



SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK
WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS

New York: West/Central Upstate Region

September 2026

Thank you for your interest in our region!

With great delight, we are announcing our first in-person conference since 2019 on **May 22-23, 2027**, at Daemen University in Amherst, NY! Just minutes from I-90 and the Buffalo International Airport, the beautiful Daemen University campus offers state-of-the-art venue services and spaces, free parking and 24/7 security. We're planning two days filled with inspiring keynotes, panel discussions, and breakout sessions. Learn from industry professionals offering submission opportunities and individual critiques, build meaningful connections with writers and illustrators in our region, and be inspired by award-winning authors and illustrators. Keep watch for more details in future newsletters and **Save the Date!**

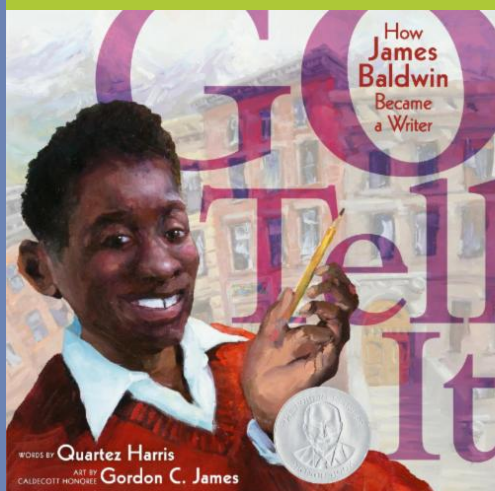
Our Fall line-up of virtual events delivers in-depth opportunities to grow in your craft and connect with **SCBWI** members in our global community! Refine your writing skills with **Poetic Prose Practice with Quartez Harris** for writers and illustrators of all levels and genres. If you're a seasoned middle grade writer or learning the genre, **Middle Grade Monsters and Mysteries with Emily Daluga** promises to thrill your creative spirit.

Have a great month writing, illustrating, and translating!

Patty Wurster: Regional Advisor
Carolyn Osborne: Assistant Regional Advisor
Annisa Glover: Illustrator Coordinator

Kathi Gunio and Deb Blowers: Newsletter Team

Upcoming Events:



**Poetic
Prose
Practice
with
Quartez
Harris**

Poetic Prose Practice with Quartez Harris

Poetry is an experience in the possibilities of language. In this interactive writing workshop, award-winning author and poet **Quartez Harris**, will encourage you to use poetry as you visually craft your prose. He will refer to his published books as a way to demonstrate how you can weave poetic metaphor into your writing to go beyond straightforward description.

Tuesday, September 22nd, 7:00 - 8:30 PM on Zoom

This event will be recorded and made available until October 22nd.

Register for Poetic Prose Practice

Middle Grade Monsters and Mysteries

with
Emily Daluga
Editor at Chronicle Books



Middle Grade Monsters and Mysteries with Emily Daluga

Whether it's a classic whodunit or a new spine-chilling tale, kids can't get enough of horror and mystery stories! Even though many young readers are struggling with reading right now, these two genres remain some of the most popular categories in middle grade. They continue to sell year after year and are getting more critical acclaim in awards and reviews. Kids are clamoring for their next great read—and publishers are eager to help them find it! In this presentation, we'll discuss recent killer trends, investigate how to craft a satisfying story, and crack the case on how to help your project stand out in the market! **Emily Daluga** is an editor at Chronicle Books.

Monday, October 12th, 7:00 - 8:30 PM on Zoom

This event will be recorded and made available until November 15th.

Register for Monsters and Mysteries

Connect Series:

PICTURE BOOK CONNECT



Join us for an SCBWI NY: West/Central Upstate Picture Book Connect: Is Your Picture Book Submission Ready?

Whether you are querying an agent for representation, submitting your manuscript to an editor, or sending your manuscript for a critique, we'll explore the qualities needed to make your submission stand out! Participants will have the option to share the first 300 words of a picture book manuscript 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, September 15th, 7 PM - 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom
This **Picture Book Connect** is **FREE** for **SCBWI Premium Members**!

Above illustration by [Andrea Wickert](#)

[Register for Picture Book Connect](#)



NOVEL CONNECT

Join us for an SCBWI NY: West/Central Upstate Novel Connect: Writing Pitfalls (and How to Avoid Them)

Let's dive deep into craft to help your pages shine. We'll cover helpful tips that span all genres to elevate your style as you write/revise and keep readers immersed in your story.

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, October 6th, 7 PM - 8:30 PM EDT on Zoom

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

Above Illustration by **Julian Plum**

Register for Novel Connect

Featured SCBWI Member!

Andrea Wickert

Tell us a little about yourself:

I'm a children's book author and illustrator from Central New York, happily making books and parenting my child among the cows of Upstate. I've invested the past few years exploring the children's book industry, finding my creative voice, and establishing my illustration portfolio and picture book manuscripts alongside a few incredible mentors. I'm currently wrapping up a fantastic summer of kid lit spent with Doug Salati & Sophie Blackall at the Milkwood Workshop for Illustrators, with Andrew Hackett as his mentee in the Picture Book Rising Stars program, and at the Boyds Mills Summer Camp for Writers and Illustrators, a trip made possible thanks to their generous scholarship program. This season will be capped off with a week-long residency in Pennsylvania dedicated to polishing up my picture book dummies, as I prepare for my next season of querying and submissions.



What are you most passionate about in your craft: Hands down, it's the storytelling. Moving a message and sharing a story with an audience, whether it's through words to be read or narrative brushstrokes, is my favorite part of the craft.

What do you love most about the children's book industry?

Having worked in a number of industries over the years, I love that the children's book industry feels entirely different. This industry has proven to be overwhelmingly welcoming and supportive. Having the opportunity to be a storyteller side by side with others who are just as passionate about sharing stories with children truly propels me to keep creating.

How has the SCBWI helped your career?

My year was kick-started all thanks to the **SCBWI** and the New York Winter Conference in January. So many lessons were learned in the wonderful workshops; the panel discussions and speeches were eye opening. I felt nourished connecting with my fellow author and illustrator friends in real life. Through the Illustrator's Showcase, I was able to share my portfolio and make valuable connections with agents, art directors, editors, and other picture book makers. I can't imagine a better springboard for illustrators starting out, the connections made during these in person settings are invaluable!

Find more about Andrea

PAL Community:

Call for PAL Coordinator!

If you are an **NYWCU (New York West-Central Upstate) PAL** member and would like to be the voice of our PALs, get involved with Regional Team event planning, and build our PAL community, consider becoming our **PAL Coordinator**. This position will include **FREE SCBWI MEMBERSHIP!** Please send your inquiry to [Patty Wurster](#)

PAL on SCBWI Region Website

School and Library Visits on SCBWI Region Website

Illustrator Community:

Put JOY in Your Portfolio

Hello Everyone,

I hope you've all enjoyed a fantastic summer filled with amazing adventures and unforgettable memories! As we move into fall, we have a variety of exciting events on the horizon that you won't want to miss. With that said, this is a wonderful chance to channel some of that summer fun and inspiration into your portfolios. Keeping your portfolio updated with fresh ideas and new projects is essential. It sharpens your skills and showcases your progress over time. I often look back at some of my earlier work (it's like night and day, ha-ha!), and I'm amazed by how much I've grown.

I encourage you to join me this month: set aside 20 minutes each day to draw something that brings you joy. Dedicate each day to drawing one joyful thing. Plan to fill the page by month's end. Run out of room before the month's over? Start another page. Let's see how we evolve together during this time!

[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

Around the Region:



Congratulations to this month's **SCBWI Featured Illustrator Jeff Harter** as he shares his journey from being a Disney animator to building a prolific career as an educator and illustrator. Check out this **SCBWI Featured Illustrator** interview [here](#).

Find more about [Jeff](#)



California or Dust by **Mindy Nichols Wendell** is about Lark, an 11-year-old girl who flees the Oklahoma Dust Bowl for California with her family in 1939.

It's a powerful story of the devastation of the Dust Bowl—and the courage of those who survived it. This middle-grade historical fiction novel is to be released through Penguin Random House September 8th.

Find more about [Mindy](#)



Festival to Go brings the magic of storytelling to your school!

A free literacy outreach program bringing published authors and illustrators directly to Rochester city schools. Every child receives a book chosen by our presenters.

Festival to Go is an all-volunteer, free outreach program of the Rochester Area Children's Writers & Illustrators.

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, September 30, 2026, to Regional Advisor [Patty Wurster](#), subject line: **Newsletter**

SCBWI Events and Information:



Things to Know About The Novel: Crafting a Compelling Middle Grade or YA Manuscript

This is a mini-master course you won't find anywhere else at this price.

Practical, actionable steps to a stronger manuscript—not just theory.

Taught by masters of their craft: **Brandy Colbert**, **Lamar Giles**, and **Lilliam Rivera**.

This is a member-only access to instruction that's usually out of reach. Seats are limited, but the growth you'll walk away with isn't.

The bell rings on September 9th.

[Register Here](#)



Go Deeper into The Journey of the Picture Book

The idea for your next picture book is already in you. **JaNay Brown-Wood** shows you how to unlock it.

Ready to take your writing to the next level? **Jashar Awan** shares the advice that gets you there.

Curious what really happens between a draft and a published book? **Andrea Davis Pinkney** knows publishing inside and out.

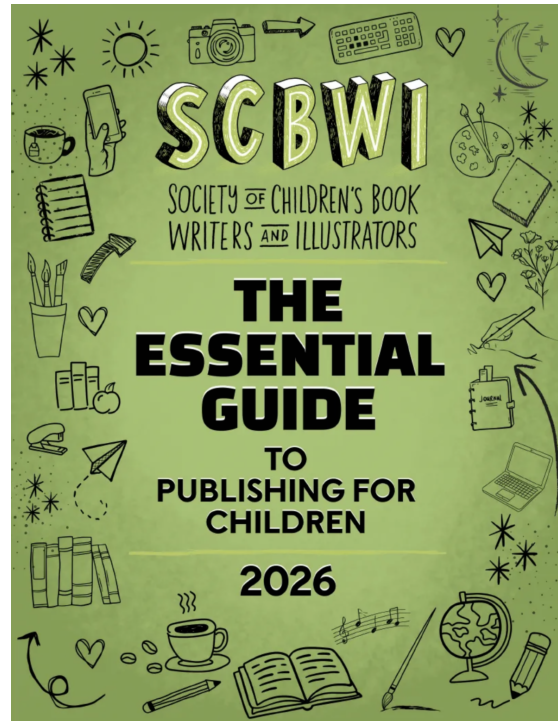
This isn't beginner-level content. It's where talented authors and author-illustrators go to sharpen their craft.

Class begins September 10th.

[Register Here](#)

The Essential Guide to Publishing for Children

This guide 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 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 people to grow alongside. A critique group offers something every creator needs: honest, thoughtful feedback that provides insight into the creator's work and helps develop their 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!

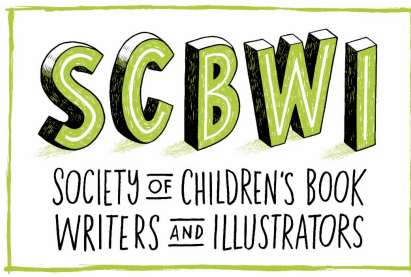
Dive into a treasure trove of insider tips and expert advice designed to help you make the most of your membership! Whether you're a writer or illustrator, these exclusive videos will show you how to unlock powerful **SCBWI** resources, elevate your craft, and take your creative career to exciting new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