

The Zephyr

A newsletter for children's writers and illustrators

From Your Regional Advisors

Hi guys, and happy summer. If you are in Reno, I hope the smoke isn't getting to you. If you are in the Sierras, I hope the fires aren't close by, and if you are in Las Vegas, well, enjoy the heat. Summer isn't always what we expect. For me, I thought it would be a little lazy, with some activity in August around the LA Conference time. A good time to garden and write. Well, I'm doing both but not as often or as well as I wished. I do keep going at it though, even as other things intrude. This summer feels a little like December to me. I'm staying in out of the smoke and juggling way too much. I hope you too, keep plugging away at making time to create. It is good for us.

Ellen, Ann, and I have some great events planned for September, October, and April. We hope to see *all* of you at one or another of them.

September 19-21 is our Novel Immersion Retreat at Granlibakken Resort at Lake Tahoe. We still have some spots left and would very much like as many people as can to take advantage of the opportunity. We have an all-star faculty, a great facility, a weekend that promises good weather, and a guaranteed small group (40 participants max). This is pretty much Ellen's and my wish list for a retreat weekend. Hope it is for you too. Check it out at www.nevadascbwi.org. Click on *Novel Immersion Retreat* and be sure to open all the tabs to learn about the faculty, schedule, etc. Some deadlines: Granlibakken may let unclaimed rooms in our block go on August 20. All manuscripts are due on August 15 in order to receive a free critique as part of your registration fee. We will take registrations after these dates on a space available basis, but we cannot promise you a critique or a room at Granlibakken (you may have to attend as an off-site registrant).

For those of you in Las Vegas, we have an exciting day planned October 18—Ready, Set, Publish. Two members, Phyllis Mignard and Diana Lucero, were the lucky winners of a free manuscript critique and portfolio consultation. They were eligible for the drawing by registering early. Registration is open and we are thrilled to bring an editor and three well-published and knowledgeable authors to Las Vegas to share with you. Find information at www.nevadascbwi.org. Click on *Las Vegas Events* on the home page. See you in October!

And we are planning our next All Nevada SCBWI Conference, April 24-26, 2009, in Virginia City, Nevada. In publishing/book people time, that is just around the corner. Mark your calendars. We plan to include an editor, an art director (the first we have brought to Nevada!), and some amazing award-winning authors and illustrators as well as great teachers. Look forward to meeting Jane Yolen, Yuyi Morales, Laurent Linn (art director at Simon & Schuster), picture book author and writing coach Esther Hershenhorn, and *many* more.

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Inside this issue

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writer's shyness

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Good news!



Las Vegas is gearing up for its Ready, Set, Publish! workshop on October 18, a full-day event for writers and illustrators. Guest speakers include editor Abigail Samoun of Tricycle Press, who will talk about working with board books, picture books, and middle-grade fiction. We'll also learn how nonfiction sells from children's author Michelle Parker-Rock, and prolific series author Linda Joy Singleton will discuss how to create a series proposal and the appeal of series versus stand-alone titles. Plus, best-selling author Ellen Hopkins will explore how to create a fresh, distinctive writer's voice.

We're also offering a limited number of manuscript critiques and portfolio reviews, so print out a registration form at www.nevadascbwi.org and join us in October!

—**Ann Kimbrough**
Las Vegas Coordinator,
Southern Nevada
SCBWI

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Applications are now open for the third Nevada SCBWI Mentorship Program. The deadline for receiving applications is November 15, 2008. The program kicks off at the conference in April 2009 and ends with an all-mentor retreat in October. All details are on the Web site, www.nevadascbwi.org. Go to *Mentor Program*.

Last, a big thanks to all of you who came out to our May and June meetings co-sponsored with the Washoe County Libraries and to the general meetings and critiques in Las Vegas. You are choosing to follow your dreams, and we are happy to be there with you. And a very, very big thanks to our newsletter editor, Jennifer MacKay, the Las Vegas crew—Elena Jacob and Prisca Crawford—and our other contributors. We wouldn't have the *Zephyr* without you!

—**Suzanne Morgan Williams**
Regional Co-advisor, Nevada SCBWI

Happy summer, everyone! Hope the hot weather and/or smoke have inspired you to stay inside and write or draw! After much travel over the spring, I have had the luxury of staying home for several weeks. My goal: finish Novel #6, *Tricks* (about five teens who fall into prostitution, for very different reasons). I'm getting close, which means thinking about revision. Ugh! How I wish I could put words down on paper and make every single one of them right, straight from the get-go. But rarely does that happen.

Creating a publishable manuscript is a process. Ditto finding an editor who will love your work. Oh yes, and once your work is accepted, revising it again. And maybe again. Then there is design. Copyedit. Proofs. Everyone, from brand new author/illustrator, to *New York Times* bestselling author/illustrator, goes through it. There are no shortcuts. Patience—with ourselves and with the industry—isn't always easy to find or maintain. But oh, is it worth it! No matter how many books with my name on the cover I have on my bookshelves, when that box with the new title comes, I do a little dance. Okay, more like a big dance with, to borrow a few words, a whole lot of shaking going on. It is the fruition of two years' work—one to write it, one to go through the process. And beyond that, it is the fruition of years of honing my craft, learning the marketplace, networking, and discovering just where I belong as a writer.

For those of you who haven't yet sold your work, I urge patience. Today, there are a number of ways to try and shortcut the process. Self-publishing and print-on-demand are readily available, and less expensive than they used to be. There is certainly a place for some books produced this way—niches that need to be filled. But this is not the place to try and make a splash with your young adult novel or beautiful picture book. Major bookstores won't carry them, so how will you sell them? Self-publishers simply can't compete with major publishers in a shrinking marketplace.

This is a journey. SCBWI is here to guide your way. Suzy and I are here to offer advice and help point you in the "write" direction. Enjoy every step along the way, even the wrong turns. Sometimes those hard lefts put you on the right highway. Keep your eyes on the ultimate goal—fulfilling your dreams, through a journey worth embarking on.

Now hit the road!

—**Ellen Hopkins**
Regional Co-advisor, Nevada SCBWI

Don't Be Shy—Get the Most Out of That Writers' Conference

By Linda Kay Hardie

Okay, I know you can't not be shy. Writers as a species tend to be introverts. I'm painfully shy, but most people don't believe me when I tell them. I've learned to pretend I'm outgoing when I'm at conferences (or book signings!), and it's worked for me.

To really be successful as a writer, especially if you've done everything else and still aren't published, you're going to have to brave that writers' conference. Conferences are great for writers at every stage. Most have workshops and activities for everyone from the earliest beginner to those writers who publish regularly.

"I can't do it," you might be saying. "I just can't face people." Or perhaps, "I went to a conference once and I didn't get anything out of it."

Professionals have to push through their handicaps.

Being a writer, being a published author, means being a professional. Professionals have to push through their handicaps. Imagine being shy and being a TV star! Did you know that Johnny Carson, the 30-year host of *The Tonight Show*, was shy? He was a professional, and he knew one of the big secrets: people like to talk about themselves. If you get them talking, you can sit there, and they think you're wonderful, even if you never say another word.

Here are three tips to help you get more out of any writers' conference, without spending thousands of dollars on therapy to overcome your shyness or changing your personality.

1. Talk to other participants. Writers love to talk about their work. At a conference, ask the other participants, "What do you write? Have you been published? Have you come to this conference before?" This will get a conversation started, and you may end up with a friend. It's easier to go to the workshops or luncheons and ask questions of the faculty if you've got a buddy at your back.

2. Talk to the speakers, because they're there to help. The published authors are there to give you advice, and

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Fun Facts

- The first published drawings of Maurice Sendak, author-illustrator of *Where the Wild Things Are*, appeared in a physics textbook.

- Decades before creating Ramona Quimby, Beverly Cleary was relegated to the low reading circle when she was in elementary school.

- Roald Dahl, of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* fame, did his writing in a dingy hut with a dirty plastic curtain. The hut was accessorized with a heavy ball made from the wrappers of countless consumed chocolate bars.

- Carolyn Keene is just a pen name for the many different authors who have written *Nancy Drew* mystery books through the years.





Mark your calendar!

Don't miss out on these upcoming SCBWI events:

Las Vegas

Ready, Set, Publish
Workshop**
October 18

Reno/Sparks/ Lake Tahoe

Novel Immersion
Retreat**
September 19-21
Granlibakken
Resort at Lake
Tahoe

All-Nevada SCBWI
Conference**
April 24-26, 2009
Virginia City,
Nevada

Statewide

Nevada SCBWI
Mentorship
Program
April–October 2009
Deadline to apply:
November 15, 2008

**Registration required

For details on
these events, visit

www.nevadascbwi.org

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the agents are looking for clients. If you're familiar with the work of one of the authors (and here's a hint: before you go to a conference, find out who the writers are and read up on their work), compliment her/him: "I really liked your last novel," or "I don't usually read science fiction, but I got into your latest book because of the characters," or "I don't know anything about business, but your book made it clear to me."

The agents often won't be quite as approachable, because they get swamped with people who don't know the first thing about the writing business. Be sure you can approach them professionally. Know what the agent represents. Don't try to pitch your children's book to an agent who only handles nonfiction. Even if it's the best children's book in the world, the agent still won't be interested, and you'll come off as unprofessional.

If an agent or editor is interested in your manuscript or proposal, send it!

3. Do all your homework. Take notes in workshops that are helpful to you. Bring along plenty of pens, notebooks, your laptop, whatever you're most comfortable taking notes on. Ask if you're allowed to record the session. Often you can't, because of copyright concerns or because the conference is selling audiotapes/CDs of the workshops. Support them by buying the ones that were most helpful or the interesting ones you weren't able to get to.

If an agent or editor expressed interest in your manuscript or proposal, send it! It's the mark of a professional to follow through, and professionals get published. You don't have to be published to look professional.

Write thank-you notes to anyone who helped you out. You never know where a connection may lead you. You could end up as a volunteer at the conference, with a chance to get to know published writers socially. We shy people aren't usually shy around our friends.

Linda Kay Hardie is the author of the children's book Louie Larkey and the Bad Dream Patrol, as well as about 2,500 newspaper articles and a handful of pieces in magazines and anthologies. Her Web site is www.louielarkey.com.

Press Release Essentials for Working Writers

By Bitsy Kemper

There's a story about a guy who prays every day to win the lottery. Every day he prays and then complains he doesn't win, that it's always the other guy. He gets so frustrated that he raises his hands, fists clenched, shouting to the sky "Why, God, why? Why not me?" A booming voice comes down from the heavens, answering, "Meet me half way...buy a ticket..."

Well that's what it can be like as an author. You'd like to get an article written about your book, but you've never contacted the newspaper. You might be waiting for them to contact you first; after all, you're a published author, right? Well, sorry, but unless you've been on Oprah, odds are they've never heard of you. You need to buy yourself a ticket: a self-promotion ticket to inkdom.

The good news is your local media *wants* to hear about you. The bad news is the ball is in your court, the keys are in your purse: *you* have to do all the set-up work, spoonfeeding reporters anything newsworthy you can think up. Although journalists keep their eyes and ears open, they may only know about news and events when you tell them. Papers love covering local angles and local success stories, and it's up to you to convince them how newsworthy you are. If you tell them, they will write. Usually.

*Papers love covering local angles
and local success stories.
It's up to you to convince them
how newsworthy you are.*

Here are some tips to up the odds you and your books will get coverage. For simplicity's sake, let's refer to all media as a newspaper. But all of this could easily apply to local papers, magazines, TV and radio stations. I hope the following is of great help in the meantime:

1. You have to be newsworthy. Papers don't have the room to write a feature story on every single person in town. What makes you unique and why does the community need to know about you? What about your books is timely or irresistible? Skip the hype and keep it realistic. Now, they might take your idea and write a completely different story or story angle. And that's okay: the point is they are writing about you!

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Nifty Shortcuts in MS Word

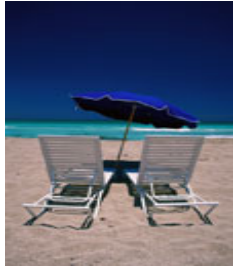
Control + F = Find and Replace. Use "Replace All" to change a name through-out or search for common typos.

Control + I = Italics. Press this combo before typing words you want to emphasize and again when you're done.

Control + Enter = Page Break. Starts a new page. Use at the end of every chapter so all chapters begin on fresh pages, even as you revise.

Control + Right/Left Arrow = Skip the cursor along a word at a time, not a space at a time.

Control + S = Save. Get in the habit of typing these two little keys after every sentence.



Winning with Web Sites

- Register your site with all the major search engines, with as many keywords as you can think of.
- Routinely update with blogs, current events articles, anything that makes your site fun to come back to.
- Link your site to any others you can. Check your site's links often to make sure they haven't gone dead.
- List your upcoming appearances and book signings. Give details on booking you for speaking engagements.
- Sponsor online reading/discussion/support groups related to your topic.

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2. You need to write a news release. A news release is a recognized format that tells a reporter about something they might be interested in reporting. Smaller newspapers might print the release verbatim as they don't have the staff to rework any of it. Sometimes a reporter may file the news for future reference, or choose not to cover it. But as a reporter myself, I can assure you they will read it if you start off strong, and like a query letter, make a good case in 25 words or less. State "photos available," but don't include or attach them. The Web sites

www.wordpix.com/business/newsrelease_how.asp
and

www.publicityinsider.com/release.asp

have templates and great details on how to format and what to include. Of course they are trying to sell you their services, which I am not advocating since I think you can do a good enough job on your own (who knows you better than yourself?). For your local media, odds are you can better decipher the who and where than a PR professional 3,000 miles away. In fact, some of your local papers may not even be on their radar.

3. Timeliness. It's best to contact the paper well before your book comes out; they want to know before it happens, not after the fact. Bear in mind a paper may have a two- to four-week lead time: that means even if you sent it today, it won't get in the paper until next month. Think ahead! But it's certainly possible to get ink even years after you've been published. Get creative. Tell them what hurdles you overcame, what direct impact you've had on your readers, why it's still popular, where you are going next. Come up with seasonal angles: a story featuring a turkey in November, or something situated in a warm climate for the summer months. Ask a reporter not to review your book but to attend a reading at a local school or library, even if you set the event up for the sole purpose of getting the reporter out there. Or get them to promote your event in the two weeks prior.

4. Communication. In today's digital age you'll likely be e-mailing the release. *Don't* send the release as an attachment. Make it as easy as possible for the reporter to read it in its entirety by including it in the text of your email. Don't bother with faxing unless they ask. A follow-up phone call is fine, and don't be shy about that. Give them several days, and if they haven't contacted you, go ahead and call. Start out with "Last week I e-mailed you a news release about *Bitsy's New Book* that I authored. It comes out next week, and I was wondering if you were

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interested in talking to me further about it..." If they say they haven't had time to look it over, ask when might be a good time to call back, or give them your phone number and ask them to call when they have read the release. Follow up again a few weeks later. (Remember that Think Ahead suggestion?)

5. Web site. You DO have a Web site, don't you? This is a must. Keep it current with news about your work. Create a "press room" where you have the same news release, a short bio, high-res photos of yourself and your book cover, some detail about your publisher, reviews and/or quotes from your fans/editor/librarian, etc.

Make it easy to read the press release by including it in the text of your e-mail.

6. Contact. Don't send the news release to the person that covers traffic and weather. Read the paper you are sending it to and really understand how it's formatted, who writes in which section, and notice not only the kinds of news they cover but how they tend to cover it. What is your news release about, and which section would your story likely appear? Who at the paper has covered similar stories? If it's about a reading or signing, send it to the calendar section as well as the local news person. If it's a new book, send it to the education contact, the book reviewer (if there is one), and the local news reporter. Take the time to address each person by name via e-mail, and while it's okay to cc: more than one person at the same paper, never cc: a competing paper or contact in the same e-mail. Send it separately.

7. Be patient. Papers can't run everything everyone sends in. Even the most newsworthy story might not make it into the paper for a myriad of reasons. There's always tomorrow, next week, next month, or next book.

Start today!

Bitsy Kemper has written four children's books and admits to being a shameless self-promoter. Often, Bitsy can be found promoting the promotion of writing instead of actually, well, writing. When not opening her own rejection letters or wrangling her three young children, she reports for the Catholic Herald. Get more of her self-help PR ideas at www.BitsyKemper.com.

*And by the way,
everything in
life is writable
about if you
have the
outgoing guts to
do it, and the
imagination to
improvise. The
worst enemy to
creativity is
self-doubt.*

—Sylvia Plath



*If there's a
book you really
want to read,
but it hasn't
been written
yet, then you
must write it.*

—Toni Morrison



The Scoop on Jackpot Grants

Jackpot Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded quarterly to Nevada artists and writers to support projects and activities that further their careers. To apply, you must be a practicing writer or artist, a Nevada resident for at least one year, and at least 21 years old. Degree-seeking students are not eligible.

Application deadlines:

August 15, 2008 for projects 10/1/08–12/31/08

November 17, 2008 for projects 1/1/09–3/31/09

February 16, 2009 for projects 4/1/09–6/30/09

For more info, visit

<http://dmla.clan.lib.nv.us/docs/arts/NACin tropgs/services.htm>

Wishes Granted: Finding Money to Further a Writing Career

By Tracy Clark

“This is the year of the conference,” I announced to my husband. I was not referencing some obscure Chinese calendar but declaring my intention to attend the SCBWI conference in Los Angeles as well as the Nevada SCBWI Granlibakken Novel Immersion Retreat. I’ve learned firsthand how rewarding these events can be. I always return more inspired and informed from having met experienced writers and industry professionals whom I otherwise would not have had the chance to meet.

I’ve also experienced the after-conference blues when the credit card statement comes. Therefore, in an effort to ease the financial strain from my “hobby,” I applied for a Jackpot Grant through the Nevada Arts Council. I recently found out that I received the grant to participate in the Granlibakken Retreat. I was thrilled! You mean they will actually give me money to work on my novel?!

I used to think applying for a grant was mysterious and intimidating, involving a daunting amount of paperwork. I have been pleasantly surprised (twice) at how simple it can be. I hope to inspire you to take advantage of grant opportunities for aspiring writers and illustrators.

You mean they will actually give me money to work on my novel?

Last year, I heard through SCBWI Regional Advisor Suzy Williams that the Nevada Arts Council would be holding a Grant Writing Workshop. For just a couple of hours on a Saturday, a group of six or so filed into the Carson City offices of the Nevada Arts Council and met with the grants program coordinator, Mary Vargas. Mary walked us through the application process and answered our many questions. She even offered to review our applications prior to the entry deadline.

The grant application includes a budget for the project for which you intend to use the funds. You must write an artist’s narrative, no longer than two pages, telling about yourself and explaining why you would benefit from the grant. You will also include samples of your work. Admittedly, the first time you apply will take you a bit longer. However, as with any skill, it does get easier the next time.

Approximately six weeks after I submitted my application, I was notified by mail that I had been awarded the Jackpot Grant to participate in the SCBWI Nevada Mentor Program. The Mentor Program was such an amazing opportunity that I would have emptied our sawed-off Arrowhead bottle full of coins to participate, but thankfully, I didn’t have to.

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I benefited in so many ways from the Mentor Program and knew right away that I wanted to be a part of the Granlibakken Novel Immersion Retreat. So, exactly one year later, I filed a new application for a Jackpot Grant and was approved again.

Applications and guidelines for all of the Nevada Arts Council Grants can be found online at www.nevadaartscouncil.org. The staff is very supportive and helpful. SCBWI also has a variety of grants to support its members.

My husband is waiting for me to announce, “This is the year of actually making money at writing,” but until then, I feel good knowing that I’ve found ways to ease the burden and still avail myself of the many opportunities to learn and grow as a writer. The Nevada Arts Council has helped me to do that. It just might be able to help you as well.

Tracy Clark is the CEO of her household and an aspiring YA novelist. She lives in Gardnerville, Nevada, with her husband, two kids, and two and a half novels.

Unlock That Writer’s Block

By Monica Marcinko

It’s safe to say if you’re a writer, you’ve had writer’s block. But is it real or just something made up by a writer staring at a blank computer screen?

There is only one cure for this so-called writer’s block—yes, WRITE! One mistake that writers make is that they feel they need to write the story they are working on, and if it doesn’t come to them, they just don’t write at all. And there you have it—writer’s block.

Writers need to write every day. If one story isn’t working for you, just write something else. One way to get your writing done on a regular basis is to set up a schedule and stick to it. Turn off the phone and the TV and put all your attention on your writing at the designated writing time. Each month, set a goal of how many submissions you will send out, then set up an index card for each publisher. Be sure to put down the editor’s name, address, and any other information you need. A great tip for keeping track of your submissions is to use an index card file box with month dividers. As replies come back you can note them on the cards. It is a fantastic way to stay organized.

It’s easier to write every day when you have assignments to finish, with deadlines. Attending a regular critique group is a great way to set a deadline for your writing. When you know

Grants from SCBWI

SCBWI accepts applications from members for eight different grants to encourage continuing excellence in children’s literature:

- General Work-In-Progress Grant
- Work-In-Progress Grant for a Contemporary Novel for Young People
- Work-In-Progress Nonfiction Research Grant
- Work-In-Progress Grant for a Work Whose Author Has Never Had a Book Published
- Don Freeman Memorial Grant-In-Aid
- Barbara Karlin Grant
- Martha Weston Grant
- Kimberly Colen Memorial Grant

SCBWI members may apply for only one grant per calendar year. Recipients of any SCBWI grant may not apply for current or future SCBWI grants.

Guidelines and information for each grant are available at www.scbwi.org.

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Block-busting Exercises

- Work all your senses to break out of that slump and get the creative juices flowing. Look around your room. What do you see? How does it make you feel? How does it smell? What do you hear?
- Try a change of scenery. You might go outside or to a park or a lake. Then do that exercise again and take note of all your senses. (A great book is *The Write-Brain Workbook*, by Bonnie Neubauer. It has exercises to prompt creative writing every day.)
- Always carry a pen and pad with you. The next time you're waiting at the doctor's office, you can get your required writing in. Who knows? You just might finish that story you've been working on.

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you have to have something done by your next meeting, it forces you to work on it. Plus, getting feedback from your peers is priceless.

Another way to establish deadlines is to take a writing class. The best thing I've done was sign up for a children's literature writing course. The program helped my skills and gave me confidence I thought I would never have. It also gave me discipline to write. I worked hard on the first assignment. It was the first time I was going to write a story to be critiqued by a teacher, so I took extra time on it and thought it was quite good. I submitted it with great anticipation. A few weeks later, I got it back with a note that read, *I only edited the first page and stopped because there are too many errors and the formatting is wrong. Redo it and send it back as soon as possible.* Needless to say, I was devastated! Couldn't my instructor just read it and tell me how creative it was and what promise I have as a writer? But she only said it wasn't formatted correctly.

Attending a regular critique group is a great way to set a deadline for your writing.

(One thing I learned about proper formatting when sending in an assignment or manuscript is margins. Editors like to have good margins for writing corrections, so leave at least a 1- to 1½-inch margin on all sides of each page, with extra space on the first page above and below your title and byline. Also, be sure to indent five spaces for paragraphs, and double-space your manuscript. It makes it easier to read.)

It took me about 4 months to resend the assignment. I didn't even know if I would continue on. But I did. And the revision was better, thank goodness. I don't think I could have taken any more negative critique! The next story I wrote got rave reviews, and the reviews got better with every assignment.

It took me two years to finish the course, but when I submitted my last lesson, I received the best reviews of all. The course helped me realize you have to just keep going. Not every critique will be a good one, but if you believe in yourself and your story nothing will keep you down. I am now submitting my story that my teacher and I so love. I hope the right publisher will come along and love it too.

Happy writing! Don't give up!

Monica Marcinko has lived in Carson City for more than 11 years with her husband and two cats. She writes regularly for the Virginia City magazine The Ol' Virginny Ink and works as a manager for Jenny Craig. She is an active part of the communities wellness programs to help promote health and fitness, especially with children.

Good News

Linda de France received a Jackpot Grant from the Nevada Arts Council for \$983 to attend the SCBWI annual conference in Los Angeles. She also plans to attend a writer's conference in Montana. Happy conference-going, Linda!

Tracy Clark also received a Nevada Arts Council Jackpot Grant for \$464 to participate in the Grandlibakken Novel Immersion Retreat this fall. We wish her luck and happy writing.

Ellen Hopkins' latest novel, *IDENTICAL*, will be released August 26 and has received two starred reviews, from Kirkus and Publisher's Weekly. Her agent just negotiated a major three-book contract, again with Simon and Schuster. Somehow, we sense there will be plenty more good news to come from Ellen.

Jean Eick's book *A New Home for Toby* is racking up sales, and the publisher has released a stuffed bear and t-shirts for children to go along with the book. Jean has had book signings in Incline Village, Yuba Gap, California, and the Village at Squaw in Olympic, California. Articles about her and her book have appeared in the *North Lake Tahoe Bonanza* as well. We'll be watching for the sequel, due for an August release.

Suzanne Morgan Williams' novel *Bull Rider* will be released February 24 by Margaret K. McElderry Books. It has been chosen to represent the state of Nevada in the Pavilion of the States at the Library of Congress' National Book Festival in Washington, D.C., September 27, 2009. Since the book won't yet be available, Nevada librarians will be featuring advance reader copies, which we're all eager to get our hands on.

Roz Fulcher has been hired by SoundPrints Publishing (in conjunction with the Smithsonian) to illustrate two baby board books, titled *First Look Books*, about farm and zoo animals. Way to go, Roz!

Phyllis Mignard, author/illustrator of *Alfie the Whistling Frog*, is a finalist in the upcoming Fourth Annual ABC Picture Book Competition. A 2-week Internet voting period will decide the winning story, and the winner will receive a publishing contract. Best of luck, Phyllis!

Jenny MacKay has been accepted into National University's Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program. Her second middle-grade nonfiction book, *Amnesia*, will be released this October by Lucent Books, followed by *Phobias* in December and *Forensic Art* in January.

Wanted: Success stories

*We can never get
enough good news!
Send your own to Jenny
MacKay at*

jopm@sbcglobal.net

*We look forward to
cheering your brilliant
accomplishments!*

