTHING KIDS' I WANT TO BE A POLICE OFFICER BOOK*. Becky is writing the book with author and veteran police officer, Lee Lofland.

Lea Lyon's third picture book, *KEEP YOUR EAR ON THE BALL*, is in the stores this month. Lea is the illustrator, and Genevieve Petrillo is the author. The book was published by Tilbury House Publishers.

Heather Mackey sold her first book, *THE WOLVES AND THE WOOD*, to Putnam editor Tim Travaglini as a direct result of the Spring SCBWI conference in Davis.

Edna Cabcaban Moran's recent picture book, *THE SLEEPING GIANT: A Tale From Kaua'i*, earned a 2007 Ka Palapala Po'okela Honorable Mention for Excellence in Hawaiian Children's Culture. More information about the awards and winning books can be found at:

<http://starbulletin.com/2007/05/22/features/story05.html>

Author/Illustrator, *THE SLEEPING GIANT: A Tale From Kaua'i* (BeachHouse Publishing)

www.sleepinggiantbook.com

Two illustrations by **Connie McLennan** will appear in the October issue of *Highlights* magazine. By this fall, she will also have completed illustrations for *WHOSE NEST IS THIS?* (coming in 2008 from NorthWord Books for Children) and will be starting work on *RIVER BEDS, SLEEPING IN THE WORLD'S OCEANS* for Sylvan Dell Publishing, also releasing in 2008.

Kris Aro McLeod has a poem and illustration in the August issue of *SPIDER*, and an upcoming cover illustration and two page activity in the November issue of *LADYBUG*. She also sold her first picture book manuscript, *HUSH-A-BYE COUNTING*, to Piggy Toes Press.

CHECK OUT "MORE GOOD NEWS" ON THAT SIXTH PAGE

MORE GOOD NEWS

Tim Myers has two new picture books out this month: *THE OUT-FOXED FOX*, a unique re-telling of an old Japanese play, published by Cavendish; and *IF YOU GIVE A T-REX A BONE*, about what you might encounter if you tried that trick with T-Rex and his dinosaur and other ancient reptile buddies, published by California's Dawn Publications. Tim's original folktale "Anansi's New Trick" will run in the March 08 "AppleSeeds."

Linda Joy Singleton's book *FATAL CHARM*, the 5th book in her psychic YA mystery series, *THE SEER*, was released August 1st. In addition, Llewellyn's imprint Flux has contracted Linda for a 3-book series with the first title, *DEAD GIRL WALKING*, publication date fall, 2008.

Danna Smith recently sold her picture book manuscript *TWO FOR THE ZOO* to Clarion. In addition, her short story titled "Majestic Flying" just sold to Spider magazine.

Tina Stolberg sold her picture book *LITTLE SHREW CABOOSE* to Pleasant Street Press. The anticipated release date is fall 2008.



Happy Halloween!

Painted Words and Written Pictures SCBWI North Central Fall Conference by Anna Levine

On October 6, 2007, RA Tekla White, together with the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature hosted the annual SCBWI North Central Fall conference in Fresno.

The day began with Tekla giving us the giggles with an introduction which brought home the importance of reading and learning about our world through literature.

An inspirational talk by Aliko, the award-winning author/illustrator of dozens of fiction and non-fiction books, took us on a journey of how her books came into being. Her talk was followed by Angelica Carpenter, founding curator of the Arne Nixon Center and author of four biographies for young people, speaking about the role of the Arne Nixon Center and their devotion to making a vibrant and relevant collection of children's literature.

Carolyn Yoder, author and editor of *Calkins Creek*, the new United States history imprint of Boyds Mills Press, spoke about the importance of both the writer and illustrator doing their research.

Then our very own Sally Crock, Technology Advisor to the SCBWI and Liaison for Regional Advisors, spoke about SCBWI's activities worldwide and how SCBWI has grown since she began working at SCBWI. Steve Mooser, SCBWI President and co-founder and the author of dozens of children's books, took over and gave a power point presentation of their trip to Mongolia. I can never get enough of seeing those guys on camels!

Newbery Award winner Karen Cushman talked about where writers get their ideas, quoting Somerset Maugham, that "there are three rules for writing a novel, unfortunately no one knows what they are."

The day ended with Yuyi Morales, an award winning author/illustrator, who, with the help of El Señor Creador, showed how illustrators work through the revisions requested by an art director.

Anna Levine, author of RUNNING ON EGGS, and winner of this year's SCBWI magazine merit award for poetry (1st place) and short story (2nd place). She has a novel coming out next year with Greenwillow Books/Harper Collins and a PB with KarBen Books.

Oh yeah, we recently had a Zoo Sketch Crawl. If you're interested, have a look at some of the sketches some of our artists did by pasting in this link: <http://sonjebasa.blogspot.com/2007/10/zsc-102107.html>

If you're interested in when the next ZSC will be send an email to: gimme.a.mocha@gmail.com. Hope to see you next time!

REGIONAL ADVISOR'S CORNER

SECOND TO
LAST PAGE

From Tekla White

SCBWI Regional Advisor North Central California

Fall greetings! I hope the change of seasons renews your creative spirit, and you have time to put your thoughts into words and pictures. If some of you have advice on how to write and illustrate in spite of the many daily distractions and essential tasks you can't avoid, please send them to me, tnwrites@cal.net, and I will include many of them in future columns. Include your name, publishing credits, and the city or town where you live.

It's the last day of September, and I'm getting ready for our October 6th conference in Fresno with the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature. It's an honor to work with Angelica Carpenter, the curator of the Center; Denise Sciandra, the president of the ANCA Board of Directors; and Peter McDonald, the Dean of Library Services at the University of California Fresno's Madden Library. A thousand thanks are sent to Jennifer Crow, for keeping track of all of the conference details and for making miracles happen. Thanks, too, to Anna Levine, the SCBWI Regional Advisor from Israel, who has helped with the mail-in registration. I'm looking forward to seeing many SCBWI friends at the conference. All authors and illustrators there will have the opportunity to set out their school visit information for the teachers and librarians who attend.

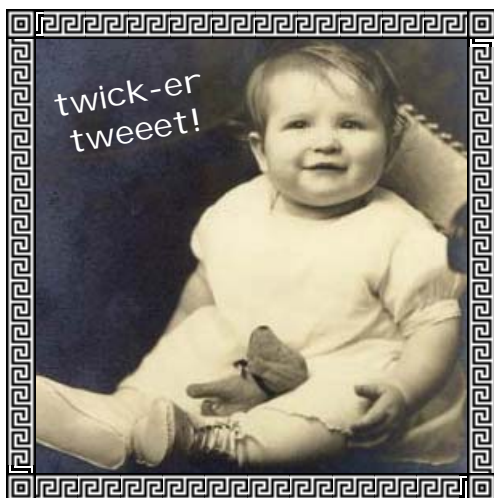
By the way, if you haven't traveled to Fresno to the Arne Nixon Center at the university, you should make an appointment to see the collections, books, and information that are there.

Our next conference will be on April 5th in Davis. Stay in touch with our new website www.scbwinorthca.org for the details. Our keynote speaker will be Kirby Larson, the author of the Newbery Honor book, *Hattie Big Sky*. There will be school visit demonstrations by some of our talented illustrators and writers. Editors will select the most promising manuscripts and meet with these authors in the morning. In the afternoon, groups of writers will meet with the editors for Q & A sessions, and there will be a craft workshop. Our plans for illustrators include working with Purcilla Burris, the illustrator coordinator for the SCBWI and Jeff Jackson demonstrating story boarding. Ready your manuscripts for the editors before the beginning of 2008. Registration for this special event will begin in the middle of January. Seating will be limited.

Our thirty-eight counties for the North Central region are stretched across Northern California. Authors and illustrators are welcome to set up meetings and get-togethers in their areas. These sessions must be approved by the regional advisor if they are sponsored by the SCBWI. The meetings can be held monthly, every three months, or once each year. There may be speakers in your area you would like to hear, or you may like to meet to discuss marketing and to critique manuscripts. These events should be held at a site that has a small rental fee or doesn't charge for the room. You might ask at a local bookstore. A small donation can cover the costs of refreshments and a speaker. If you have ideas and plans, please let me know.

Many thanks go to our ARA, Genny Heikka and Pam Wilkinson for setting up our table and working at Fairytale Town on the last weekend of September. Thanks, too, to all of you who volunteered to help. I hope all the published authors and illustrators sent their school visit information so Pam and Genny could set them out for teachers and librarians. There were several thousand people attending the weekend event. We had a new SCBWI banner and a special book writing and illustrating project for children coming to Fairytale Town.

Our new website for The San Francisco East/North Bay and North Central California is www.northca.org. If you would like to be listed for school visits and you weren't on the other website, please contact Tekla tnwrites@cal.net, or Margaret Speaker Yuan books4women@yahoo.com. Sara Kahn, our web person, will help you set up your information. Remember to contact Pam Wilkinson, pmwmarigrace@comcast.net if you are interested in a critique group in your area. Thanks, Pam for helping us keep in touch.



Before the year ends, I want to thank Linda Boyden, our terrific Acorn editor; Jeff Jackson, the graphic designer and artist who puts the news together; Sara Kahn, who designs and works on the website for all of our members; and Nancy Barnet who manages the Northern California listserv. There's more! Kris McLeod and Joy Allen are our illustrator coordinators who help plan the illustrator events at our conferences. They deserve a big round of applause. The Assistant Regional Advisor, Genny Heikka, works on North Central projects and conferences all year. She is a regional treasure! We have an advisory committee and many volunteers who help with our conferences. Many thanks. We appreciate all you do.

I'll ask the North Central Advisory Committee to send brief biographies and pictures for the winter Acorn so you can find out more about them. They are an outstanding group of writers and illustrators.

May you find your mailbox stuffed with contracts, Tekla

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