

# Write What Inspires You! Newsletter

September 2009  
Volume 2, Issue 9

Donna M. McDine  
Children's Author



Welcome to the September issue of my FREE newsletter:

## Write What Inspires You!

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For many across the country school is already in session. Our school district does not start until September 8<sup>th</sup>. Have you seen the Staples commercial for back to school supplies that features the "most wonderful time of the year," song from the popular Christmas song? It's been out for quite a few years now and much to the chagrin of our children my girlfriends and I always get a great chuckle from it. While we love our children and we always welcome the onset of summer vacation to spend more time with them and not having to deal with the backpacks, lunches, projects, etc., we tend to enjoy the beginning of school just as much. We get a break from being "Julie McCoy" cruise director and hopefully back into a more set routine of our careers.

I hope you all had a wonderful summer and are taking the chance to re-evaluate your goals before the onslaught of PTA meetings, car pooling for one event or another, projects, etc., take over once again. I for one will be picking back up with my "Change Coach" in hopes of remaining accountable for my time and working towards the goals I have set for myself.

Best wishes for a terrific start to the new school year and to your goals! Check out my blog on September 14<sup>th</sup> and join the discussion on how your summer went and if and how you re-evaluated your goals for the fall.

It is my pleasure to present to you interviews with authors Joseph Sottile and Lorraine Florido and editor, Angie Kaelberer of Capstone Press. Don't miss the goodies in the columns: Book Reviews, Reflections and Dreams by Joseph Sottile, Proclaim Your Successes, SFC Best of Anthology, Writer's Digest Best Of, First Book, Media Release, and Sponsor Ads.

If you are interested, please feel free to submit your name for an interview, an essay and/or your successes to: [dmcidine@optonline.net](mailto:dmcidine@optonline.net)

Please share this newsletter with your peers in the writing industry and encourage them to opt-in as a monthly subscriber.

Here's to your inspiration and continued success!

Donna

## Quote of the Month:

"It's funny, all the fussing and the fighting, the things that matter so much in life, all come to nothing in death." ~ Lisa Scottoline, Dirty Blonde

## AUTHOR INTERVIEW – JOSEPH SOTTILE

Joe and I met at the June 2008 Eastern NY SCBWI Conference through a mutual friend, Lori Calabrese, and since then we have remained in touch. I have never been much of a reader of poetry until I got to know Joe. He has opened up a whole new world for me and I thank him for this enlightenment. Joe is the author of *Waiting for the Principal and Other Poems*. Not only will you enjoy reading this collection of poems, you'll have a great LOL time reading them with your children.

DMc: What or whom inspires you to write?

JS: I am inspired to write for several reasons. Sometimes I feel compelled to write because of the personal discoveries that I need to share. For example, on my website in the section "About Joe" there is an area called, "Some of Joe's Publications." It contains an essay, "10 Myths About Teaching and Why You Can Ignore Them", that was featured on the cover of *Learning* magazine years ago that still speaks loudly about being an effective teacher. In that one essay I incorporated my whole philosophy of teaching in a lively, funny way.

Another reason I write is "corral" the pain that one encounters in life and put it on the ranch in area where it hurts less and can be dealt with as need be.

Thirdly, I write to be seen and heard. I grew up in the 40s and 50s and kids weren't supposed to be seen or heard. They were simply supposed to do what their parents told them. Writing gave me a chance to express my feelings.

Fourthly, I write poems and stories for kids to let them know that they aren't alone in the world—that other people have felt the same way about certain issues and events. Furthermore, I want to encourage the poet in all kids one poem at a time.

DMc: How did you get started?

JS: When I was a teen my best friend moved away and we started writing each other volumes about girls, school, sports, and our demanding fathers. To write was comforting, rewarding, and more important than getting all of our homework done every night!

DMc: What did you find to be the most frustrating step/process of getting your first book published?

JS: The frustrating part of publishing is achieving a sense of balance about getting rejections. In the beginning they feel like wooden stakes to the heart. After awhile, you start gaining a better perspective on them, and you realize that each one of them is a stepping-stone to success, especially if you learn to read them correctly.

DMc: You have a unique way of keeping your readers up to date on your appearances called, "Silly Sottile last seen..." Please share with us the concept behind your promotions.

JS: I've tried to create my whirly-bird hat as a trademark for my poetry. (You wouldn't believe the number of people that tell me they love my hat!) I hope to be easily recognized in a crowd of authors at a book festival or poetry performance. Anyone wearing a hat like that has to be a "character." And I am a character that is trying to encourage kids and adults to take themselves a little less seriously. Moreover, if you want to know what neighborhood I have been in last, it's easy. Just check out the photos on my website. Maybe I will be coming to a neighborhood near you soon!

DMc: How did the nickname "Silly Sottile" come about?

JS: I have been called Silly Sottile all my life. I am like Yogi Berra. Half the time I say something it's funny and I don't even know it at the moment until the words are spoken and drifting out into space. I am also left-handed, a little awkward at times, and I walk like a duck. This tends to all add up to a lot of silliness. And "silly" rhymes with "So-til-ee" if you say it correctly. But it's spilled "S-o-t-t-i-l-e."

DMc: Joe, you conduct poetry workshops for children and adults. Please share with us a typical workshop.

JS: Well, I can do poetry workshops one of two ways, whether I am working with kids or adults. I have one workshop that works like magic. I call it "Truths and Lies Workshop." It involves small pieces of paper, writing, telling the truth, telling lies, and sharing our poems. The best part is telling lies. The group loves it. The last time I did that was for homeschoolers aged 5-17. They had a ball! You can see their photos in my archives. They are blushing in their photos but enjoying every second of their moment in the "spotlight." Here's the site: <http://www.consideration.org/sottile/photos/2009may/last-seen.html>.

I am also an enrichment instructor for BOCES and I visit kids for 10 weeks and do poetry with them. I always focus on doing one poem per visit and eventually we create our own books. Then we have a publication party. I have over 100 different types of poems that I like to write with kids. So I get to pick and choose.

DMc: You also visit schools. Are your visits specifically curtailed to the particular schools needs or do you stay with your own format? Describe a typical school visit.

JS: A typical poetry performance is a lot of fun, laughs, and food for thought for young poets. I share poems and illustrations from my book "Waiting to See the Principal and Other Poems" on a classroom screen. The kids love the black and white sketches. I ask them to chant back the lines that are repeated in my poems. They have a blast doing that. In between slides I talk about the writing process. If time allows we have a Q & A period about my writing life. I always leave the group laughing. The visit lasts from 40-60 minutes, depending on the schedule. And I'll include any poetry ideas that teachers want me to reinforce.

DMc: What has been the most memorable school visit? Why?

JS: My most memorable visit was at Lakeshore Elementary School in Greece, New York. It was a very hot day in late June. I had 250 kids sitting in the cafeteria on the clammy floor at the end of the school day. I was still going strong at 3:10 on the school wall clock, according to a photo that I have of the event. And 97.8% of the kids are tuned into me. Later, the principal, who I had never met before, told me that I did a great job. It was the poetry and sketches that kept their undivided attention.

DMc: Please share with us your current work-in-progress.

JS: I can't wait to tell you! I've just completed the first draft of a poetry writing guide for homeschoolers and other kids. It has a "recipe" for writing 26 poems from A to Z. The recipe pages stand alone and can easily be used with a little help from parents with kids of all ages. The two pages that lead up to the recipes are based on my teaching experience and they were written with TLC to inspire a lasting interest in poetry empowerment.

DMc: A signature request I like to ask every author, illustrator, editor, etc., I interview is for the individual to share with us a tidbit from their lives that the reader will find either humorous or surprising. Joe, can you please share one with us?

JS: I was not much of a reader or writer in school until two things happened. I read "Catcher in the Rye" and fell in love with YA literature. Secondly, my senior year English teacher marked all my essays "A+" because she believed in me as a writer and person. Miss Starr Hacker left footprints on my heart.

Visit Joe at:

<http://www.consideration.org/sottile>

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## AUTHOR INTERVIEW – LORRAINE FLORIDO

While surfing JacketFlap for writers, illustrators, and editors to network with I came across Lorraine Florido. Her background and talent drew me in immediately and felt compelled to interview her. Come along for this insightful interview and I'm sure you too will be inspired by Lorraine.

DMc: What has been the most memorable experience in your writing career?

LF: The most memorable experience in my writing career thus far has been the collaborative journey with my illustrator, John Ewing. The creative process of working with him was quite an exciting and educational journey. He is just a gem of a human being who happens to be a stellar artist and writer as well. A wonderful friendship was cultivated between us as our personalities clicked and so did our sense of humor.

DMc: What type of creative process do you use for the development of your ideas? Are you an outline writer?

LF: I like to visualize how the story will unfold in my mind like a movie. I have found that taking walks outdoor or do simple task helps me brainstorm and envision the direction story, plot, and dialogue ideas. Once I feel committed to an idea, I race to my laptop and write several paragraphs while I'm inspired. This can be quite a challenge sometimes with a toddler and two other children, but I wait for the gap (which may come sporadically throughout the day) and get the ideas out of my mind. I never force myself to come up with ideas. If I'm not in the mood, I just don't write. If I need to get in the mood I re-visit my manuscript put it down and go about my normal daily endeavors, daydreaming and deliberating in my mind how the story could unfold. I am definitely not an outline writer. I'll complete a full rough draft then go back as many times necessary firming up and editing before sending off to my Editor. I emphasize my efforts on firming up the dialogue and literary elements instead of grammatical errors, which I leave to my editor's meticulous eyes.

DMc: Are any of the characters in the books based on real people?

LF: My first two books have many characters based on real people. I like to write humorous books and I find it even funnier if the characters are based on real people. I find characters are richer and more realistic when I based them on real people. Since I am a humorous writer, I thoroughly love scrutinizing a person's attributes (good and bad) then exaggerating the depiction of them.

DMc: Have you used any of your experiences from teaching in your writing?

LF: I haven't used any particular experience, but the twenty- plus years submersed teaching kids and teens certainly helped with the choice of dialogue used for my first two books!

DMc: What inspired you to develop Thinkus Publishers?

LF: I wanted to retain artistic control over my books and I love new business ventures. I choose the name Thinkus Publishers as a tribute to John Ewing. He would amuse me with his choice of words. Sometimes he'd say he had a "blinkus of the thinkus", if he forgot a particular detail in his illustrations.

DMc: Did you hand pick the illustrator, John Ewing, for your book Dezzter the Gasser?

LS: Yes, I sure did! I saw samples of his work and I just knew his was the one and only! I was deeply impressed with his accomplishments at the Disney studios in Burbank during the "Golden Era" where he helped craft classics like The Original Jungle Book and Sleeping Beauty. Mr. Ewing resides in New Zealand and is retired, so I was not sure he would take on my projects. When he agreed, I was ecstatic!

DMc: Was your vision of "Dezzter" the same as Mr. Ewing's from the onset?

LF: His illustrations were 'right-on' with what I had envisioned, but with much more detail that my imagination could ever create. He is a true genius!

DMc: Please share with us your latest work-in-progress?

LF: Currently, my humorous youth chapter book, Hugo the Punk, is in final editing phase. I had the time of my life creating this book. I'd laugh myself to sleep some nights thinking about the illustrations for this book, or a funny idea my husband threw into the mix. My husband, Hugo, was very instrumental helping me hammer out ideas for this book, especially since it is based on his life as an adolescent. He was a late bloomer. The book illuminates the trials and tribulations of being a late blooming teen.

DMc: What advice would you like to convey to aspiring writers?

LF: I once heard that "every idea is born drowning". That is how it is with writing. You'll come up with a great idea one day then the next day you may think your idea was horrid. Keep going with that initial inspiration and by all means don't share it with the world. Everyone might have a different opinion that may prematurely cause you to jump ship. Write a book that you would absolutely love to read and chances are you will find an audience. Also start small but think big. If writing a six hundred page novel seems overwhelming, start with a smaller manuscript and dream big. Commit to writing a paragraph or two a day, but make it your best writing. A little every day can add up to a lot. Most importantly don't worry about how you are going to get published. The 'how' will come later, just concern yourself with finishing your book!

DMc: A signature request I like to ask every author, illustrator, editor, etc., I interview is for the individual to share with us a tidbit from their lives that the reader will find either humorous or surprising. Lorraine, can you please share one with us?

LF: Well, at this very moment, my two year old is taking out all the silverware out of a drawer! I will say goodbye before he gets to the Ginzo knives!

To learn more about Lorraine visit: <http://www.dezzertthegasser.com>

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## EDITOR INTERVIEW – ANGE KAELEBERER

Beyond attending conferences to get valuable information from publishing houses, editors, and agents another terrific way of staying informed is by interviews. I also met Angie through JacketFlap and contacted her for an interview. And to my delight she accepted! Kaelberer is an editor at Capstone Press in Mankato, MN. Capstone Press publishes mainly children's nonfiction, and she has edited books on everything from extreme sports to pro wrestling to biographies of queens and princesses and has also written about 15 books for

the company over the years. Take the time out today and read the insights of this thoughtful editor.

DMc: Do you find it difficult to switch roles between editor and author for Capstone Press?

AK: I'm primarily an editor, and I believe that job makes the best use of my strengths. But I also enjoy the chance to write. I pretty much keep my editorial hat on as I write—I'm conscious of all the things that an editor looks for in a finished manuscript. My manuscripts (and those of all the Capstone editor/authors) usually don't need much editorial work!

DMc: What do you look for first when you receive a submission packet?

AK: Capstone, like most nonfiction children's publishers, doesn't accept unsolicited manuscripts. We work with freelance authors on a write-for-hire basis, where we give them the topic and guidelines for the book, and they produce the manuscript to our specifications. When I receive a letter of interest from a writer, the first thing I look at is the resume. The writer should also include two or three writing samples. If the samples are in the nonfiction genre, that's a plus, but we can also get an idea of the quality of the writing from fiction samples. Send your best work! Also, make sure you check for typos in your resume and cover letter. Attention to detail is important and shows that you're serious about wanting the job.

DMc: What are your thoughts about a writer creating a platform prior to getting their first novel published?

AK: Not working in trade publishing, I'm not sure if I'm qualified to answer this question. However, I would think that anything a writer can do to get his or her name out there would be helpful in getting published.

DMc: If you feel a platform is essential, what are some important steps a writer should take towards forming a platform?

AK: I would think that networking, developing contacts in the publishing world, and getting published (articles, short stories, or even book reviews) and most important. Having a website or a blog would also be helpful.

DMc: Is there a particular genre you prefer to read? Or are you open to almost anything?

AK: I work almost exclusively with nonfiction, but I love to read fiction. I don't believe I have a favorite genre—mainly just novels. As far as nonfiction goes, I do like memoirs (both true and exaggerated) and biographies.

DMc: What piece of advice would you provide to the newbie writer when submitting?

AK: Do some research on the publisher before you submit. Find out what they publish and what they're looking for. I'm always impressed when a writer has done his or her homework.

DMc: Beyond your scope of editor for Capstone you are an accomplished writer in your own right. Please share with us your road to success in publishing.

AK: I don't know if I would call myself an accomplished writer! My books have all been written for Capstone, so it wasn't much of a stretch. I was always writing stories as a kid, and ended up getting a degree in journalism and writing for newspapers before moving into book publishing. I do remember the first book I wrote for Capstone, in 2001. It was on skateboarding, a subject I knew nothing about beforehand but quite a bit about by the time I was done! Lots of my books have been on subjects like extreme sports and pro wrestling—11-year-old boys think I'm very cool!

DMc: What is the best piece of advice you received when you started writing for children?

AK: You don't have many words to work with, so make every one count.

DMc: Please share with us your latest work-in-progress.

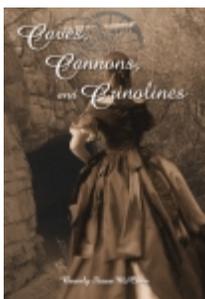
AK: I will soon be starting on a history of professional wrestling for Capstone.

DMc: A signature request I like to ask every author, illustrator, editor, etc., I interview is for the individual to share with us a tidbit from their lives that the reader will find either humorous or surprising. Angie, can you please share one with us?

AK: As I mentioned before, I've ended up learning quite a bit about subjects that I knew NOTHING about before starting the writing process. Around 2000, Capstone launched a series of biographies of pro wrestlers. I was the editor, and all I knew about pro wrestling was that a guy named Hulk Hogan was involved. Well, I started doing research and watching the TV shows, and soon I was a rabid pro wrestling fan. I even went to a couple of shows—to my husband's horror, I might add! I wrote several of the books when the series was extended, and I still have a pretty scary amount of wrestling trivia stored in my brain. So I guess I was a natural pick when a history of pro wrestling was proposed for our upcoming title list. People at work still give me a hard time about my interest in "rasslin"!

To learn more about Angie visit: <http://www.jacketflap.com/profile.asp?member=churchlady>

## BOOK REVIEWS



Title:	Caves, Cannons and Crinolines
Written by:	Beverly Stowe McClure
Ages:	12 and up
Publisher:	Twilight Times Books
ISBN:	1-60619-112-8
Published:	September 2009
Soft cover:	153 pages
Price:	\$16.95

The year 1863 finds outspoken, 14-year-old, Lizzie Stamford at a crossroads of what her parents believe to be acceptable behavior for a young lady and secret desire to join the Confederate Army disguised as a boy. Her two brothers, Willie and Joseph willingly joined the Confederacy to defend Vicksburg from the Yankees and Lizzie longs to be part of the glory. Her blind courage brings her into the midst of a battleground at nighttime. Much to her dismay war is not what she believed it to be. The horrific acts of violence overwhelm her and she runs away as quickly as she arrived.

Her emotions and beliefs that all Yankees are evil are put to the test when an unexpected encounter with a Yankee soldier has her doubting her belief system. Will Lizzie come to terms of the ever changing world and circumstances which surround her? And what is to become of her beloved brothers and the city of Vicksburg?

McClure balances the emotions of the Confederate and Yankee characters with such in-depth feeling the reader will find themselves switching sides throughout the perilous journey of Lizzie Stamford and her family, and their quest to reclaim Vicksburg.

To learn more about Beverly Stowe McClure visit:

<http://beverlystowemcclure.wordpress.com/>

Reviewed by Donna M. McDine for the National Writing for Children Center.

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## REFLECTIONS OR DREAMS

## On the First Day of School

By Joseph Sottile

I was worried that Mom would forget to kiss me good-bye.

I was worried the school bus would pass my stop.

I was worried I'd get into a fight at the bus stop.

I was worried I had toothpaste on my cheek.

I was worried I'd never find my classroom.

I was worried my lunch money was on the kitchen table.

I was worried that I'd be late and marked "tardy."

I was worried I wouldn't know anybody.

I was worried all the bathrooms would be locked.

I was worried my teacher wouldn't like me.

I was worried all my school friends moved away.

I was worried nobody would like me.

I was worried nobody would like my new glasses.

I was worried I wouldn't know any answers.

I was worried I'd have to take a test.

I was worried the lunchroom would run out of food.

I was worried I'd trip on my shoelaces and fall flat on the floor.

I was worried I'd get into trouble on the playground.

I was worried I'd go home on the wrong bus.

I was worried my sitter wasn't home.

None of my worries came true.

Visit Joe at: <http://www.consideration.org/sottile>

## PROCLAIM YOUR SUCCESSES!

Donna McDine - I'm very happy to announce after a dry spell my article, "Children's Writing Resources," has been accepted by Writers' Journal and will appear in either their January/February 2010 or March/April 2010 issue, with a lead-in on their website - <http://writersjournal.com>.

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## TESTIMONIALS

Great Newsletter! Love the look and the content. I read every word of the author interviews. Each interview is loaded with gems! ~ Margie Lawson ~ <http://margielawson.com>

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Stories for Children Magazine First Annual "Best of" Anthology!

Stories for Children Magazine is proud to announce the release of its first annual anthology, Best of Stories for Children Magazine Volume 1. Come take an adventure in the World of Ink and let the SFC Contributors and Stanley Bookman show you how your imagination can be your guide.

There has always been an enchantment about reading a good children's story. Children take pleasure in having a story read to them anytime or anywhere - whether it be around a campfire, under a starry night, in their beds wrapped up tight in snugly blankets, beneath a shady tree on a hot summer's day, or in front of a roaring fireplace on a cold winter's day. Children love to listen to a story being read and this can go as far as adolescence. Best of Stories for Children Magazine Volume 1, is a collection of over 20 poems, stories, and articles published by leading children's authors.

At Stories for Children Magazine the World of Ink is a place where imagination is everything and everything is only your imagination. Stories for Children Magazine has been inspiring children, parents, librarians, and teachers for well over two years with their monthly online magazine. Now with the release of the Best of Stories for Children Magazine Volume 1, children, parents, librarians, and teachers can enjoy the top stories, poems, and articles from Stories for Children Magazine's first year of publication over and over again.

The Best of Stories for Children Magazine Volume 1 can be purchased nationwide from any bookstore, or online through several internet websites including Amazon.com, LuLu.com at <http://www.lulu.com/content/4892856>, and the SFC Bookstore at <http://www.storiesforchildrenmagazine.org>

Come visit the SFC Team and SFC Contributors in the World of Ink at Stories for Children Magazine! There are many wonderful articles, stories, and interviews with leading Children's Authors or Illustrators in each monthly issue.

To learn more about Stories for Children Magazine visit:  
<http://www.storiesforchildrenmagazine.org>

Editor, Stories for Children Magazine  
Email: [vsqrenier@storiesforchildrenmagazine.org](mailto:vsqrenier@storiesforchildrenmagazine.org)  
Phone: 800-670-4416

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## NEW BLOG & WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Terri Forehand:** I have been a member of the Children's Writing Coaching Club, where under the direction of Suzanne Lieurance, I was encouraged to use what I know and my experience as a pediatric critical care nurse to find my niche. While I am still working on finding what the professionals call a niche, I began blogging and writing articles for parents and kids relating to several health related topics including death and dying. One of my goals is to include this knowledge in fiction for kids.

I currently am developing two blogs that I am passionate about. I have the blog for parents of children who suffer from a chronic or serious medical issue or are dealing with a terminal illness or grief. It can be found at <http://heartfeltwords4kids.blogspot.com>. Here I offer information, resources, encouragement, book reviews, and tips that I have discovered over the course of my nursing career in the critical care and pediatric arenas. I feel parents sometimes lack the knowledge for where to go for support when dealing with these sensitive issues and often just need to know that what they feel is okay.

An offshoot of that blog came the website I am just starting geared towards kids. The site can be found at [www.freewebs.com/heartfeltwords4kids/](http://www.freewebs.com/heartfeltwords4kids/) and is in the baby stages. I want to offer a safe place for kids to come to read about other kids who may be going through an illness or loss, a place where they may find information they can relate to if they are ill, scared, or sad and a place where they can find truthful answers to some of what they ask.

The site offers a comment page and will soon include information for specific illnesses, tips for siblings, and other helpful stuff just for kids.

I have started a blog specifically (under my real name) for new writers. The purpose of this new blog is to encourage others who want to write for children and to show them how I am doing it from an unpublished beginning sort of way. That blog can be found at <http://terri-forehand.blogspot.com>. I know from my own experience, it seems everyone else is already published and well known and that new writers don't have half a chance to make it in

children's publishing. Since writing and taking classes over the last 20 years myself, I realize that it is tough but I do believe it can be done. I also believe that those who have a passion for writing for children can find contentment and satisfaction even if the road to publishing is a long one. Happiness is in the writing journey; being published is one part of that journey. As I search for writing tips and learning experiences in my own writing, I want to share them with others. I have been helped and my skills are improving from similar sites and information, so hopefully, I will also return the favor and encourage someone else to give writing a try.

Writing for children is so important. Children learn in a thousand different ways and today the written words found in articles and books must reach out and grab their attention NOW or they will move on to more techie ways to learn and be entertained. That is a huge challenge for writers. The words must hook them like the bells and whistles on their iPod's, computers, and hand-held's or they lose interest easily... the words must touch a cord somewhere in their hearts. So my goal as a writer is to give the reader words and stories that entertain, educate, and nudge the reader to feel emotions or take some action making a positive impact in their daily life. I want to write to the heart of the matter for kids.

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## Writer's Digest

WRITE BETTER GET PUBLISHED

If you appreciate Write What Inspires You Newsletter, please consider nominating us for the "Writer's Digest Best Newsletters for Writers," Send an email to [writersdig@fwpubs.com](mailto:writersdig@fwpubs.com) with your comments and nomination and be sure to note "Writer's Digest Best Newsletters" in the subject line. Thank you in advance if you are so inclined.

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DO YOU  
REMEMBER  
THE MAGIC  
OF YOUR  
FIRST BOOK?

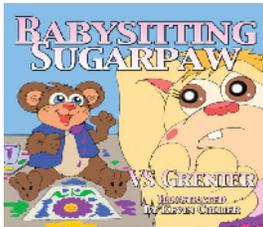
VS Grenier has joined forces with First Book to help children find the love of reading and writing. Here is what Bonnie Johnson from First Book had to say about me joining their cause.

"First Book provides new books to children in need addressing one of the most important factors affecting literacy - access to books. Since 1992, First Book has distributed over 65 million new books to children from low-income families in thousands of communities nationwide.

"Programs that serve predominantly children from low-income families can receive books from First Book and that is why VS Grenier has joined First Book in our fight to bring children their first book.

"First Book works with many different authors and/or publishers big and small! We are thrilled to be working with VS Grenier at First Book in our donation program. We have done similar donations and generally because First Book works with thousands of recipient groups across the country we try to find a group near an author and/or publisher that could benefit from a donation such as this."

However, getting a book into a child's hands is much harder than it sounds and so I need your help. You can help me bring a child their first book a few different ways.



1. Place an order for an autographed copy of Babysitting SugarPaw and 25% of the sale will go to books for First Book. Place your order at <http://vsgrenier.com/BabysittingSugarPaw.aspx>
2. Buy and donate Babysitting SugarPaw to First Book. Once we reach the 100 book level, First Book will proceed in donating the books to a group in my local area where I get to personally hand each child their First Book. You can place your donation at <http://vsgrenier.com/BabysittingSugarPaw.aspx>
3. Tell your friends about Babysitting SugarPaw and how I have joined forces with First Book in bring children their first book. You can use this announcement or parts of it on our blog, website, or social networks.

If you would like to know more about First Book please visit their website at <http://www.firstbook.org>

To learn more about VS Grenier and her picture book Babysitting SugarPaw visit <http://vsgrenier.com/BabysittingSugarPaw.aspx>

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## MEDIA RELEASE

CONTACT: Tracy Mesuda, Children's Author  
Email: [tracy.mesuda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tracy.mesuda@sbcglobal.net)

For Immediate Release

### Calling All Voters - ABC Children's Picture Book Competition

The ABC Children's Picture Book 5<sup>th</sup> Competition has chosen 12 finalists from among the 175 entries and paired each with an illustrator. The competition's objective is for an undiscovered author to get published.

As stated from the ABC Children's Picture Book Competition website: "The idea for The ABC's was conceived in a brainstorm session when the topic turned to all the rejection letters everyone was getting from submissions to the traditional publishers. Research into the market yielded the fact that for every 12,000 children's picture book submissions, an average of three books are actually published. Overwhelming odds, don't you think? So we set out to create a competition that would give the unknown author a chance to reach his or her goal of being published."

Tracy Mesuda is a working mom professional from Pleasanton, CA and Hello My Friends was written to enhance children's awareness and appreciation of our multi-cultural world. MaiLei, the main character learns through friends from various countries around the world the different ways to greet when they meet. Providing MaiLei with a true insight to different cultures around the globe.

If you are so inclined, please take time out beginning September 20, 2009 through October 4, 2009 and vote daily for Mesuda's entry entitled Hello My Friends at [http://www.abcbookcompetition.org/5th\\_comp/HelloMyFriends.html](http://www.abcbookcompetition.org/5th_comp/HelloMyFriends.html).

To learn more about Mesuda's writing career please visit: <http://maileiblossom.com>

Thank you in advance for your interest.

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If you'd like to become a published children's book author yourself, join the Children's Writers' Coaching Club like I did, at the National Writing for Children Center and get the help you need to succeed ~ <http://www.cwcoachingclub.com>

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[Lea Schizas](http://leaschizaseditor.com), is a multi-published and award-winning author and editor. Her commitment is to help you tighten your manuscript before it's submitted to agents or publishers. She will stick with your manuscript until we are both satisfied of the conclusion ~ <http://leaschizaseditor.com>

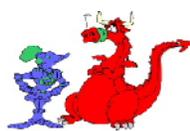
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At SFC Newsletter for Writers, we believe writers naturally want to help along those starting out. I know you will enjoy this monthly newsletter loaded with helpful information, fun stories about the writing life, and the successes of fellow writers.

Voted one of the 101 Best Websites for Writers by Writer's Digest 2009  
<http://storiesforchildrenpublishing.com/SFCNewsletterforWriters.aspx>

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Parents, grandparents and caregivers often hear these familiar words: "I'm bored, there's nothing to do." And the most famous of all while traveling - "Are We There Yet?" Now -- There's an App for that.

iKids Play™ by Shering Solutions LLC, is the perfect creative play activity developed by educators and now available for iPhone/iPod Touch through this new App. Sue Thurman's, *Maybe We Are Flamingos*, is now available in this innovative format, at the Apple Store in the iTunes section.

Your child can use the Rub 'n Color activity, which is perfect for small fingers providing the ability to magically reveal pictures. The Touch 'n Color allows children to select one of many colors, then use their finger as a crayon to color the illustrations. This is the perfect way to color without breaking or misplacing crayons on a long trip. The iRead Aloud function will let your child read the story and record it in their voice, or listen to Storytime read by Safari Sue Thurman. Adults also love these fun activities, when they can get their children to share.

Read more at: <http://www.examiner.com/x-2174-Arizona-Family-Examiner>

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