

SCRIBBLERS SCOOP

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Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles Educating and Inspiring Writers on the Road to Publication

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November 2012

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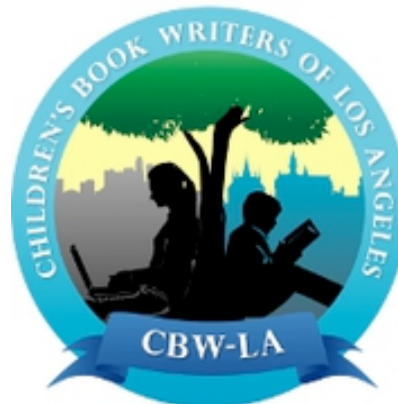


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Coming February 2013:

- *CBW-LA Member Spotlight*
- *Agent Spotlight*
- *Best Practices: Social Networking*
- *Ask the Expert*
- *Advertising Opportunities*
- *Query Sample*

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello, and welcome to the first edition of Scribblers Scoop, the official newsletter of the non-profit Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles!

The newsletter will be published quarterly, and filled with events, news and information that you will not want to miss.

In this issue, we introduce you to the CBW-LA Board of Directors, give you a glimpse into this past year's valuable workshops, share the latest writing news, and welcome you to pick up the pen and go!

Please enjoy your complimentary copy of our newsletter, and share it with family and friends. Archives will always be available on our website.

We welcome editorial submissions, comments, questions and suggestions. Write us -
CBWLANewsletter@gmail.com.

Bonne lecture!

Alana Garrigues
CBW-LA Scrivener



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Two years ago, I began my journey to publication in earnest. I read tons of writing books, and attended many schmoozes and conferences. I learned that although writing was a solitary affair, it didn't have to be a lonely journey.

I not only craved the constant company of other writers, I needed it. I began looking for writing groups closer to where I lived, hoping to find other writers who shared my desire for exchanging valuable writing information and inspiration. I found a few who seemed interesting and helpful, but I wanted something more focused on writing for kids.

I also wanted a group that would teach me more about the craft of writing, without requiring a lot of money. I longed for writing classes, workshops, creative writing and critique sessions, but couldn't afford to take an MFA (Master of Fine Arts) in writing.

Novelist Toni Morrison once said, "If there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." I thought the same idea would apply to a writing group. Since I couldn't find a nearby writing group that answered all of my needs, I decided to organize one, and the [Torrance Children's Books Writing Group](#) was born.

I started out with eight members, and a few small class-type sessions. I had no idea the group would grow this much in so many ways.

In two and a half years, we've had 37 meetups ranging from creative writing sessions, and critique sessions, to valuable writing workshops and classes with wonderful speakers.

Today we are known as the [Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles](#), or CBW-LA.

Our group has grown to 263 members, and we are now officially recognized as a Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation.

Our group's rapid growth is thanks in big part to our selfless officers, who have volunteered their time, money, and brainpower into making our group a success.

Our group also has you, our enthusiastic and active members, to thank for its continued improvement. Your own contributions of time and funds keep us on track, and help us expand our mission and vision.

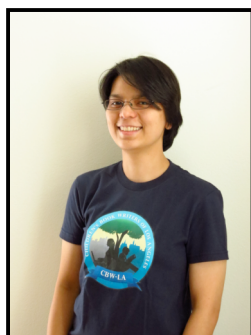
The road to publication is long and difficult, but thanks to CBW-LA, it doesn't have to be lonely or confounding. We're here to make sure that you have all the knowledge and support you'll need to achieve your writing goals.

As this year comes to an end and a new one begins, let's continue our publishing journey together and work as a family to make our writing dreams come true.

~ Nutschell



MEET YOUR CBW-LA DIRECTORS



**Nutschell Anne Windsor |
Founder and President**

Nutschell (pronounced new-shell and not nut-shell) is a Middle Grade/Young Adult Fantasy Writer who hails from the Philippines and now lives in sunny Los

Angeles. She is an SCBWI-L.A. Board member, and an active member of the blogging community. You can find her sharing writing tips, techniques, and reporting on various writing events at www.thewritingnut.com. Nutschell founded the Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles in 2010 with the simple hope of sharing writing knowledge with fellow children's book writers in the area. She graduated from the University of the Philippines with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, and later on became a High School English Teacher. Currently, she works as an accounting clerk for a wholesale company in Beverly Hills. All these experiences have turned her into a detail-oriented, organized planner and she uses these skills to teach and facilitate the workshops and mini-class sessions for the group. A Jane-of-all-Trades, Nutschell's interests include photography, traveling, sketching, playing the guitar and drums, playing basketball, badminton, billiards, and singing in the shower. She also practices the Filipino martial art of Escrima, and bakes yummy desserts.

JUMP ON THE CBW-LA SOCIAL MEDIA BANDWAGON!



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[www.facebook.com/
groups/273116729415579/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/273116729415579/)

Lucy Ravitch | Secretary

Lucy lives in the Los Angeles area and is a stay-at-home mom who loves to read and write children's picture books. She uses her Elementary Education degree when she is thinking of new topics to write about. You will find her writing picture books or board books with various math concepts sprinkled throughout her manuscript. She has been a member of SCBWI since early 2010 and a member of CBW-LA since June 2010 before it was officially named CBW-LA. She is the Vice President (AKA Second Scribe) where she helps the Head Scribe, Nutschell, with planning and logistics of the group meetups. Lucy also loves to hike, play tennis, do quilting projects, and spend quality "goofy time" with her kids and husband.



**Lena Chen | Treasurer,
Webmaster**

Lena grew up and lives in South Bay, Los Angeles. She received her Bachelor of Science in Business Information

Systems from DeVry University. Currently, she works as IT Support for a lithium ion battery manufacturer in Sylmar, California. Even though Lena is not a writer, she enjoys listening to audiobooks on her long commute to work. During her spare time, she loves outdoor activities, adventures, meditation, meeting new people, attending book signings, and spending time with friends and family.



Tiffani Barth | Publicity

Tiffani joined CBW-LA to find support and encouragement in the lonely world of writing, and is currently the Publicity Coordinator for the group. She is also an active member

of SCBWI. She writes middle grade and young adult fantasy in order to cope with the stresses of reality, although she often finds more reality in imaginary worlds and situations than she usually anticipates. When not writing, she can be spotted hiking, eating ice cream, and brainstorming ideas for the next blockbuster youtube video. She currently resides in North Hollywood, CA where she works in television production.



Alana Garrigues | Newsletter Editor

Alana is a Redondo Beach-based freelance journalist who also dabbles in picture books and writerize, an educational writing prompt blog. Her non-writing time is filled with

parenting young identical twin girls, daydreams and as much travel as she can manage. A Portland, Oregon native, Alana lived in Seattle, Boston, DC, and New York, with brief stints in Germany and Italy, before settling in lovely So Cal in summer 2008. Alana joined CBW-LA in September 2010 and is the group's Stationer (Newsletter Editor). She loves the diversity and knowledge of the group's members and always learns something new and fascinating at the meetings. Since Alana feels claustrophobic squeezed into a genre box, she is trying to forge ahead bridging the gap between journalism, picture books, literary fiction and blogging. It is surely a familiar plight for many writers!

CBW-LA NEWS

On August 24, 2012, the Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles was awarded 501(c)3 status by the IRS as a non-profit public charity. This non-profit status will permit us to extend annual membership opportunities to writers, agents and editors. It also allows us to fundraise on behalf of the club to raise money for even more training and educational opportunities for you.

The Board of Directors met on May 12, 2012 and again on October 27, 2012 to discuss the mission, vision and purpose of the organization and plan upcoming events. At those meetings, the five officers discussed our non-profit status and voted to approve the by-laws. We also talked at length about membership levels.

Beginning in January, the club will offer annual memberships for \$30 and two-year memberships for \$50, payable to CBW-LA. Discounted memberships will be available for professional affiliates – agents, editors and publishers. Membership dues will support the club's administrative fees, facility rental and workshop expenses, and members will be eligible for workshop discounts and free critique sessions.

Guests may continue to access our calendar and quarterly newsletter and attend events at a non-member rate.

Look for complete details in a January 2013 Scribblers Scoop Extra!



BEST PRACTICES: CRITIQUE SESSIONS

How many copies of my work should I bring to my critique? Is there a preferred format? Will I need a thick skin? Can I respond to critiques? What if I disagree? What if I agree and want more feedback? Will someone steal my idea? How can I best offer advice? What makes me qualified to critique someone else's work?

For many of our members, the CBW-LA critiques may be the first view into how a critique session is run. Even experienced critique group members may have more experience at retreats or with an online group that in person explicitly for a critique session. We're here to answer all your burning critique questions. Read on for a peek at the CBW-LA Critique Guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CRITIC

- Keep the book type (chapter / beginning-reader / picture / how-to / middle-grade or young adult fiction) as well as the genre (fantasy, historical, romance, literary, etc) in mind as you make your comments. Refer to the guideline/ hand-outs for each specific book type as you write your notes.
- Write down your comments. Take note of the following elements: opening/ hook, characterization, conflict, theme, dialogue, voice, language, rhythm/pace, plot, setting, ending, emotional effect of the writing sample on you as reader, as well as what things made an impression on you.
- Always start with something positive. Point out what the writer is doing well. Maybe he/she has a great story idea. Maybe the characters are lovable. Maybe the description of the setting is very vivid. Find something good to say about the work and mean it. Praising the writer for a good element in his/her writing will make him/her more receptive to your feedback.
- Critique the writing, not the writer. Learn to give feedback in a polite manner. Say "The story gets interesting on page two..." instead of "I don't think the story should start here..." Say "The story is a bit confusing because..." instead of "You are a confusing writer."
- Speak from your own perspective. Let the writer know how you felt/responded as you read the piece. For example, "I had trouble following the story goal." Or "I felt like the dialogue could be shortened."
- Keep your criticism within the scope of the given sample. Do not assume where the piece is going and criticize the author based on these assumptions. Instead, focus on giving feedback about the chapter you've read.
- Be honest with your feedback. Don't be afraid to speak out about a weakness in the writing because you don't want to hurt the writer's feelings. This can only defeat the purpose of a critique session.
- Be specific about your comments. For example, don't just say: "The characterization seems flat"; instead give specific suggestions as to how the writer can make his/her characters come alive.
- Subjective feedback such as "I like the main character" or "I don't like the main character" is to be expected, but the writer needs to know why you like or don't like the character.
- Give the kind of critique that you would like to get. Consider what impact your choice of words or tone will have on the writer you are critiquing. Offer advice that will help the writer improve his/her writing, and not something that would discourage him/her.



GUIDELINES FOR THE WRITER

- Follow the standard format for manuscript submission: Use Courier/Times New Roman Font. 1 inch margin on all sides, Double-Spaced, Slug line on left hand corner: Name/ TITLE. Ex. Anderson/ BRED IN THE BONE. Right hand margin on same line, page number.
- Make sure your manuscript is as error-free as possible. Grammatical, punctuation or typographical errors might distract the critics from giving more helpful feedback about your story elements such as your plot, characters, settings, etc.
- Listen to all critiques. You can learn from everyone's comments even while they are discussing someone else's writing sample. Take note of feedback you think you can apply in your own manuscript.
- Listen to the criticism silently and with an open mind. Avoid interrupting the critics as they give their feedback, and try not to be defensive when it comes to your writing. Instead, approach their feedback with an impartial and analytical eye, and a thankful heart.
- Take down notes. It shows that you are receptive to criticism and keeps you busy so that you will be less likely to defend your work. Moreover, recording the comments helps you focus on what story elements you need to fix when you are rewriting/editing your manuscript.
- Keep your emotions in check. Be receptive to all feedback—whether they are positive or negative. Some comments and suggestions might be hard to take, and you may want to speak up and explain your intentions. Avoid doing so. Remember that the critiques are so you can improve your writing, and not because you want approval for your work.
- When every critic has had his/her turn, you may ask questions to clarify points made and comments given, or ask about a specific element that concerns you. For example: Was the pace of my story too slow or too fast? Was the dialogue realistic? Were you able to relate to my characters?
- Not all comments/suggestions may be valid or helpful. You may ignore comments you feel are unjustified. If two or more people agree on a point, it might be wise to try and address it. Study your notes when you get home. In the end, you are the only one who can decide how your story should change.

JOIN A REGULAR CRITIQUE GROUP

We all know how important critiques are. Getting feedback for our works in progress is a valuable part of our publishing journey.

Many members have emailed their need for more regular critique sessions, aside from the one we facilitate every other month.

Last year, we asked interested members to fill out a critique group form and submit it to us. Only 13 members submitted their forms. We strove to divide these groups according to genre, location and preferred form of critique. Some of these groups did meet up, while others couldn't find a common schedule.

We're in the process of trying to organize more regular critique groups for all interested members, but for that we need more information.

If you are interested in joining a regular critique group, please click on this link: <http://www.meetup.com/CBW-LA/files/> to download the Critique Group Form.

Fill out the form and email your answers to cbwla2012@gmail.com.



2012 WORKSHOP RECAP

In addition to bimonthly critique sessions, CBW-LA members were treated to workshops and panels highlighting five published authors – Kathie Fong Yoneda, Pamela Jaye Smith, Leigh Bardugo, Jennifer Bosworth and Christopher Lynch - and two workshops hosted by founder Nutschell Windsor.

Topics included how to set writing goals, a creative writing session, lessons in self-publishing, myth, magic and madness in the children's market and how to avoid publishing pitfalls.

MISS A MEETING?

No worries!
CBW-LA members can purchase
workshop notes, presentations
and all handouts
for just \$5.00 per event.

CONTACT CBWLA2012@GMAIL.COM
TO ARRANGE PAYMENT AND
ELECTRONIC DELIVERY.

Summaries of all events since the group's inception can be found online at www.thewritingnut.com/torrance-childrens-book-writing-group/, but read on for a teaser!

GET ON YOUR WRITE PATH: PLAN YOUR WRITING GOALS AND CAREER JANUARY 14, 2012



The timely Write Path workshop took 20 attendees on a path to publication from New Year's Resolution to cold, hard facts and a contract to one another to spend time writing.

Nutschell first invited participants to visualize their own publishing contract, book signing, cover and autograph. By visualizing a potential future, participants could harness that vision and take the proper steps to making it into reality. Nutschell drew a parallel to chess champion Gary Kasparov, a man who spent nine years in USSR prison, accused of being a US spy. With nothing to

do and no one to talk to, he played chess in his mind to pass the time. Upon his release, he began to enter contests and eventually became the best chess player in the world.

Possible future in mind, Nutschell dove into the world of publishing and the pros and cons for both traditional publishing and self-publishing. She talked about the reality of agents and editors, query letters, book sales and marketing, and publishing timelines.

She then asked each participant to admit to themselves and the world that they were writers, published or not, and make a commitment. Not hobbyists or thinkers or people who liked the idea of writing, but real bona fide writers with a contract between themselves and their writing dreams. To round out the meeting, Nutschell advised participants on how to set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound) writing goals. Additional details at: www.thewritingnut.com/tcbwg/january-14-2012-22nd-meetup-write-path-plan-writing-goals-writing-career/



CREATIVE WRITING SESSION: FIND YOUR VOICE, STYLE AND LEARN THE ART OF DESCRIPTION MARCH 10, 2012

“Practice makes perfect. We know this to be true about every skill. The only way we can develop our writing skills is to keep on practicing. I’m not just talking about writing one novel after another, or writing picture book after picture book. I’m talking about honing our craft by focusing on the act of writing itself.”

So began a three-hour dive into a day of fun, creative writing with children’s book writers. To kick it off and get the juices flowing, workshop attendees were asked to free write for five minutes, inspired by a hidden question picked out of a box as they arrived at the workshop.



Nutschell then spoke to the difference between sound, style, tone and voice, referring back to Noah Lukeman’s First Five Pages. According to Lukeman, **sound** is technical and refers to basic sentence construction. He said sound issues in manuscripts may relate to sentence construction, repetition, alliteration and resonance. **Style** takes sound to the next level, looking to the intention behind the sentence construction. Whereas sound is grammatical, style is artistic. **Tone**, according to Lukeman, refers to the voice behind the writing. There are no technical parameters for tone, which can be viewed in a highly subjective manner. For the purposes of the workshop, Nutschell defined voice as a combination of tone and style.



Participants examined worksheets containing paragraphs taken from popular books to see if they could identify the book as well as the to

To show writers how easily different people could convey and interpret the same story, Nutschell asked everyone to Paraphrase one of the paragraphs from the worksheet. Workshop attendees went around the room to share their raw work, without any criticism or editing advice.

After appropriate oohs, aahs and giggles, Nutschell led attendees on a Character Chat exercise, asking writers to put a lead character in their novel or picture book in a very unfamiliar situation – i.e. a billionaire eating SPAM or a preschool teacher in a prison yard. She then led everyone back to the tone worksheets and asked them to rewrite one paragraph three ways for a Many Moods exercise – infuriated, broken-hearted and scared stiff.

To round out the workshop, Nutschell led writers on a path down the Art of Description, looking to an article by author Anne Marble for advice. Marble advised avoiding huge lumps of description, sprinkling it throughout the story instead. She recommended tapping into all five senses, avoiding adjectives and using strong, active, concrete writing words to tell a story. Rather than run, say chase, or gallop, or race, or hurdle – it puts the story and the character’s intentions into more context.

In order to brainstorm beyond normal verbs and descriptions, Nutschell instructed participants on how to complete several description exercises, including word pools and word alchemy, and handed out worksheets full of descriptive verbs and nouns. Complete descriptions of writing exercises, as well as a list of resources for the writing prompts, tone and voice designations and descriptive storytelling can be found at: www.thewritingnut.com/ramblings/march-10-2012-24th-meetup-creative-writing-session-find-voice-style-learn-art-description/.



MYTH, MAGIC AND MADNESS: WRITING FOR THE CHILDREN'S MARKET WITH HOLLYWOOD SCREENWRITING CONSULTANTS KATHIE FONG YONEDA AND PAMELA JAYE SMITH JULY 26, 2012

Summary: There are a lot of myths out there about how to become successful. One thing we do know is that following the myths can enrich your stories. Everyone agrees that success requires a bit of magic, both in your marketing and in your stories. The madness is just an integral part of the marketing, but if you know what's ahead you can better navigate the choppy waters of the Children's marketplace for books, films, tv series, and web series.



Published authors and veterans of the entertainment industry, Kathie Fong Yoneda and Pamela Jaye Smith met with CBW-LA members at Barnes & Noble on 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica to present their individual top 10 challenges that writers face to conquer the myth, magic and madness of writing for children.

[Pamela Jaye Smith](#) discussed the use of myths and symbols as a way to deepen the layers of our stories. She discussed ten important questions for us to ask ourselves as we develop or revise our short stories/novels/scripts:

- 1 – Have I aligned my story with a universal Mythic Theme?
- 4 – Have I aligned both Protagonist and Antagonist with an identifiable but not stereotypical Inner Drive (chakra) and how do they differ from each other?
- 5 – How does my Protagonist change and grow, as expressed by their arc from one Inner Drive (chakra) to another?
- 6 – What internal problems does my Protagonist have?
- 8 – Is my main symbol expressing an emotion, a situation or a concept?

Pamela said that symbols in stories are used to express emotion, tell something about the situation or show a concept. As it relates to children's literature, she gave the example of Harry Potter's lightning scar. Lightning, linked to mythological gods such as Thor, and Zeus, has long been a symbol of the connection between the deities and humanity, heaven to earth. JK Rowling's decision to put a lightning scar on Harry's forehead implies so much more, and is a more effective symbol of his character than say a circle or a dot on his forehead.

[Kathie Fong Yoneda](#) posed her own 10 Question Challenge for writers, based on her book *The Script Selling Game*.

- 2 – Does my dialogue add to the personality of each character and support the plot points of my story?
- 4 – Does each scene / segment have a distinct purpose for being included?
- 5 – Have I paid attention to details by doing proper research?
- 8 – Can I summarize my story in one or two sentences?
- 10 – Is this a story that I love?

Kathie spoke to the importance of well-drawn secondary characters, and noted that one editor she spoke with told her one of the common downfalls of a book is that the secondary characters are weak and not memorable. Nodding again to Harry Potter, Kathy pointed out the importance of Ron and Hermione's perspectives in telling the whole story.

(Excerpts from <http://www.thewritingnut.com/events/july-26-2012-30th-meetup-myth-magic-madness-writing-childrens-market/> - click to read the authors' Top 10 lists in their entirety and the full meetup summary by Nutschell Windsor.)



WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN: AVOIDING PUBLISHING PITFALLS FROM DRAFT TO DEAL WITH AUTHORS LEIGH BARDUGO AND JENNIFER BOSWORTH AUGUST 18, 2012

On a summer day at Mysterious Galaxy Bookstore in Redondo Beach, CBW-LA members packed in to listen to Leigh Bardugo, author of [Shadow and Bone](#) and Jennifer Bosworth, author of [Struck](#), discuss common mistakes made by first-time authors and the things they wish they'd done differently on the road to publication.



Topics included: how to build a better first draft, balancing critique and community with the integrity of personal voice, researching and approaching agents, what writers need to expect when they're on submission, and how to evaluate their publishing deals. They also shed light on what happens after the sale and discussed what writers may want to know as they work with editors and publicists to polish and promote their books. Armed with several pages of handouts for attendees, Jennifer and Leigh emphasized the importance of understanding your story idea, and considering the audience you wish to write for.

They also stated the importance of being able to sum up your story in one sentence. They discussed the value of loglines, and the difference between high concept loglines and regular loglines.

Attendees volunteered their loglines. The speakers helped them figure out if their loglines contained high concept ideas, and even helped them improve and strengthen their one-sentence summaries. After helping the attendees with their loglines, the speakers discussed the two kinds of writing: "plotting" and "pantsing," and the pros and cons between the two. Jennifer and Leigh are polar opposites in their writing styles, and they were perfect examples of how different plotters are from pantsers.

Leigh is a plotter and admitted that she would not be able to sit down and write without some semblance of an outline. The wonderful benefit of being a plotter is that the revisions are less painful because you already know the structure of your story. One of the cons of plotting, however, is that there is no perfect plan, and sometimes too much research can bog a writer down.



Jennifer is a pantsier and loves the process of discovery and of surprising herself. One of the downsides she mentioned was that without an outline, it was easy for her to get lost in the story.

They then moved on to highlight the importance of critiques, noting an agent or editor should never be the first to see a manuscript. Once the manuscript has been critiqued and edited, Leigh and Jennifer talked about how to find an agent. Leigh obtained hers through a query letter, while Jennifer pitched her story to an agent in person. They gave specific tips on how to make the pitch (i.e. do your research, be excited about your book, keep it short whether speaking or writing), and what to ask when an agent bites to make sure the contract will be mutually beneficial for author and agent (i.e. What kind of revisions do you have in mind? Do you have clients I could speak to? If the book doesn't sell right away, what would be your approach?).

(Excerpts from: www.thewritingnut.com/events/august-18-2012-31st-meetup-avoiding-publishing-pitfalls-draft-deal/. Request a copy of the handouts from CBWLA2012@gmail.com for \$5.00.)



AUTHOR CHRIS LYNCH ON SELF-PUBLISHING OCTOBER 13, 2012



What happens when an author elects to skip the lengthy traditional query, agent, editor process and self-publish in hours? How much time can a writer write when they manage book sales and marketing? What are the options for self-publishing, and what are the costs involved? Are there different formats for print on demand, nook, kindle and iBooks? Will bookstores carry a self-published book and participate in author signings? How can a self-published author stand out from the crowd? How much should a new author charge for a novel? What are the hurdles and complications for first-time self-published authors? What are the major pros and cons of self-publishing?

[Christopher J. Lynch](#), author of the mystery novel [One-Eyed Jack](#) featuring a professional blackmailer, shared his experiences with a group of 25 CBW-LA members at Torrance Municipal Airport. In three hours' time, Chris covered all of the questions above, and recommended when to save and when to spend money to pay an expert. Hire a marketing manager? Save your dough. Design your own book cover? Spend \$50 on a professional. He also suggested paying for a professional line editor and a format

In May of 2012, Chris finished the first draft of his debut crime novel. By June 13, he had it revised, edited, formatted, and published as both an e-book, and a "Print on Demand" on both Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Since then, he has done four author signings, and had it placed in Pages Bookstore, Small World Books, Apostrophe Books and Frog Books. He also done numerous guest blogs, author interviews, and promo pieces.

It has not been an easy task, Chris said, as he had to become his own bookkeeper, promoter and business manager. He manages print on demand book orders, sales to bookstores, sales tax, speaker schedules and book signings, but for him, the speed of publication (e-books can be available in less than eight hours!) and ability to maintain creative control outweighed the intense work of the business side of things.

Chris began his talk with a view of his [YouTube book trailer](#). To pump up readers and inspire TV producers, he cast, starred in and directed a four-minute trailer about the story, featuring a tryst between a married woman and her lover caught on tape by blackmailer Jack. It was a fun visual representation of the book, and an intriguing new way to market books in the 21st century.

Chris talked in depth about sales for self-published authors, and said that the average self-published book sells about 100-150 copies. There are exceptions – Fifty Shades of Grey was originally self-published and then picked up by Vintage Books – but those are abnormal. Successful self-published authors know how to promote and work sales. Through online sales, book festivals, blog tours and signings at indie booksellers, Chris has sold around a book a day since June. His profit margins range from \$0.30 for an e-book (which he priced at \$0.99) to just over \$6.00 for a print-on-demand book sold directly to the reader. He considered one sale a day a good rate for a debut novel, saying that after five months of consistent sales, he could surpass average self-published book sales.

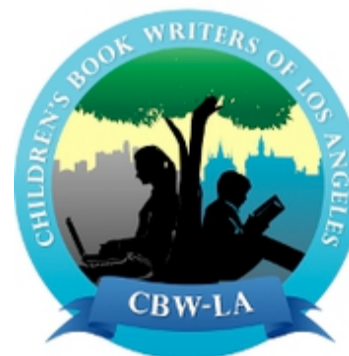
Chris recommended a few ways to hook readers. He said that self-published authors tend to have more of a following by writing novels in series, so he is now working on the second book in what will be the One Eyed Jack trilogy. He also recommended free PDF copies of a novel's first chapter for anyone interested in a preview. That way, if a person likes the beginning, they will be satisfied customers with their purchase and follow the author. And, an author can pique a reader's interest with the first chapter of a new novel just prior to its release, in order to build excitement. For more information about Chris' talk, visit www.thewritingnut.com/tcbwg/october-13-2012-33rd-meetup-author-chris-lynch-selfpublishing/.



2012-13 CALENDAR

November 3 – Critique Session
January 12 – Kickstart Your Writing Career! + Lunch Social
February 9 – Critique Session
March 9 – CBW-LA Anthology: Creative Writing Seminar
April 13 – Critique Session

**Dates subject to change according to facility availability. Once an event is posted on Meetup calendar, the date has been confirmed.*



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Reach more than 200 local Los Angeles writers and get a link on our website!

RATES

1/4 page ad = \$50 / year
1/2 page ad = \$75 / year
full page ad = \$100 / year
(1 year = 4 issues)

SPECIALS

CBW-LA member discount: \$20 off
Author promo: 1/4 page ad = \$25 / year

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TO RESERVE YOUR AD SPACE NOW.

Also ahead in 2013 –

Queries, Loglines and Blurbs Workshop,
YA Panel with Samantha Combs and
Carmen Rodriguez,
Workshop with Author Jen Bosworth,
HUGE Regional CBW-LA Event on June 8
... and much more!

CALLING ALL ILLUSTRATORS AND GRAPHIC ARTISTS!

CBW-LA is hosting a postcard design contest.
We need a postcard for promotional purposes to distribute in local businesses and at writing events.

Wow us!

Remember our audience – children's book writers – and get creative!!
Send your submission to CBWLANewsletter@gmail.com by February 15, and the board will review all submissions and select a winner this spring.

The winner will receive our eternal praise and gratitude and promotion as the winning designer listed on the printed postcard, but the contest has no monetary value.

Send an email of your intent to enter the contest to receive your copy of the CBW-LA logo.



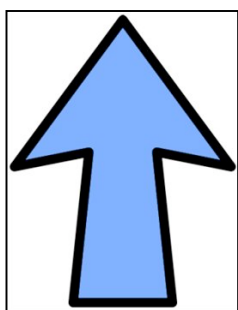
CHILDREN'S MARKET IN THE NEWS

Got children's market news tips? E-mail CBWLANewsletter@gmail.com!

INDUSTRY NEWS

Children's Book Sales Rise in First Half of 2012

Good news for children's book writers. Parents and kids are reading, and they are willing to pay for to own both electronic and hard copies.



The Association of American Publishers reported strong children's sales in the first half of 2012, according to [an article in Publishers Weekly](#).

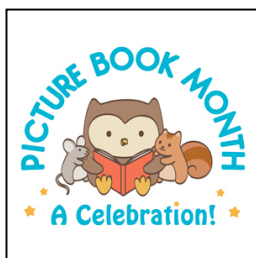
Book sales for 21 publishers reporting their earnings from January to June to the AAP were up 40.7% over last year, bringing in an estimated \$845 million dollars total over the six-month period.

Technology led the statistical growth charge, with children's e-book sales growing by 251.5% over last year, earning an extra \$100.3 million dollars for a total of \$146.4 million dollars. That is equal to just over 17% market share.

However, hardcover books continued to be earn the largest piece of the children's book pie, bringing in \$387.4 million dollars the first half of this year and representing more than 45% of children's book market share. That's a 37.1% increase over hardcover sales from January – June 2011. Board books, representing the smallest market share, grew by 12.7% to \$22.6 million dollars in sales, while paperbacks grew 12.9% to \$266.4 million dollars.

PICTURE BOOK NEWS

November is Picture Book Month



The American Association of School Librarians announced they would partner with author and storyteller Dianne de Las Casas to celebrate the second annual Picture Book

Month the entire month of November 2012.

An international literacy initiative to celebrate the print picture book in an increasingly digital age, www.picturebookmonth.com will feature

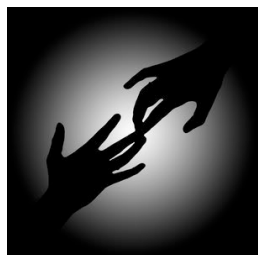
essays from thought leaders in the children's literature community with a daily post throughout the month of November by "Picture Book Champions."

AASL President Susan Ballard said in a statement, "AASL is pleased to partner with Picture Book Month and to help highlight the value of connecting people of all ages ... Picture books help to engage and inspire all of us, but in particular they introduce children to the power of visual story-telling and the marvels of human imaginations and creativity."



MIDDLE GRADE NEWS

Just Let Go: Don't Parent Your Characters



Sue Bradford Edwards told Writer's Digest readers in November 2011 the best way to create compelling characters, conflicts and plots for the children's market is to quit

parenting their characters.

The timeless advice is of particular value to MG authors whose characters are stuck in that awkward tween angst of defining one's self apart from one's parents, while craving the comfort and assurance of earlier childhood. Allowing the character to struggle through bad friends and humorous mishaps without

judgment could be just what the doctor ordered to fix a flailing manuscript.

Edwards recommends five specific steps in her article, and elaborates nicely with quotes from authors and real world examples. She writes:

- Lose the parents to advance the plot.
- Use adult characters as obstacles.
- Let your protagonist solve problems.
- Keep kid characters real.
- Give your characters room to grow.

CBW-LA members can [visit Writer's Digest to see the full article](#) for expanded advice and samples.

YOUNG ADULT NEWS

Coveted Adult Demographic Creeps into YA Audience

Bowker Market Research [released information in September 2012](#) that shows more than half of all consumers of books classified YA are older than 18 years old, with 28% of YA readers in the 30 to 44 year old demographic.

Largely thanks to The Hunger Games trilogy, Twilight series and Harry Potter series, adult readers mentioned more than 220 YA titles they purchased for themselves.

"The investigation into who is reading YA books began when we noticed a disparity between the number of YA e-books being purchased and the relatively low number of kids who claim to read e-books," said Kelly Gallagher, Vice-President of Bowker Market Research. "The extent and age breakout of adult consumers of these works was surprising. And while the trend is influenced to some extent by the popularity of *The Hunger Games*, our data shows it's a much

larger phenomenon than readership of this single series."

According to Boyker, the adult consumers of YA books are some of the most coveted consumers, as they tend to be loyal, committed, socially active early adopters.

The news may not come as a surprise to YA writers, who tend to consume YA fiction as they write it, but it is good news for the longevity and power of the genre, and the cross-promotional possibilities. The 30 to 44 year old demographic represents the readers who are willing to buy a book early and light a fire under a good story with word of mouth. These are the readers that blog and belong to book clubs and tweet and Facebook about their finds. They are also the type of readers who will attend movies and sequels about their favorite characters, leading to box office potential.



QUARTERLY QUESTION

This month we asked our board members: Why do you write for kids?

"I don't write for children intentionally. It's what happens to come out of me. Stories and adventures featuring young characters fill my mind almost every waking moment. I continue to relate to children as I keep learning and growing every day, still reaching for that future me when everything will come to a happily ever after finale. Writing is my own version of time traveling. It takes me back to an innocent time filled with light and a sense of wonder, where anything is possible and magic is real. It's a time that defines the type of person I will become, when there are so many paths to follow and places to explore. This time exists in a special place in my heart and my desire to revisit it comes as no surprise. It's an exciting adventure for me to return there, although I'm starting to wonder if I ever truly left."

– **Tiffani Barth**

"Growing up in the Philippines, I never went anywhere for the summer. While well off classmates were enjoying a vacation in one of the many beach islands, I was stuck at home with my younger cousins. Some summers, I got to stay with my grandmother in the boondocks.

In both situations, I was left to my own devices. Having no internet, no good shows on TV (or no TV—as was the case when I stayed with my grandma), and no friends my age to play with, I had to find various ways of entertaining myself.

Books became my constant companion and most faithful friend. And although I never physically went anywhere, my summers felt packed with adventure. I sailed down a river on a makeshift raft, got shipwrecked on an island, went on a treasure hunt, and even faced down a variety of monsters and aliens—all thanks to the stories I read.

Books not only entertained me. They also helped me through the toughest times of my life, taught me valuable life lessons, increased my knowledge, widened my imagination, and inspired me to reach for the stars.

I'm all grown up now, but I still read the same kind of stories that held me captive when I was young. And now I write them, too.

I write children's books, because I love reading children's books. I write for the inner child in myself, the one who never grew up.

I write for other children, too. I write so they may have life-changing adventures without having to come to physical harm, so they may learn the value of following one's heart, so they may widen their perspectives and learn to look at life from all different angles, so they may be inspired to reach for their dreams; and so they may know that they are never, ever alone.

Most of all, I write for the kids in this generation—the ones who are in a constant storm of sensory details, who are deluged with technological distractions, and social expectations. I write in the hopes that in their quiet moments, they might pick up my book and for once, rely on the power of their imagination to take them places." – **Nutschell Windsor**

February's Quarterly Question:

What children's book turned you on to reading, and why?

Submit your response to CBWLNewsletter@gmail.com to be published in our February newsletter! Please include your first name, last initial and city in your reply.



BRAIN BOOST

Quarterly Writing Prompt for Children's Book Authors

There may be no children's literature more classic or ingrained in our minds than a fairy tale.

Walt Disney borrowed ageless tales of hope, magic, love and despair and turned them into a visual empire, but the Brothers Grimm were some of the first to put the oral tales down on paper. Often more grotesque than Disney, they have been published for hundred of years, and continue to fill the shelves of bookstores today.

Tap into the brilliance of fairy tales, and exercise your children's book writer prowess with the November brain boost.



PROMPT

Rewrite a famous fairy tale ... with a twist.
Forget the princess. You must pick a new character to focus on.

For example, if you are rewriting the Cinderella story, tell it from the perspective of Prince Charming or the Wicked Stepmother. Or get into the heads of the seven dwarves to tell the tale of Snow White. Any tale, any character – just get writing!

ADVERTISE IN SCRIBBLERS SCOOP

Reach more than 200 local Los Angeles writers and get a link on our website!

RATES

1/4 page ad = \$50 / year
1/2 page ad = \$75 / year
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SPECIALS

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Author promo: 1/4 page ad = \$25 / year

CONTACT CBWLANEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM
TO RESERVE YOUR AD SPACE NOW.

Forget your fairy tale titles? Try these!

Aladdin Beauty and the Beast Cinderella
Hansel and Gretel Little Red Riding Hood
Rumpelstiltskin Sleeping Beauty
Snow White The Little Mermaid
The Princess and the Pea

We'd love to see how this prompt inspired you.

Please send your effort (500 word limit) to CBWLANewsletter@gmail.com and we'll pick a few top answers to publish in February. Subject to editing for length. Character studies and prologues welcome from YA / MG authors!



ABOUT CBW-LA

Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles provides education and inspiration for published writers and writers on the road to publication. We also provide a venue for sharing knowledge and information between writers, illustrators, members of the publishing industry, booksellers, educators, librarians and other members of the community who wish to be involved in promoting children's literature and literacy for children.



MEETUP MEMBER REVIEWS



"CBW-LA is an incredibly helpful organization that addresses the many issues that are critical to writers. Meetings, speakers and workshops offer amazing information!" – D.A. Anton

"Ms. Windsor impressed me highly. She is without a doubt one of the most professional persons I have have had the pleasure of meeting. An obvious expert in her area, she has domain of literary jargon, and an editor's eye for detail and improvement on her delivery of a critique. She makes the uncomfortable heat, inconvenient distance, and traffic battle very worth ones' while." – L. Donovan

"An excellent resource for writers of all kind." – A. Flores

"Very professional and friendly people! Well put together!" – Lisa



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CBW-LA

PO Box 4376

Torrance, CA 90510

CBWLANewsletter@gmail.com