

Write What Inspires You! Newsletter

December '10/January '11
Volume 3, Issue 8

Donna M. McDine
Children's Author



Welcome to the December '10-January '11 issue Write What Inspires You!

I hope 2011 has started off on a terrific note for you all and that you enjoyed the 2010 holiday season.

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As you all know the life of a writer and/or illustrator is a hectic one. Between working on our writing and marketing ourselves and our books or freelance writing services it is all quite time consuming and exhausting at times. I recently took time out to re-evaluate my writing goals and for one I'm glad I did. But I needed the good old [Morning Nudge](#) to get me going. Under the expert guidance of Suzanne Lieurance of the [Children's Writers' Coaching Club](#) we were encouraged to complete the January 2011 assignment which entailed exploring our 3 Major Goals for 2011 and what we would do to achieve said goals, and then break down each of the 3 Major Goals onto calendar pages for the first quarter of 2011. By doing so, it forced me to take my ever growing To Do list (I know you have the same long list that just keeps getting longer and longer and more and more daunting) and break it down to manageable tasks instead of feeling like I had to tackle each and every task every day (Hey, pick yourself up off the floor...I can hear you laughing...one can dream can't they?). This has provided me with more focus and direction as to where I want to go in 2011 and I'm sticking to it like glue. I'm determined to make 2011 my best year yet! How about you? What are you doing to achieve your goals in 2011? Stop by my blog <http://www.donna-mcdine.blogspot.com> on Monday, January 31st and join in the lively chat. I look forward to hearing from you.

Quote of the Month:

"In the realm of ideas, everything depends on enthusiasm. In the real world, all rests on perseverance."

Johan von Goethe

Without further ado I present to you the December/January feature interviews with authors, Nancy Lepri and Dixie Phillips, and Special Announcements. Don't miss the additional goodies: Book Reviews, Reflections or Dreams Column, Proclaim Your Successes!, Dynamic Media Release Service, Newsletters, and Sponsor Ads.

If you are interested, please feel free to submit your name for an interview, an essay and/or your successes to: donna@donnamcdine.com. Please share this newsletter with your peers in the writing industry and encourage them to opt-in as a monthly subscriber.

Wishing you your best year yet!

Donna

AUTHOR INTERVIEW - NANCY LEPRI

Since embarking on my writing career in 2007 I have developed the love of interviewing fellow authors. Nancy is another "angel" I met through Guardian Angel Publishing. Her illustrious career is one of author, illustrator, and editor. Read about Nancy's fascinating life and career through this insightful interview.

DMc: You have led quite the adventurous life moving many times. What did you find to be the most difficult once settled in your new location to get your creative groove back?

NL: It was difficult moving, but I guess my husband doesn't like to get any moss under his feet. Anyway, I've always been more or less a solitary type who loves to read and create. The first thing I always did upon moving was find the closest library. Now, thanks to the Internet, and the fact that I have TONS of books yet to be read, that's not necessary. I like to hole up in my office and visualize what I want to write or draw. When I know what that is, I sit down at the computer and type, type, type, which I know many authors say you should not do, but I have tried writing from an outline and find I always seem to deviate from them. Unfortunately, I tend to write like I talk...too much! So, I end up going through what I've written and cut, cut, cut. I've found it much easier to cut than add. When it comes to drawing, I love to sit quietly and envision what I want to do, but I'm my own worst critic and usually my finished illustrations do not come out as I see them in my head.

DMc: What can a writer expect when collaborating on a book with you?

NL: I'm very easy to get along with. I love hearing new ideas and suggestions and working with talented people.

DMc: Your children's chapter book, *Tiny Angel* was released in November 2009, please share with us your inspiration behind this delightful story.

NL: First off, thank you for saying it's delightful! My inspiration behind this book comes from the fact that as a child I was a bookworm, very shy and wore glasses, which causes me to be the brunt of the class bully. I was very insecure and felt like I never fit in. My strong belief in guardian angels helped me through some tough times and my own personal angel is named Jody, same as Macy's in the book. Many times I was lonely and when I got older, I learned I was not the only kid who felt that way. I thought by putting a little of my childhood angst into this book it would show other children they are not alone.

DMc: Do you find it difficult to switch from writer/illustrator to editor?

NL: I started writing almost twenty years ago. I was working as an editorial assistant for a publisher and realized my love of writing and editing. My first credits were with local newspapers and when we moved to NC, I wrote for the "Wilmington Magazine". I had started writing "Tiny Angel" earlier, but had put it aside. Next I wrote for national and international food-industry trade magazines which paid very well, but I was not able to use my creativity with non-fiction, so I gave that up. Then I got assigned to illustrate several children's books and with the urging (really nagging!) of my critique group, I got back to "Tiny Angel". Meanwhile, to keep diversified, I got certified as an editor through Cape Fear Community College in 2006 and have had many freelance jobs. I also review books for New York Journal of Books and ReaderToReader.com. This way I'm never bored!

DMc: What can we expect from you in the future?

NL: I am working on a sequel to "Tiny Angel" and have started Tommy's story. After that, I hope to write two more books in the series, the last being the bully's story. I believe every child has insecurities or fears, and so many feel alone because of them. I hope my books will show kids there are others going through the same feeling and they are not alone.

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. Nancy, can you please share one with us?

NL: I lead rather a boring life and don't know if I can impart anything humorous or surprising about my work. I guess I could say what surprises me most is that I cannot read anything just for the pleasure of reading. I am always finding errors or making corrections, so it seems I'm always in the editor mode. Though I do have to say, the more I read, the more I learn, which I hope will help me become a better author.

To learn more about Nancy visit: <http://nancycl.webs.com/>

AUTHOR INTERVIEW - DIXIE PHILLIPS



I'm proud to have children's author, Dixie Phillips with me today. As fellow angels at Guardian Angel Publishing we may have never met without being part of this wonderful publishing company. Come along on this heartwarming interview and you will surely be

inspired by Ms. Phillips intriguing life.

DMc: What has been the most rewarding/memorable experience in writing for children?

DP: My husband and I have been in fulltime ministry for nearly thirty years. Because we are actively involved with Lighthouse Academy, a Christian school in our church, we deal with children on a continual basis. There have been some children, who have come to us, whose young eyes have already seen more hurt and abuse than many adults. Many of these wee ones already believe they have been "born wrong." My heart has been thrilled to see hope flicker in their eyes when I read "Stubby's Destiny" to them. (Stubby was a little donkey who thought he didn't measure up to the elegant stallions, but one day Stubby discovered his divine destiny.) I never get tired of hearing their little voices cheer for Stubby and my eyes fill with tears when I see them have their own "light bulb" moment and realize they have a divine purpose, too.

DMc: You have also written seasonal plays for children. How do they differ from writing a children's book?

DP: I seem to have the gift of gab. (I think I just heard my husband say, "Amen!") Writing dialogue comes easy for me. Plays and skits are completely different than writing a children's book because you mainly deal with only dialogue. Sometimes I get an idea for a play, only to discover it works better as a children's book or vice versa.

DMc: You recently became a grandparent, has this inspired you even further in continuing to write for children? If yes, how?

DP: Yes, I have contracted grammyitis and I don't think I'll ever recover! When I hold our grandsons (Tristan and Easton) I have this overwhelming wave of love that sweeps over me. (I told you it's bad.) Already they are little sponges soaking up what is happening around them. My prayer is that my love for them and the stories I write will leave eternal "footprints" in their hearts and help shape their small souls.

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

DP: As a little girl, I had a special bond with my paternal grandmother. I have written a story about her and an apron she sewed for me. Of all the stories I have written, I am very excited about Apron Strings.

DMc: What can we expect from you in the publishing pipeline?

DP: I have three new children's books coming out in the near future with Guardian Angel Publishing - Cinderfella and the Furry Godmother, Stilts the Stork and The Cat Came Back.

I also have new Christmas plays, skits and recitations, which will be coming out with Standard Publishing this fall.

I am excited to be writing downloadable curriculum for Randall House. Presently I am

working on some curriculum for children, which will be available later this year.

Guideposts has included one of my stories in their Extraordinary Answers to Prayer - Love and Forgiveness series, which will soon be available.

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. Dixie, can you please share one with us?

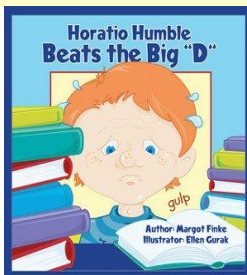
DP: I have been an avid southern gospel fan since I was a young girl. When I was a teenager, most girls had pictures of David Cassidy on their wall. I hung a poster of Vestal Goodman and the Happy Goodmans on my wall.

I was born and raised in northern Iowa. There wasn't much southern gospel in northern Iowa at that time. In the mid '90s, my husband and I started the Floyd Gospel Sing, a two-day, all-day Sing. Over thirty gospel groups from across the United States come and minister through testimony and song. The population of our small rural community (population - 350) swells when around 2,000 southern gospel fans arrive for two days of good old gospel singing.

I enjoy writing songs and have sung in a ladies' southern gospel trio called Three Redeemed for over fifteen years. We have recorded three projects.

To learn more about Dixie visit: <http://writing4littleones.blogspot.com/>

BOOK REVIEW



[Horatio Humble Beats the Big D](#)

Margot E. Finke, E...

[Best Price \\$9.30](#)

or Buy New \$9.95



Title:	<i>Horatio Humble Beats the Big "D"</i>
Written by:	Margot Finke
Illustrated by:	Ellen Gurak
Soft cover:	18 pages
Ages:	5-12
Publisher:	Guardian Angel Publishing, Inc.
Print ISBN 13:	978-1-61633-101-6

eBook ISBN 13: 978-1-61633-102-3
Published: November 2010
Print Price: \$10.95
eBook Price: \$5.00

Math equations and history lessons were a snap for Horatio and he flourished in those classes. Put him in English class and the letters would swirl through his mind making no sense at all. Frustrated to no end, Horatio feared being labeled dumb. Until the day his teacher and parents held a meeting and shared their discoveries. He would need to be taught life skills to control and overcome his Dyslexia.

Children's author, Margot Finke, brings to the forefront the learning disability dyslexia with expert rhyme and compassion. For one to discover they are not alone, and the wealth of resources available to them, will surely pave the pathway to success.

Ellen Gurak's delightful illustrations bring Horatio's story to life and show him overcoming adversity. A helpful parent-teacher guide is included.

Margot Finke's Books Page:

<http://preview.tinyurl.com/GAP-Books> - Autographed books available here.

TRAILER:

<http://preview.tinyurl.com/26sejhl>

REFLECTIONS OR DREAMS

Let Tom Swift Inform Your Writing

By Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Ever heard of Tom Swifties?

Maybe you're too young to be familiar with the classic Tom Swift adventures for boys. Or maybe you're a girl who never read a Tom Swift book nor cares to.

Tom Swifties are one-line jokes lampooning the style of Victor Appleton, the author of the original Tom Swift books. People started making jokes about his overuse of adverbs and the unnecessary taglines he wrote into his dialogue. Like the Polish jokes, they were so much fun that a whole series of them became available for pun aficionados. The author of these classics, of course, laughed all the way to the bank. But that's a lesson for one of my marketing seminars, not this article on writing.

Tom Swifties were then. This is now. I haven't dared read the new books in the Tom Swift series but I assume that this outdated writing has been eliminated from them.

You'll want to minimize tags and adverbs in your writing, too!

An example from one of the Swift books will suffice to let you know what to watch for. (Thank you to Roy Peter Clark for the example.)

"'Look!' suddenly exclaimed Ned. 'There's the agent now!...I'm going to speak to him!' impulsively declared Ned."

Even authors who swear that adverbs are always very, very good things to use and are reluctant to give up their clever taglines can see how, well . . . awful this is. In fact, I have to reassure people the quotation is real! Some of the writing that comes to the desks of agents and editors looks almost as bad. Here's how you can make sure yours doesn't:

1. Use taglines only when one is necessary for the reader to know who is speaking.
2. Almost always choose "he said" or "she said" over anything too cute, exuberant, or wordy like "declared" and "exclaimed."
3. Cut the "ly" words ruthlessly, not only in dialogue tags but everywhere.

You will find specific techniques for strengthening your writing in the process of eliminating adverbs in *The Frugal Editor: Put Your Best Book Forward to Avoid Humiliation and Ensure Success* (www.budurl.com/TheFrugalEditor). This book will also give you some computer tricks for making these edits easy. Until then, take Nike's advice and "Just do it!"

Carolyn Howard-Johnson, award-winning author of *The Frugal Book Promoter: How to Do What Your Publisher Won't* (www.budurl.com/FrugalBkPromo) and *The Frugal Editor: Put Your Best Book Forward to Avoid Humiliation and Ensure Success* (www.budurl.com/TheFrugalEditor). The former is the winner of USA Book News "Best Professional Book" award and the Book Publicists of Southern California's coveted Irwin Award. *The Frugal Editor* is a USA Book News winner and a Reader Views Literary Award winner. The promotion campaign for it won the New Generation Marketing Award. Learn more at www.HowToDoItFrugally.com. Learn more about editing at www.thefrugaleditor.blogspot.com.

PROCLAIM YOUR SUCCESSES!

[The Princess of Las Pulgas](#)

C. Lee McKenzie

[Best Price \\$11.52](#)

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AUTHOR BRINGS TOUGH TEEN ISSUES TO FOREFRONT**McKenzie's newest book *The Princess of Las Pulgas* released December 2010**

C. Lee McKenzie moved her writing skills from the world of academia to the teen scene, helping bring to light the issues young adults fight on a daily basis. Her newest book *HYPERLINK "<http://www.cleemckenziebooks.com/youngadult.html>" *The Princess of Las Pulgas** (Dec. 15, *HYPERLINK "<http://www.westside-books.com/authorCLeeMcKenzie.shtml>" *WestSide**) paints a beautiful story of a family who loses everything and must rebuild their lives together.

The Princess of Las Pulgas centers on young Carlie Edmund, a high schooler with everything - a loving family, good friends, a perfect home and wealth and status. Everything changes junior year when her father loses his battle with cancer and her mother is forced to move the family to keep them afloat financially. Carlie must take on the challenges of living in a different world, one where she doesn't fit and where nothing is as it should be.

Award-winning author L.K. Madigan says of McKenzie's second YA novel, "*Small but glittering details illuminate the prose, and perfect turns of phrase keep the reader right next to Carlie as she struggles.*"

And award-winning author Francisco Stork writes, "*Princess of Las Pulgas is a beautifully-written, meaningful young adult novel. Carlie Edmund will jump off the page and pull you into a poignant and timely story of loss and ultimate gain. She'll take you into a world where stereotypes are shattered and truth is discovered deep beneath the surface.*"

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Great NEW Resource for Educators

Introducing

The New Teacher Resource Coaching Center

Founder:

Dorit Sasson

You are invited to join with other dedicated educators as a part of this growing professional site. The NTRCC is a support center that empowers educators and their students with purpose and passion.

Do you strive to become an inspiring and empowering teacher?

Are you a beginning teacher looking for strategies to help you not just survive but thrive in the classroom?

Are you a veteran teacher looking for ways to brush up your classroom management so you can enjoy your teaching career?

The *New Teacher Resource Coaching Center* invites teacher leaders and dedicated educators as a part of this growing professional membership site. The NTRCC is a support center designed for professionals who want to empower their educators and their teaching and students with a purpose and passion.

Members of the center gain unlimited access to a wealth of articles, tip sheets, templates, teleseminars, and other great resources that will help them build their teaching career to the next level.

Specifically, members receive:

1. Access to two monthly teleseminars taught by a professional elementary, middle school or high school educator who knows the tricks of the trade and what works and what doesn't
2. Unlimited support to classroom tested resources including charts, checklists and tip sheets on a wide range of teaching areas
3. *Specials, offers and special promotions* on various teaching materials and instructional resources offered through the NTRCC.

To become a member, all you have to do is sign up. You'll be prompted to provide a password,

contact information and payment registration. Once you receive your access number, you will be able to log-in anytime - 24/7!

[CLICK HERE](#) to find out more about the center and how you can join!

Membership in the NTRCC is just a modest \$7.97 a month.
Special holiday savings! Get the second month of membership FREE when you purchase a one month's membership.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read reviews of the center



Are you a children's book author who's ready to get the word out about your book? Visit the National Writing for Children Center today and learn how your book can be showcased for an entire month: <http://writingforchildrencenter.com/showcase-application>



Guardian Angel Kids Ezine for children expands the publisher's mission to provide safe, healthy entertainment for ages 2 to 12. It features games and activities from Guardian Angel books and characters. GAK is currently taking submissions for April through December 2011.

Visit today for submissions guidelines <http://www.guardian-angel-kids.com/submissions.htm>



Overwhelmed? Don't have time to write and post your media releases. Let the panic settle and don't fret any longer. Let Donna take the pressure off. Writing a media release requires a certain technique and online media distribution can be quite time consuming.

Coupled with her marketing manager experience at Stories for Children Magazine, Donna is uniquely positioned to help provide you with a top notch media release.

You'll discuss your good news and happenings to get a clear indication of your direction. Your valuable information will then be written into a dynamic media release. Even if you don't have publishing credits under your belt, announcing guest interviews or your topic of choice will help draw traffic and recognition to you and your writing blog.

Don't wait. Let Donna take the pressure off you today. References furnished upon request.

Contact information: Donna McDine / donna@donnamcdine.com / 845-359-6646
<http://www.donnamcdine.com/dynamicmediareleases.html>



Ever wish you had a go-to place to find all the latest children's literature give-aways on the web? Look no further! Lori Calabrese has started a new monthly meme (if there's enough interest, it might possibly become a weekly meme) in which she links to book giveaways around the Kidlitosphere and web.

If you are hosting a children's - young adult book-related giveaway, sponsoring a giveaway, or just found a really awesome giveaway that you'd like to share, please leave it at Fish For a Free Book! <http://loricalabrese.com/category/giveaways/fish-for-a-free-book-meme/>

NEWSLETTERS

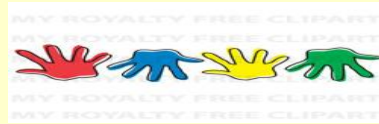


Looking for the latest children's literature news? Don't have time to scour all of the blogs out there (and we know there are a ton!), but would like to be pointed in the direction of some of the best articles and gossip?

Be sure to sign up for *The Book Bugz Newsletter* from [Lori Calabrese Writes!](#) *The Book Bugz Newsletter* flutters your way once a month and covers all of the latest children's book buzz-everything from the latest children's literature news, things happening throughout the Kidlitosphere, book reviews & recommendations, book giveaways, and tips for writers on writing and marketing.

Lori is so interested in what other writers and bloggers have to say. After becoming inspired from the wealth of information out there regarding children's books and children's literacy, she wanted to create a newsletter that not only highlights what's happening at [Lori Calabrese Writes!](#), but also highlights the recent news being talked about throughout the kidlitosphere.

The subscription is FREE and subscribing is easy. Just visit the *NEW!* [Lori Calabrese Writes! blog](#) and subscribe at the top right sidebar. Then we'll be buzzing about children's books in the November issue of *The Book Bugz!*



MOVEMENT AND RHYTHM NEWSLETTER

Attention all educators, home schooling parents, and librarians!

Kathy Stemke, Freelance Writer, Author, and Educator has a fantastic newsletter jammed packed with tips and activities your students and children will surely be thrilled to join in on. To become an opt-in subscriber today and to learn more about Kathy visit: <http://educationtipster.blogspot.com/>

At <http://educationtipster.blogspot.com/> you will also find important information on movement activities, book reviews, and parenting tips which will help parents and teachers teach children phonics, math, writing and science! All this at your fingertips and in your email in-box...you surely can't go wrong.

SFC Newsletter for Writers



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>

SUPPORTER ADS



Award-winning author of the HowToDoItFrugally Series of Books for writers, including USA Book News' award winners

The Frugal Editor <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0978515870/>

The Frugal Book Promoter <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/193299310X/>



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>



[Lea Schizas](http://www.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>



Need A Manuscript Critique?

Do you have a wonderful story, but need a second pair of eyes to look it over?

VS Grenier will look for grammar, spelling, setting, plot, character development, and so much more. Critiques are designed to help us become better writers. We all need our stories looked at by others who have experience in the writing world. *VS Grenier was voted one of the Top Ten Editors ~ Preditors & Editors Readers Poll 2007. To find out more about VS Grenier's critique services visit: <http://vsgrenier.com/critiques.aspx>*

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To unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply send an email to: donna@donnamcdine.com with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line and you will be removed.

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