

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014 • 7PM

Children's Book Writing and Publishing

IS THERE A CHILDREN'S BOOK INSIDE OF YOU JUST WAITING TO GET OUT? Are you curious about how to get started on writing a book for a young audience? Want to hear some personal experiences from both traditionally and independently published children's book authors? And what about getting your book illustrated?

At our May 14 meeting, we'll have a panel consisting of a children's book illustrator and two children's book authors—one who went the traditional publishing route and one who self-published a series of books for kids.

The panel members will answer your questions and share their experiences on a variety of topics, including:

- How to determine the age range of your readers and why that matters
- What you need to know before you start writing and designing art for your book
- How to find and work with an illustrator
- The unique marketing challenges and opportunities for children's book authors

If you're in the process of writing a children's book or have been thinking about it, this is a meeting you won't want to miss. And if you have no interest in publishing books for kids, you are still bound to learn a few important lessons you can apply to your own book, no matter what the genre.

Our Speakers:

Amy Sklansky is a dynamic, successful children's book author whose career began as an editor at HarperCollins Children's Books in New York and Studio Goodwin Sturges in Boston. Among her books are *From the Doghouse: Poems to Chew On* and *Skeleton Bones and Goblin Groans: Poems for Halloween*. Her first



Amy Sklansky



Tim Hill



Jennifer Stolzer

original board book, *You Are My Little Cupcake*, was #1 on the St. Louis Independent Bookstores Bestseller List and featured in *Scholastic's Parent & Child Magazine*. *Publishers Weekly* called Amy's latest book, *Out of This World: Poems and Facts about Space*, "an evocative mix of the whimsical and the scientific." You can find more about Amy at her website, www.amysklansky.com.

Tim Hill is the author of the *Joe the Crab* series of children's books. Based on bedtime stories he told his own kids, these delightfully written and illustrated books describe the challenges young children face in schools and at home. Tim frequently speaks before school groups and appears at charity events. He hopes the characters in his books don't just entertain but also teach children important life lessons as they mature. www.joethecrab.com

Jennifer Stolzer is a freelance illustrator and author based in St. Louis. She specializes in local, independently published children's books, book and audiobook cover designs, logos, promotional art, comics, commissions, and more. See her online portfolio at www.jenniferstolzer.com, or find her on Facebook.

Jennifer also produces dog- and cat-themed merchandise at www.jensdogsCUSTOM.com.

Five Easy Steps in Writing a Children's Book

By Terence Tam

Come Up with Different Story Ideas

A book is not a book without a good story. When parents buy a children's book, they read it first. Check out other children's books [and] look at how other authors wrote their story. You can also ask your relatives and friends (especially those who have kids) about the ideas that you have in mind. Make sure you create a story that will fit your

interests and talents so it wouldn't be difficult for you.

Make Your Characters Interesting

Come up with characters that will entice children to read your book. You must decide whether you want to use people, animals, or create a whole new character for your story. Illustrations can be created through creative imagination.

You need to check out other children's books to help you build strong characters. Those books will be your teachers and will help you familiarize yourself with the children's market. Start with the main character [who] should be unique, yet still be someone the child reader can relate to. After building up your main character, the supporting characters will follow easily.

(Five Easy Step's continued on page 2)

Five; Easy Steps continued from page 1)

Outline Your Story

Create an outline to help you see where your story starts and how it will end. Use draw cards with pictures [to] show you how your characters will interact in your story. In your outline, introduce the characters and describe their physical attributes and personalities. Describe their surroundings and whom they come in contact with. Your story should have a problem that needs to be resolved by the main character. Include the problem in your outline and show how the main character will resolve the conflict.

Make Use of Pictures

The most important thing one should remember when creating a children's book is that children love to look at pictures, especially colorful ones. Make sure that you use the right color temperature in your pictures. When the story hits a happy note, make use of bright and lively colors;

otherwise, dark colors can lend atmosphere to a sad episode.

Be Creative

What's great about writing a children's book is that you can make up stories, no matter how strange or outlandish they sound. Children are full of imagination, so they want stories that will fill up their fanciful minds. Anyone who has ever read Peter Pan would want to sprinkle magic powder on themselves and imagine that they can fly! That's how you want children to feel when they read your story; you want them to take it along during playtime.

Terence Tam spent six years as an academic and was a contributing author for several academic books. He set up Bookpal (www.Bookpal.com.au/) to help self-publishers around the world successfully self-publish and market their books. The website offers a free book for budding self-publishers, and many other free resources. (Article Source: http://ezinearticles.com/?expert=Terence_Tan)

News You Can Use

The following is a selection of articles, resources, and information to help you WRITE, PUBLISH, and MARKET your book.

WRITE

The Setback: How to Successfully Start Writing Again, By Cris Freese January 30th, "...make writing a routine—as routine as brushing your teeth, eating lunch, walking the dog, etc. You want writing to be a part of your daily life, something you do without even thinking about it. So sit down to write, every day, at the same time."

2014 <http://www.writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/there-are-no-rules/writing-setback-how-to-successfully-start-writing-again>

PUBLISH

Publishers Greatest Challenges in Digital, By Josh Sternberg, June 14th, 2012, "...there are many traditional things that publishing will want in the new century, which, while so far rare on the Web, must somehow be translated into their new medium."
<http://digiday.com/publishers/publishers-greatest-challenges-in-digital/>

MARKET

How to Write Perfect Press Releases with Steven Lewis, By Joanna Penn/Steven Lewis, February 5th, 2013

"People don't care that you wrote a book, they care about what it can do for them."
<http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2013/02/05/perfect-press-releases-steven-lewis/>

SLPA Mission The St. Louis Publishers Association empowers authors and publishers to create and market quality products and books. A nationally recognized organization, the SLPA provides educational, informational resources on publishing. Through its monthly meetings, the organization provides networking opportunities for people involved in all aspects of the publishing industry.

MEMBERS: Do you have a new book you would like to announce? For more information, email Bobbi Linkemer at communications@stlpublishers.org

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Melanie Paticoff Launches First Magazine for Kids and Teens with Hearing Loss

Hearing Our Way, a groundbreaking publication designed for young people with hearing loss, will debut next month. Created by Melanie Paticoff, M.S.D.E., *Hearing Our Way* will change the way kids and teens with hearing loss view their disability. "*Hearing Our Way* provides an opportunity for children and teens not only to read about but also to connect with others who are experiencing similar challenges with hearing loss," says Paticoff. "It teaches kids and teens to celebrate their differences and provides vital social and emotional support to young people during their formative years."

Melanie (Mel) Paticoff is the creator and CEO of Sophie's Tales, LLC, which publishes books, products, and resources for children with hearing loss and cochlear implants. She has a Master of Science in Deaf Education (M.S.D.E) from Washington University's Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences (2013).

SLPA Meets on the Second Wednesday of the Month

BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER
2505 S. Brentwood Blvd., Room 101
Brentwood, MO 63144
(Enter through the door closest to the flagpole)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm, and meeting begins at 7pm. The formal meeting concludes at about 8:30pm with networking until 9pm.

Regular meetings are free to members. Guests—\$10 at the door, cash or check only.

Questions About SLPA?

Contact membership chair:
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membership@stlouispublishers.org

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