



SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK
WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS

New York: West/Central Upstate Region

May 2026

Thank you for your interest in our region!

We had a memorable event with **Heidi E.Y. Stemple** this past month with **SCBWI** picture book authors and illustrators from around the world! Heidi guided us through her picture book **ADRIFT** (illustrated by Anastasia Suvorova), and discussed revision with intentionality, arc, word choices, and heart. It was well attended with 88 registrants!

Our Picture Book Connect, facilitated by **Sarah Mead**, met on Tuesday and discussed how to write humor in picture books, and attendees shared their manuscripts. Our Connect Series meets every other month, is widely attended globally, and everyone has a great time! Consider attending one in your genre! You are always welcome to come and observe if you do not want to share your work.

The **Crystal Kite Submissions** are open for PAL members to submit their traditionally published books from 2025. It is always a fun way to find new books and support our **SCBWI** members!

In the footer of every **SCBWI** website page is a link to **Regional Virtual Events**. Your **SCBWI** membership offers discounted pricing for all global events. If you are interested in submitting your manuscript, picture book dummy, or portfolio for a critique or a submission opportunity with an agent or editor, look through this webpage regularly. The regional teams all keep in touch and try our best to pass on valuable events for all **SCBWI** members. There is always something for everyone!

Finally, the **SCBWI 2026 Summer Conference** is **July 31, 2026, through August 2, 2026, online**. Look for information about this event and other opportunities at the **SCBWI website homepage!**

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:

NOVEL CONNECT



Join us for an SCBWI New York West/Central Upstate Novel Connect: Let's Hook Your Reader

Let's dive into the crucial opening pages of a manuscript to make sure you hook agents and your future readers! Please bring the first page of your manuscript to share on screen, or listen in for tips to help you polish your opening chapter.

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 [@SCBWI Member Profile](#).

Tuesday, May 12, 7 PM - 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.

This **Novel Connect** is **FREE** for **SCBWI Premium Members!**

Above Illustration by **Andrea Wickert** [@SCBWI Member Profile](#)

[Register for Novel Connect](#)

ILLUSTRATOR CONNECT



Join us for an SCBWI New York West/Central Upstate Illustrator Connect: Character Sketches

Who (or what!) is your main character? Do a series of sketches and *show* us their personalities. You can use black and white, but if color is important to your character, show that too. You can share your sketches to the group and get some feedback!

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 [@SCBWI Member Profile](#)

Tuesday, May 19th, 7 PM - 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.

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

Above Illustration by [William Pineda @SCBWI Member Profile](#)

Register for Illustrator 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. Goal Reflection-5 mins. Goal Sharing-10 mins.

Hosted by [Patty Wurster](#), SCBWI NY: West/Central Upstate Regional Advisor @ [SCBWI Member Profile](#).

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.



Crystal Kite Member Choice Awards

This peer-given award recognizes great books from fifteen SCBWI regional divisions around the world.

Submissions for the 2026 Crystal Kite Awards open May 1, 2026.

Further informations and Guidelines can be found [HERE.](#)

[PAL on SCBWI Region Website](#)

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

Illustrator Community:

Portfolio Refresh

As the new season unfolds, it brings a fresh wave of exciting possibilities for our illustrators!

Speaking of which, it's a perfect time to refresh your portfolios. I know this seems daunting (even a bit repetitive), but hear me out. Many believe that portfolios must adhere to the latest trends or continuously churn out work to remain relevant; however, I hold a different perspective. Life evolves, circumstances shift, and our portfolios should reflect that change. A portfolio, in its truest essence, serves as your unique signature in the world, showcasing what resonates with you at any given moment.

Some questions to ask yourself:

- Does this body of work resonate with me anymore?
- Have I evolved from this?
- What can I learn from this, and what can I let go?
- What are some influences that I can exhibit in my new pieces?
- What's the next step in this character's journey? Do they have an ending?
- What are some new techniques that I'd like to explore? New materials I haven't tried yet?
- What is the story I am trying to tell?

The answer isn't simple; take time to reflect on your goals and creations. Portfolios vary by the guidelines and preferences of editors/art directors, so just be mindful of this.

To further assist you in refreshing your portfolio, next month's SCBWI newsletter will include Quick, Useful Tips to Help You Get Started. Stay tuned!

Annisa Glover: Illustrator Coordinator



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!

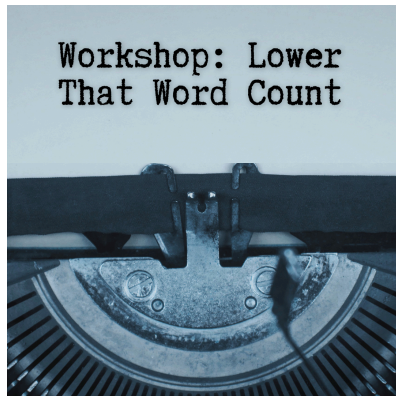
Through these efforts, we hope that not only are our readers impacted for the better, but our authors, illustrators, and storytellers are as well.

Equity and Inclusion on SCBWI Region Website

Let's Celebrate!!!

Jacob Souva [@SCBWI Profile](#), **William Irvine** [@SCBWI Profile](#), **Christopher Roberts** [@SCBWI Profile](#), **Kate Woodle** [@SCBWI Profile](#), **Erin O'Leary Brown** [@SCBWI Profile](#), **William Pineda** [@SCBWI Profile](#), **Andrea Wickert** [@SCBWI Profile](#), and **Veronica Balceda** [@SCBWI Profile](#).

Visit [SCBWI regional website pages](#) and on the Connect Series Event Graphics for their illustrations.



Workshop: Lower That Word Count

Ilona Bray will be presenting in this upcoming event titled, **Workshop: Lower That Word Count! Self-Editing for Brevity and Clarity*** on Thursday, May 14, 7 PM - 8 PM on Zoom.

This is a **craft workshop for writers wishing to tighten and shorten their manuscripts**, with Stephen Soong.

REGISTER HERE:

**This event is not organized by SCBWI, and we are not liable for the information presented.*

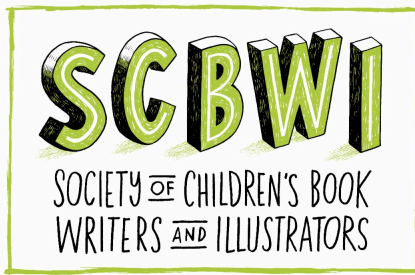
All Traditionally Published Books and Self-Published Books are welcome here! Send your Good News by Friday, June 1, 2026 to Regional Advisor [Patty Wurster](#).

SCBWI Events and Information:

SCBWI Regional Virtual Events:

SCBWI 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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SCBWI New York West Central | 11755 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1250 | Los Angeles, CA 90025 US

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