



SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK  
WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS

## New York: West/Central Upstate Region

### June 2026

**Thank you for your interest in our region!**

Many of our members ask me how they can find a critique group. I am excited to say that the **SCBWI** has created a fantastic new opportunity: **SCBWI Critique Groups: Find Your Community, Perfect Your Craft** for all of our premium members. It is a versatile program where you can explore existing groups to join or organize your own. Check it out!

We have an impressive lineup in our **Connect Series** this month! To allow our **Picture Book Connect** participants to have more sharing time and focus on picture book writing, we are happy to introduce the **Sequential Art Connect**, hosted by **Annisa Glover**, Illustrator Coordinator. Author/Illustrators can share their picture book dummies, storyboards, and graphic novel panels there. If you haven't attended a **Connect**, pop in and see what's going on!

The following **SCBWI** virtual events are worth looking at!

- June 25 — The **State of the Children's Book Market**, hosted by **Deborah Halverson**, author and editor. FREE for Premium members.
- July 9 — **How to Create Powerful Stories for Young Readers to See Themselves**. FREE for all and sponsored by the **SCBWI** and the **Authors Coalition of America**.
- July 31-August 2 — The **SCBWI Annual Summer Conference**.

Voting for the **Crystal Kite Awards** round one has begun! You can vote for your favorite books from each of the 15 **Crystal Kite** divisions! This is a great way to discover new authors and illustrators from **SCBWI**. [Vote here](#).

For more information on any of the above events, check your inbox, your **SCBWI News feed**, and the **SCBWI** website throughout the month!

And finally, I'd like to thank our Website Manager, **Dan Shanahan**, for his many years of service to our region, working behind the scenes on our pages at the **SCBWI** website!

Have a great month of writing and illustrating!

**Patty Wurster**: Regional Advisor

**Annisa Glover**: Illustrator Coordinator

**Kathi Gunio**: Newsletter Editor

**Deb Blowers**: Newsletter Proofreading Editor

## Upcoming Events:

# ILLUSTRATOR CONNECT



## Join us for an SCBWI New York West/Central Upstate Illustrator Connect: Focus on Portfolios

Be ready to share samples of your portfolio of 12-15 images. It can be a desktop presentation of your choice or one website page with multiple enlargeable images. While we're sharing, we'll discuss the elements of a successful portfolio.

Even if you're not sharing, please join us and meet illustrators in our global community. Hosted by **Kate Woodle**, PAL member, and Illustrator Connect Facilitator.

Tuesday, June 16, 7- 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.

This **Illustrator Connect** is **FREE** for **SCBWI Premium** members.

Above illustration by **Erin O'Leary Brown**.

[Register for Illustrator Connect](#)



## Join us for an SCBWI NY: West/Central Upstate Picture Book Connect: How to Fit Writing into Your Busy Life

We'll talk about how to fit writing into your busy life. Participants will have the option to share the first 300 words of a picture book draft with the audience for feedback.

Even if you're not sharing, please join us and meet picture book writers in our global community.

Hosted by **Sarah Mead**, agented picture book writer and Picture Book Connect Facilitator.

Tuesday, June 23, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.

This **Picture Book Connect** is **FREE** for **SCBWI Premium** members.

Above illustration by [Katelyn McKillip](#).

[Register for Picture Connect](#)

# SEQUENTIAL ART CONNECT



## Join us for an SCBWI NY: West/Central Upstate Sequential Art Connect: Sequential Art: Storyboards, Picture Book Dummies, Graphic Novel Panels

We'll review three different Sequential Art examples: Storyboards, Picture Book Dummies, and Graphic Novel Panels. Participants will have the option to share their work-in-progress storyboard, 3-5 images of their picture book dummy, or a single graphic novel panel page with the audience for feedback.

Even if you're not sharing, please join us and meet illustrators in our global community. Hosted by [Annisa Glover](#), published illustrator and Sequential Art Connect Facilitator.

Tuesday, June 30, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.

This **Sequential Art Connect** is **FREE** for **SCBWI Premium members**.

Above illustration by [Jonathan Schnapp](#).

[Register for Sequential Art Connect](#)



## Join us for an SCBWI New York West/Central Upstate Novel Connect: Let's Build Your Query Package

You've polished your manuscript, perfected your opening pages, and identified the agents you want to query. Now it's time to build your query package. We'll review everything you need to include in your query letter—pitch, metadata, comp titles, author bio—and tips for writing your synopsis. We'll even discuss ways to connect directly with agents to help you

rise out of the slush pile and help you on your path to representation. Bring a sample of either your pitch, synopsis, or author bio to share for feedback.

Even if you're not sharing, please join us and meet Chapter Book, Middle Grade and Young Adult writers in our global community.

Hosted by **David Neuner**, YA writer and Novel Connect Facilitator.

Tuesday, July 7, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.

This **Novel Connect** is **FREE** for **SCBWI Premium members**.

Above illustration by **William Irvine**.

[Register for Novel Connect](#)



**Join us for an SCBWI New York West/Central Upstate  
a.m. JAM craft session.**

Kick-start your week with a full hour of dedicated writing or illustrating. This is a quiet session. Welcome-5 mins. Write/Illustrate-20 mins. Break-5 mins. Write/Illustrate-20 mins. Break-5 mins. Write/Illustrate-20 mins. Reflection-5 mins. Goal Sharing-10 mins.

Hosted by **Patty Wurster** SCBWI NY: West/Central Upstate Regional Advisor.

Every Monday morning 9 AM - 10:30 AM EDT on Zoom.

This **a.m.JAM** craft session is **FREE** for **SCBWI Premium members**.

[Register for a.m.JAMs](#)

## PAL Community:

**Connect with local PAL members!**

The members on our PAL page have chosen "New York: West/Central Upstate" as their home region, designating our region as where they are geographically located.

**Call For Proposals PAL SPEAKER SERIES 2026-2027**

The PAL Speaker Series is a new initiative to offer growth experiences for our published authors, author/illustrators, and/or illustrators to help expand their careers.

We are accepting individual and panel presentation proposals (for up to three people) for this series until June 30, 2026.

# PAL Speaker Series 2026-2027

[More information on eligibility and proposal guidelines can be found here.](#)

[PAL on SCBWI Region Website](#)

[School and Library Visits on SCBWI Region Website](#)

## Illustrator Community:

### Portfolio Refresh: A Couple of Useful Tips to Get Started

As the new season unfolds, it brings a fresh wave of exciting possibilities for our illustrators! Here are some useful tips to help you get started.

1. Check the copyright pages of your favorite books for art directors and inquire about openings. If you've had the chance to meet an art director in-person at some point, add a little anecdote—it helps a lot and brings back great memories).
2. Don't shy away from reaching out. And, don't be discouraged by rejection, as it can lead to valuable opportunities for improvement. A thank you email can go a long way and leaves the door open for something else down the line.
3. When coming up with a concept for an illustration, don't be afraid to let your mind wander. Take a sheet of paper and jot down everything that comes to mind, such as sights, sounds, smells, etc. Sometimes going off on a tangent can actually help lead you to your next big idea.
4. Don't be afraid to start over. Sometimes a piece doesn't turn out as expected. Maybe the mediums or the colors aren't working. Whatever doesn't feel right about the illustration, step back. Take a moment to find it, examine it, learn from it, and decide your next move.
5. Books stand the test of time. With that said, be very intentional about the projects you take on and make sure they align with your values. In the end, it'll be something you can look back on with pride.
6. Have fun! Make it great and make the most of it!

Portfolios vary by the guidelines and preferences of editors/art directors, so just be mindful of this.

I hope this helps. Happy creating!

**Annisa Glover:** Illustrator Coordinator

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### REGIONAL Website Illustrator Gallery:

Update or create your **SCBWI** Illustrator Gallery on your SCBWI Profile page!

[Illustrators on SCBWI Region Website](#)

# Equity and Inclusion Community:

**We hope to positively impact the lives of children, families, and storytellers, and strive to help lower the barriers in publishing.**

Through education and skill sharing, we strive to support our members with their creation of books that improve the lives of readers. Children need to see themselves depicted in books to foster a sense of belonging and a healthy self-esteem.

Children also need to see diversity represented in books in order to develop empathy and understanding as they celebrate the communities in which they live. Books have the power to change lives! Books have the power to save lives!

Through these efforts, we hope that not only are our readers impacted for the better, but our authors, illustrators, and storytellers are as well.

**Equity and Inclusion on SCBWI Region Website**

## Let's Celebrate!!!

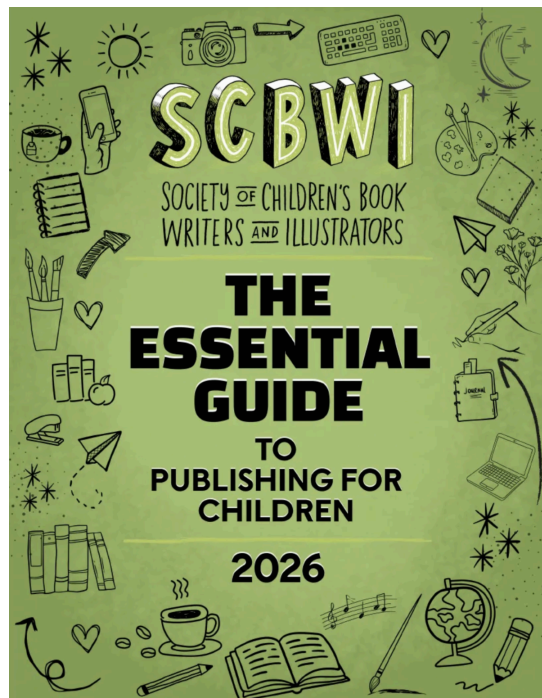
**We want to celebrate and share your accomplishments and good news!**

**All Traditionally Published Books and Self-Published Books are welcome here!**

Send your Good News by Wednesday, June 24, 2026, to Regional Advisor **Patty Wurster**.

## SCBWI Events and Information:

**"The Essential Guide to Publishing for Children"** offers invaluable advice and resources for authors, illustrators, and translators of children's books. Inside you will find new and essential articles such as maximizing social media, creating book trailers, best practices in independent publishing, and grassroots promotion. Our up-to-the-minute Market Survey includes a comprehensive house-by-house listing of imprints, editors, art directors, and key personnel. Other directories include The International Market Survey, The Reviewers Directory, The Agents Directory, and unique features called Edited By and Agented By, in which editors and agents have been personally surveyed to provide a history of their recent acquisitions. Key resources include an annotated bibliography of reference books for aspiring children's book creators, as well as a current listing of bloggers, reviewers, grants, and awards opportunities.



[Download The Essential Guide 2026](#)

**Connect, Create, and Critique: Lean In to Your Community!** For many children's book creators, the journey toward bringing a story to life, whether you're writing, illustrating, or translating, begins with finding the right group of people who can help you grow in your craft. A critique group offers something every creator needs: honest, thoughtful feedback that helps you understand your work more deeply and develop your unique voice. We invite you to join our SCBWI critique group builder and become part of a global community united by a shared passion for children's literature.



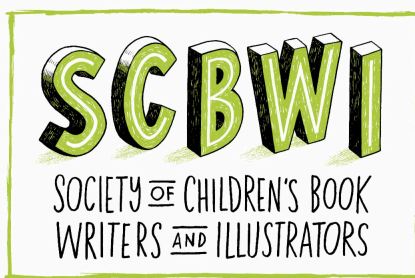
[Critique Groups](#)

**Supercharge your SCBWI membership with the Member Benefits Video Series!** Dive into a treasure trove of insider tips and expert advice designed to help you make the most of your membership. Whether you're a writer or illustrator, these exclusive videos will show you how to unlock powerful SCBWI resources, elevate your craft, and take your creative career to exciting new heights!

[SCBWI Member Video Digest](#)

**SCBWI Regional Virtual Events:** SCBWI Global Regions offer affordable virtual events featuring industry professionals from all around the globe—and you can attend from the comfort of your own home! Check here often to find a webinar that fits your interests and your budget.

[SCBWI Regional Virtual Events](#)



**SCBWI New York: West/Central Upstate**

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