



SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK  
WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS

## New York: West/Central Upstate Region

### October 2025

Thank you for your interest in our region!

**Patty Wurster**: Regional Advisor

**Annisa Glover**: Illustrator Coordinator

**Sue Heavenrich**: Co-ARA and PAL Coordinator

**Cait Darfler**: Co-ARA



Drop by our table at the  
**Rochester Children and Teens  
Book Festival** on Saturday,  
November 8th, 10AM-4PM.  
**More information here!**

2025 New York State Reading Association Annual Conference



**Literacy & Leadership!**

November 9 - 11, 2025  
Buffalo Niagara Marriott  
Amherst, NY

The **2025 New York State  
Reading Association Annual  
Conference** is open for  
registration. Our vendor table, in  
partnership with SCBWI NY:  
Westchester, will display our  
region's PAL members who offer  
school visits! November 9th -  
11th.

## More information here!

One thing that we all can agree on is how absolutely beautiful the Fall season is here in west and central New York! The beautiful blend of autumn colors, the crisp fresh air, the beginning of the new school year, and book festivals! Our region will have a display table at the **Rochester Children and Teens Book Festival** and our region members are invited to share one traditionally published or self-published book and illustrator postcards! We'll be sending you details in the upcoming week on how to participate.

A priority of mine for our region has been to focus on our PAL member's wishes for more school visit programming and opportunities. I am hoping that our presence at the **2025 New York State Reading Association Annual Conference** during the first week in November, our School Visits SCBWI webpage (in the works), and our **Back to School Webinar Series** will energize our PAL community. I want to give a huge shout out to our PAL Coordinators; **Sue Heavenrich** and **Dee Romito**, and our Literacy Liaison, **Judy Bradbury**, for their commitment to our PAL program! Expect more details in your inbox about participating in our vendor table display at the upcoming NYSRA Conference and School Visits web pages.

Thank you to all of our region members who attended the **Your Voice Shaping Our Region** meeting and/or participated in our survey! **Cait Darfler**, our Co-Assistant Regional Advisor spearheaded this campaign. We had an over 20% response! We are currently examining the results and will focus on targeted programming for our authors and illustrators. Thank you, Cait!

Speaking of illustrators, we want to see your designs for our **'Regional Graphic' Contest**. The deadline is October 8th. Thank you, **Annisa Glover**, Illustrator Coordinator, for offering this opportunity to our region members!

Keep writing and illustrating!  
Patty Wurster

## October Events:

# BACK TO SCHOOL WITH SCHOOL VISITS

## PART 2: GETTING AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR SCHOOL AND LIBRARY VISITS

with

Deena Viviani



Kim Norman



Annette Whipple



Tuesday, October 7th, 7:00-8:30 PM EST on Zoom

### Part 2 - GETTING Author/Illustrator School and Library Visits

School and library visits are a great way for authors and illustrators to connect with readers and the teachers and librarians who buy the books. This two-part webinar series addresses how to develop your program, and how to reach out to schools and libraries for booking opportunities.

Panelists will share insight and tips on marketing and booking your programs. **DEENA VIVIANI** will talk about what makes a good program for library. **KIM NORMAN** examines the life/work balance of creative time against the demands of school visits. **ANNETTE WHIPPLE** will share how she promotes her programs and her outreach to schools and other venues.

Tuesday, October 7th, 7:00 PM -8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.  
THIS EVENT WILL BE RECORDED AND AVAILABLE FOR 30 DAYS.  
Pricing: \$15 for SCBWI Premium members. \$25 for non-member

**Register for Back to School with School Visits - Part 2**

# Join us for a **PICTURE BOOK CONNECT**

## **Let's Polish Up Your Manuscript!**

Let's Get Those Manuscripts Ready to Hook an Agent or Editor! Participants will have the option to share the first 250 words of a draft with the audience for feedback. We will also reserve time to discuss suggestions for comp titles as well as any other obstacles you're facing in your manuscript. Even if you're not sharing, please join us and meet picture book writers in your community.

Hosted by **Sarah Mead**, Sarah Mead, agented children's author, writer at 585 Magazine & 585 Kids Magazine, President of Rochester Area Children's Writers & Illustrators, and Picture Book Connect Facilitator.

Tuesday, October 14th, 7:00 PM -8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.  
This Picture Book Connect is FREE for SCBWI Premium members.

[Register for Picture Book Connect](#)

## **Coming November 18th:**

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

7:00 PM -8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.  
This Novel Connect is FREE for SCBWI Premium members.

Join us for a

# **NOVEL CONNECT**

## **Coming November 25th:**

Hosted by **Kate Woodle**, published illustrator, PAL member, and Illustrator Connect Facilitator.

7:00 PM -8:30 PM EDT on Zoom.  
This Illustrator Connect is FREE for SCBWI



Premium members.

Join us for an

# ILLUSTRATOR CONNECT

## A Warm Welcome to Melquea Smith: Equity and Inclusion Leader



**Melquea Smith** has a story to tell...Once Upon a Time...a little Black girl had *very* busy parents who kept her occupied with art supplies. But they couldn't *imagine* that her busyness would evolve into a business!

Now, with a specialty in drawing little Black kids in all shapes and sizes, Melquea Smith is a queer, multi-award-winning children's book illustrator who creates clip art of Black and brown kids for educators, authors, and business owners. As a kid, Melquea struggled with being accepted and loving herself. So now, she honors her little self by showing up joyfully and authentically to encourage every beautiful human to do the same.

Find more about [Melquea](#)

# PAL News:

From PAL coordinators, Dee Romito & Sue Heavenrich

## You asked. We answered!

You asked for some webinars on school and library visits. So our region is delivering with our 2-part "Back to School With School Visits" webinar series:

Part 1: "CREATING Author/Illustrator School and Library Visits" was FANTASTIC and the webinar recording is available until October 16th.

Part 2: "GETTING Author/Illustrator School and Library Visits" on Tuesday, October 7th. This webinar will be recorded and made available for 30 days.

You should already have received an email yesterday about a special offer for SCBWI New York West Central Upstate PAL members. If not, contact [Sue Heavenrich](#) or [Patty Wurster](#) before registering for this event.

## 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. If you are NOT on our PAL page and feel like you should be, let us know.

[PAL on SCBWI Website](#)

# Illustrator News:



# YOUR DESIGN HERE

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

## 'Design our Regional Graphic' Contest

SCBWI New York: West/Central Regional Team is looking for regional artwork to offer a fresh new look that represents our region! We will incorporate the official SCBWI logo into your artwork's design to create our regional graphic. The winning piece will be featured on all regional SCBWI newsletters, flyers, and social media posts.

### Design Guidelines

- All art considered must be appropriate for the children's book market!
- All mediums welcome! (Original digital work must be high resolution; 300 dpi).
- Artwork **MUST** be both in COLOR and a vignette! (Preferably not a complete rectangle or square).

### Submission Guidelines

- Current SCBWI members across the region are invited to submit their design to represent the exceptional talent and limitless possibilities our region has to offer!
- Preview Image Size: 150 dpi and 1600 px - 2000 px width (so it's consistent for everyone).
- Please do not add the SCBWI logo or region name to your artwork submission.
- Questions email [\*\*Annisa Glover\*\*](mailto:Annisa.Glover@scbwi.org)

**DEADLINE:** Send your design to [\*\*Annisa Glover\*\*](mailto:Annisa.Glover@scbwi.org) by **October 8th!**

The SCBWI New York: West/Central Regional Team has sole discretion to withhold this award.

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## REGIONAL Website Illustrator Gallery Page!

Update or create your SCBWI Illustrator Gallery on your Profile. Make sure you select New York: West/Central Upstate as your region. If you are not included on this page or need assistance, contact [\*\*Annisa Glover\*\*](mailto:Annisa.Glover@scbwi.org)

**Illustrators on SCBWI Region Website**

# Shop Talk Around the Region:

## Ithaca ShopTalk

For SCBWI folks close to Ithaca, join us on **Wednesday, October 22nd, from 6:45-7:45PM in the Schwarz-Jacobsen room at the Tompkins County Public Library** for our fall Ithaca Shoptalk meeting. Our focus will be on workshopping characters from current manuscripts, so come with a character in mind from a project you're working on and we will have a meet and greet (with that character) and do some interviewing to help you with character development. Try to think of some questions ahead of time, for instance: What's this character's favorite color and why? What scares this character? What's in this character's backpack? Who is this character's best friend?

For more information or if you'd like to be added to the Ithaca ShopTalk e-mail list, contact **Heidi Marschner**

## Query Corner:

### TIP #4.5: Adapting your Query Letter as an Author-Illustrator

- Your First Impression - Introduction:
  - I am an author-illustrator seeking representation...
  - I am an illustrator seeking representation (wordless PB)...
  - Mention any illustration related connection; critique, presentation, social event...
- Pitch and Summary - no changes (see September newsletter)
- Description of PB and Comp Titles
  - It is here where you can add descriptive qualities of illustrations
- BIO
  - Art and illustration background, and experiences that are important to you
  - Mention active memberships, critique groups, etc...
- Sharing your PB dummy
  - Your website page with password
  - File Sharing like; Dropbox, WeTransfer, etc.
  - Upload to online portal at agency website

READ SUBMISSION GUIDELINES CAREFULLY  
From **Cait Darfler**

## Let's Celebrate!!!

**Michelle Cavigliano, Heidi Marschner, Julian Plum, Katelyn McKillip, Vanessa Bidwell, Melquea Smith, and Patty Wurster** for sharing their Fall themed work on our SCBWI website pages!

**Jacob Souva** whose illustration from *Big*





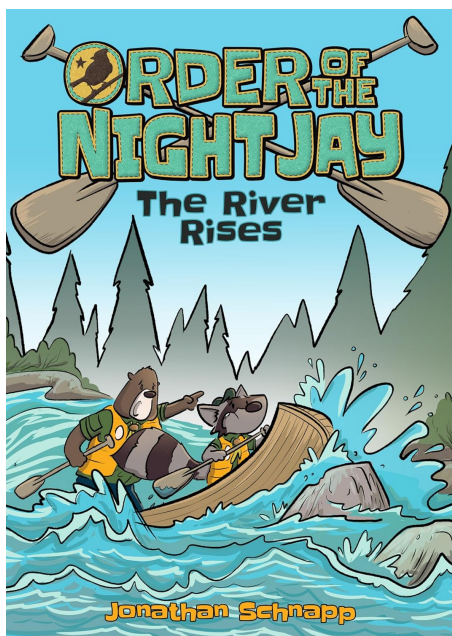
***Bike, Little Bike***, written by Kellie DuBay Gillis, was juried and selected to be included in **The Original Art 2025: Celebrating the Fine Art of Children's Book Illustration** at the Museum of Illustration at the Society Of Illustrators in NYC. On exhibit soon!

Publishers, agents, and illustrators submit books released over a twelve-month period. Those books are juried by five illustrators, one editor, and one art director.

## CONGRATULATIONS JACOB!

Find out more about [Jacob](#)

Find out more about the [Society of Illustrators](#)



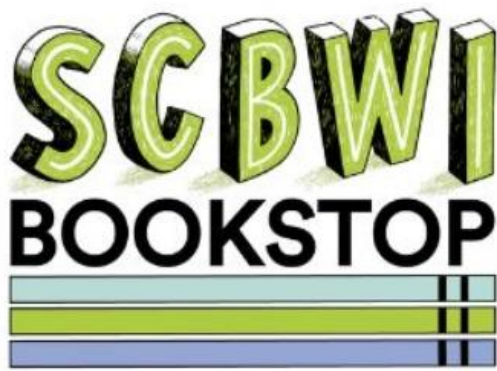
## ***Order of the Night Jay* by Jonathan Schnapp**

*Order of the Night Jay (Book 2): The River Rises* Return to the wilderness with nervous bear Frank and excitable raccoon Ricky as they dive deeper into the long-lost (and supernatural) secrets of Camp Jay Bird. Frank and Ricky are in trouble. They broke camp rules, made enemies of all the other scouts, and released something dark and scary in the forest that might be out to get them! Top Shelf Productions, October 7, 2025.

Find out more about [Jonathan](#)

Send your Good News by 1:00 PM EDT on the last Friday of the month to:  
Regional Advisor; [Patty Wurster](#)  
PAL Members can send your Good News to  
Co-ARA/PAL Coordinator [Sue Heavenrich](#)

# SCBWI Events and Information:



# Important BookStop Dates

09/10

- THE TEMPLATES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL MEMBERS TO CREATE THEIR PAGES
- TRADITIONALLY PUBLISHED BOOKS, INDEPENDENT/SELF-PUBLISHED BOOKS, AND READING AND CHILDREN'S BOOK APPS THAT HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED (OR WILL BE PUBLISHED) BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2022, AND DECEMBER 31, 2025 ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROMOTION

10/22

- BOOKSTOP GOES LIVE TO THE PUBLIC
- YOU MAY STILL CREATE A BOOKSTOP PAGE THROUGHOUT THE PROMOTION PERIOD OF OCTOBER 22 - DECEMBER 8

12/12

- END OF BOOKSTOP PROMOTION PERIOD

**SCBWI BookStop FAQ**

**This Event Looks FUN! Hosted by SCBWI New York: Westchester!**

Join this first of it's kind NY marathon of creation!

Authors, illustrators and author/illustrators working in all age ranges and genres

**Empire State**

**24 Hour**

**Children's Book Challenge**

Jointly hosted by the NY regions

**Beginning @ 10 am**

**November 8th on zoom**

If you can **MAKE IT** there, you'll "make it" anywhere!

For 24 hours you'll find support, initiatives, and accountability to bring your next portfolio piece, manuscript or dummy to life. Including guided story structure and pacing prompts to help you complete a draft in 24 hours. Plus scheduled check ins, sharing opportunities, prompts and a hashtag to document your progress.

[Register for 24 Hour Challenge](#)

## 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](#)

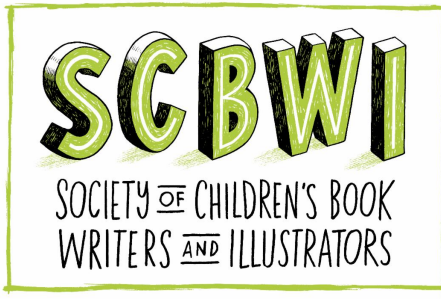
## Newsletter Contributing and Proofreading Editors:

Patty Wurster: Regional Advisor  
Annisa Glover: Illustrator Coordinator  
Sue Heavenrich: Co-ARA and PAL Coordinator  
Cait Darfler: Co-ARA  
Dee Romito: PAL Coordinator  
Melquea Smith: Equity and Inclusion Leader  
Sarah Mead: Picture Book Connect Facilitator  
David Neuner: Novel Connect Facilitator  
Kate Woodle: Illustrator Connect Facilitator  
Heidi Marschner: Ithaca ShopTalk Facilitator  
Deb Blowers: Proofreading Editor

## SCBWI NewYork: West/Central Upstate

[CONTACT US!](#)

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