

June 2006
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COMPACT
VERSION

SCBWI Dakotas

A SCBWI Dakotas Publication

SCBWI Dakotas is a regional chapter of the Society for Children's Book Writers & Illustrators.
www.scbwi.org

What is SCBWI?

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators is a professional organization for writers and illustrators of children's literature. If you join on the national level, you automatically become a member of the SCBWI Dakotas (or your own state's region). For more information about the benefits of belonging to SCBWI, visit www.scbwi.org

A New Editor, A New Look

The SCBWI Dakotas Newsletter is back, with a new look and a new editor.

ABOUT ME:

I've been writing for young adults for over ten years, though I'm still striving for that first major publication. I've lived a lot of places (which is useful for a writer) but right now, I call Minot, North Dakota home. I teach composition, creative writing, adolescent literature and linguistics at Minot State University, where I'm also the director of the Writing Center. I write mainly young adult fiction, contemporary, mystery, sports, and fantasy. I'm also the chapter's web master, so be sure to check our site out at: <http://www.scbwidakotas.org>.

I hope to make this newsletter informative, interactive and useful for all of you. In the coming issues, I plan to feature interviews with chapter members and other published writers and illustrators for children. I'd also like to feature market news, contests and of course, news about our members, as well as articles about writing.

But in the end, this is YOUR newsletter. Which means I'm open to ideas and suggestions from all of you. If you have any news, ideas or other suggestions for the newsletter, be sure to email them to me at: scbwidakotas@gmail.com.

Who is receiving this Newsletter:

Because we'd like to reach as many writers and illustrators as we can, there will be two versions of the newsletter:

The COMPACT version will feature shorter versions of the interviews, some market news and the contests and articles on craft. This newsletter is available to any interested writer or illustrator of children's literature.

The DELUXE version will feature expanded market news, member news, longer interviews and more in-depth articles. This will be available to SCBWI members only, as a perk of your membership.

In This Issue:

- 10 Questions for Janice Tingum.
- New Contests and calls for your submissions.
- Market news.

Inspiration is wonderful when it happens, but the writer must develop an approach for the rest of the time... The wait is simply too long.

*Leonard Bernstein
US
composer &
conductor
(1918 - 1990)*



**"Remember, only
YOU can write like
you."**

**Van Reid
Author of The
Moosepath League
Books**

From Our Regional Advisor...

"Those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer..."

It's early June as I write this, but already I'm in the haze of the crazy, lazy days. Crazy...because I have three teenagers who assume I know their schedules by osmosis. And lazy, too. When I finally have a chance to write, the summer heat tries to lull me into a blessed trance of inactivity.

What can pull us out of the crazy, lazy days and into the land of creative productivity? Deadlines from external sources (i.e. contests, editors, etc.) are always nice. But most of the time we have to supply our own self discipline. What fun!

Here are a few ideas...

If you've read *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron, you know about Morning Pages. Before you're fully awake (i.e. before the coffee or Diet Coke), sit down at your kitchen table and write, write, write until you've filled a couple of pages with your stream-of-consciousness ramblings.

Do these Morning Pages daily. They aren't meant to be re-read (and certainly not to be shared!). However, they're a great way to get the juices flowing without the glare of your internal editor...who is still fast asleep!

If this early morning stuff is repulsive, here's another idea. Take a look at <http://www.organizedwriter.com/draw.htm> and follow Julie Hood's DRAW technique. With a commitment of 20 minutes each day, you'll develop habits of Decluttering, Reading, Assessing, and of course, Writing.

Do you have self discipline strategies that work for you? Please email your ideas to me: jean@jeanpatrick.com. We'll do our best to publish them in the next newsletter.

Have a great summer!

Jean Patrick

SCBWI Regional Advisor - Dakotas

jean@jeanpatrick.com

First Line Contest...

Here's the first line. Can you identify the author and title of the work?

"Someone was looking at me, a disturbing sensation if you're dead."



First Line Contest (continued)

Know the answer? E-mail it to me at scbwidakotas@gmail.com. The first 3 e-mails I receive will be the winners and all winners' names will be put into a hat for a drawing for a prize at the UND/SCBWI Writers Conference October 13-14, 2006 in Grand Forks.

Good luck!

New Contest...

Favorite First Lines Contest.

Send us **your** favorite first line from a work of children's literature. Each month, we'll feature several of your choices in the newsletter. Everyone who submits will be entered in the drawing for a chance at a prize at the SCBWI Conference in Grand Forks, October 13-14, 2006.

Send your favorite first lines to: scbwidakotas@gmail.com

10 Questions for Janice Tingum

Janice Tingum is an SCBWI member from Grand Forks, ND

Q: Last year you won the Highlights fiction contest. Talk a little about that contest and your entry. What was your reaction when you won? How has it affected your life and your writing? What are your thoughts about entering writing contests?

A: It was truly an honor to win the award in 2005 from Highlights for Children. If I knew how to do cartwheels (and were a bit younger and more agile), I would have done a few right there in my living room! My story is entitled "Grandma's Purse" and is about a child who has heard that Grandma carries everything in her purse except the kitchen sink. The child tests this theory by asking Grandma for a pencil. As Grandma searches for the pencil, a wide array of unusual objects, such as a swimming pool, come out of the purse. The story is slated for publication in the December 2006 issue. Winning the Highlights award certainly gave me a boost of confidence in my writing, not to mention a great credential to cite when I query editors about writing projects. It has also resulted in some very nice publicity.

I haven't entered many contests and generally don't even consider them if there is an entry fee (either I'm cheap or just figure freelance writing doesn't pay enough to warrant entering a lot of fee-based contests). The exception to that is if I think the contest will teach me something. Last January, I entered a 24 Hour Short Story Contest sponsored by www.writersweekly.com (Winter 2006 contest). This is sometimes called "flash fiction". At the appointed time, all the contestants were given a topic and word count. The topic consisted of a brief paragraph that the writers had to touch on in some way. The contestants have 24 hours to write the story and e-mail it in. My story, entitled "Busted Bottles and Crushed Cans" won an Honorable Mention. It was a fun exercise that pushed me beyond my usual writing routine.



*Outside of a dog,
a book is man's
best friend. Inside
of a dog it's too
dark to read.*

*Groucho
Marx
comedian
with the Marx
Brothers (1890 -
1977)*

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10 Questions (continued)

For those interested in other free and fun writing contests, check out SCBWI at <http://www.scbwi.org/contest.htm>

Q: Describe any other books you have published or forthcoming.

A: My most recent projects have been developing the website Watercolor and More and the recent release of my eBook entitled "The Beginner's Watercolor eBook: Start Painting Today!" Information about the eBook can be found at <http://www.watercolorandmore.com> and it is available for purchase through Booklocker.com at <http://www.booklocker.com/books/2465.html>. I also publish a free weekly e-newsletter about painting. Interested subscribers can send an e-mail to Janice@watercolorandmore.com with the word "Subscribe" in the subject line.

I am also the author of a children's biography entitled "E.B. White: The Elements of a Writer" published in 1995 by Lerner Publications.

Q: What is/are your current projects?

A: A few months ago, I sold a humorous anecdote to Woman's World magazine about the time I inadvertently booked a hotel for my family vacation at a nudist beach in Florida. I don't know the publication date of that one yet. My current outstanding submissions are: (1) a picture book manuscript sent to a traditional publishing house, (2) a query for a non-fiction travel article sent to an online market; (3) a humorous essay submitted on spec (by request of editor following a query letter) to a Christian magazine for women; (4) greeting card text and photos submitted to an online market; (5) short article about selling real estate sent to a magazine editor; (6) article about painting e-mailed to online publisher.

Q: As an attorney and a mother, how do you balance your career, family and writing time? What tips can you offer other busy writers for finding time to write?

A: The #1 thing that helps me keep priorities straight is knowing that Jesus loves me. Proverbs 3:5 is a cornerstone in my life: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." I know that when I rest in God's great love and trust Him, it is easier to keep people, relationships, obligations, work, hobbies, and everything else in proper perspective.

The #2 thing that keeps me balanced is a supportive and loving husband and family. Kirk and I have three children; two will be in college next fall and one in middle school. While our family members have some interests that overlap, we give each other time, space and encouragement for individual pursuits. I really believe creativity thrives in a loving environment.

The #3 thing that has impacted my time management is the fact that I am able to do my legal work at home. I started doing this almost twenty years ago at the suggestion of an employer and appreciate the flexibility this arrangement provides.

Tips for finding writing time:

* Keep your writing tools accessible as much as possible. Whether it's a notebook in your car to jot ideas down or a laptop computer that's always on, writers will find it easier to find extra time to write if the tools are handy

(continued)

10 Questions (continued)

* If you aren't spending regular time each day writing, another tip is to make a practice of devoting at least 15 minutes each day toward your writing career. This might not initially mean writing for 15 minutes each day, but involving yourself in an activity related to your writing. Count the time you spend at the library perusing a magazine that may be a potential market. Or the time you spend surfing the net researching a topic you'd like to write about. As you become conscious each day of the time you are devoting to writing, it is likely you'll find more and more niches of time for writing.

Q: Which authors do you enjoy reading and why? What's your favorite children's book and why?

A: I primarily read non-fiction books and magazines, usually for purposes of research.

Adult fiction authors most recently read - John Grisham and Nicholas Sparks.

Favorite children's book authors: Jane Kurtz and Kate DeCamillo. Jane Kurtz because she is a very talented and knowledgeable author who generously shares her insights with other writers. Kate DeCamillo, whose book "The Tale of Despereaux" is wonderful.

Q: Where do you get your ideas? (I know it's an old chestnut, but still...)

A: Ideas are everywhere and I have hundreds of them. The trick is figuring out which ones are worth anything! The idea for "Grandma's Purse" arrived the day I glanced up from my computer and saw on the shelf a small black coin purse that used to belong to my grandmother. I kept it around as a little reminder of my grandparents, who are no longer living. As I looked at the coin purse, I recalled how Grandma used to have it stuffed with so much change it bulged. She would carry the coin purse inside of her much larger black purse. Grandpa loved poetry and used to challenge his grandkids to memorize the poems of William Wordsworth Longfellow and other famous poets. If we were able to recite a poem from memory, he'd give us a quarter. I memorized "Paul Revere's Ride" and "The Wreck of the Hesperus" and more with the enticement of a quarter. But sometimes, Grandpa was out of quarters and told us to get one from Grandma. Then Grandma would open up that big black purse and fish around till she found the bulging coin purse and paid me. As I sat at my computer, contemplating this memory, I figured the expression "she has everything in her purse except the kitchen sink" was true. Then my youngest son walked by and I wondered if he was familiar with that expression. Can you see the idea developing here? What if it were true? What if there was a Grandma out there who actually did have the kitchen sink in her purse? Wouldn't a young reader love that? My imagination took over the story from there.

Q: What tips would you offer our members about writing and getting published?

A: Write it, send it out, forget about it. Start a new manuscript and repeat. If a manuscript is accepted, it will be a great surprise because you forgot it was even out there. If a manuscript is rejected, you'll look at it and say "What, this old thing? I think it needs a little tune-up." Then revise it, send it out, and forget about it.

I hope this doesn't sound trite, but if you have enough manuscripts floating around in the land of publishing, you won't regard each one as a special baby and get pulled into depression if a rejection letter comes back. I allowed that depression from a rejection letter to do that to me one time. It was a very personal, nasty rejection letter that came in response to a proposal I had spent a lot of time developing. It took me a long time to feel confident about my writing after that happened. Since then, I've learned to treat my writing more objectively and always have multiple projects going.

(continued)

10 Questions (Continued)

*"Words, once they
are printed, have a
life of their own."*

Carol Burnett

*US actress &
comedienne*

Q: If you had all the time in the world to write, what's the one project you would devote that time to and why?

A: I'd probably get pretty bored if I was going to work on only one project. However, I've been thinking about the annual Delacorte Dell Yearling contest for a first middle-grade novel. I think middle school is a fun age to interact with and there are so many topics to explore.

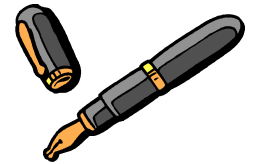
Q: Do you ever get writer's block? If so, how do you get past it?

A: Yes. I'd like to write another story in the humorous vein of "Grandma's Purse", but there's this enormous elephant standing in front of the story and all I can see is the elephant. So, in the meantime, I write other things, mostly non-fiction. I'm guessing that one day, the story I want to write will reveal itself, perhaps rather unexpectedly as "Grandma's Purse" did, and the elephant will wander off.

Q: Any other thoughts about writing you'd like to offer our readers.

A: If you haven't already made the Writer's Conference in Children's Literature at UND an annual event, plan to do so this year. The dates are October 13-14, 2006. I have learned so much from attending these conferences. It's a wonderful opportunity to listen to editors and published authors, learn about the publishing world, gain inspiration, network and get a manuscript critique.

For anyone interested in developing their own website, I recommend the free offer from Microsoft at <http://officelive.microsoft.com/> I use the Live Basics plan for Watercolor & More! and get a free website, free domain name and five free Hotmail accounts using my domain name. Can't beat that deal!



Featured Contest

Delacorte Press Books for Young Readers is proud to announce the Fifteenth Annual Delacorte Dell Yearling Contest for a First Middle-Grade Novel.

The prize of a book contract (on the Publisher's standard form) for a hardcover and a paperback edition, including an advance and royalties, will be awarded annually to encourage the writing of contemporary or historical fiction set in North America, for readers age 9-12. The award consists of \$1,500 in cash and a \$7,500 advance against royalties. Deadline June 30, 2006. For details, visit <http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/writingcontests/#middlegrade>

Want More Contest News?

Become a member of SCBWI and you'll enjoy the perks of membership, including the **DELUXE** version of our monthly chapter newsletter.

To become a member or for more information, visit: www.scbwi.org

Or email Jean Patrick at jean@jeanpatrick.com



*"Ideas are the
cheapest part of the
writing. They are free.
The hard part is what
you do with ideas
you've gathered."*

Jane Yolen

Featured Markets

innovativeKids

Based in Norwalk, Connecticut, innovativeKids publishes a variety of interactive books that educate and entertain. In 2005, innovativeKids saw a 52% growth in trade sales. In 2006, the company plans to publish 42 new titles - a 100% increase over 2005. Plans for 2007 include the release of more than 50 new books.

From *PW Children's Bookshelf* (5/4/06)

Charlesbridge Publishing

This summer, Charlesbridge Publishing is emphasizing introducing "bridge books" (or transitional readers) for children ages six to 12. (Previously, the publisher has focused exclusively on picture books.) Charlesbridge plans to grow from 24 to 30 books a year to 30 to 36 in 2007.

PW Children' Bookshelf (5/18/06)

Want More Market News?

Become a member of SCBWI and you'll enjoy the perks of membership, including the **DELUXE** version of our monthly chapter newsletter.

To become a member or for more information, visit: www.scbwi.org

or email Jean Patrick at jean@jeanpatrick.com

Calendar

July 7, 2006 Deadline for submissions to North Dakota State Fair Writing Contest. For information, visit <http://www.ndstatefair.com/competition/index.asp?category=writing&Submit=go>

August 4-7, 2006 35th annual SCBWI Summer Conference. Los Angeles, CA

For details, visit www.scbwi.org

September 22-24, 2006 South Dakota Festival of the Book. Sioux Falls, SD

October 13-14, 2006. UND/SCBWI Writers Conference in Children's Literature. Grand Forks, ND. (Manuscripts will be due in early September. Start writing!)

*"We do not write
because we want to;
we write because we
have to."*

*W. Somerset
Maugham*

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.scbwidakotas.org

Interesting Web Sites...

www.scbwi.org Check out the resources available for writers and illustrators on the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators website. SCBWI members can find hot-off-the-press marketing news by logging in, clicking "For Our Members," and clicking on "Publishing Resources."

www.verlakay.com Verla Kay is a highly-respected children's author. Her website is full of resources.

www.greetingcardwriting.candyham.com Have you ever considered writing greeting cards? This website has plenty of tips and markets.

Editorial Information

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Regional Advisor: Jean Patrick jean@jeanpatrick.com

Call For Submissions...

Have you read a book (fiction or nonfiction) that has inspired you to write or illustrate? Do you know of a great book about the craft of writing or illustrating for children? Tell us about it. Perhaps we'll include your recommendation in the next newsletter.

Everyone who submits a book recommendation will have their names put in a drawing for a prize at the Fall SCBWI/UND conference, October 13-14.

Send submissions to scbwidakotas@gmail.com

Disclaimer: SCBWI-Dakotas claims no responsibility for the accuracy, validity, or outcome of any contests, market information, events, etc. This newsletter is a service to pass on information: you are responsible for investigating before participating.

