

# Write What Inspires You! Newsletter

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Children's Author



## Welcome to the October/November 2010 issue Write What Inspires You!

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The saying "big brother is watching you" has come to reality for me, because without the technology we have today my efforts in the children's publishing industry as an author and marketer may have gone unnoticed by many. I'm excited to share with you all (if you haven't already heard) the thrilling news in my writing career. I was hired as the Publicist Intern for the [National Writing for Children Center](#) in August and then received an offer to come on board as the Editor-in-Chief at [Guardian Angel Kids Ezine](#). Both offers were pleasantly unexpected. Suzanne Lieurance of the NWFCC offered me the publicist position because of my marketing background both from [Stories for Children Magazine](#) and personal book marketing efforts and Lynda Burch of the GAK Ezine offered me the Editor-in-Chief position because of my success in the children's publishing industry and website design experience. Don't think for a moment that no one is noticing your efforts in your writing career too, for you never know who is on the other end.

I'd enjoy hearing about your writing career. Please stop by Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> and share with us what's going on in your neck of the woods. I look forward to your visit.

Without further ado I present to you the October/November feature interviews with authors, Danika Dinsmore and Bill Kirk, and Special Announcements. Don't miss the additional goodies: 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](mailto: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 and your families a Blessed Thanksgiving and Holiday Season!

Donna

### Quote of the Month:

*"During a virtual book tour it's difficult to track sales, but spreading awareness about our books and connecting with people is a key aspect to book marketing." ~ Connie Arnold, author of Animal sound Mix-up*

**AUTHOR INTERVIEW - DANIKA DINSMORE**

Come along for this fascinating interview into the creative mind of Danika Dinsmore and learn how the world of the White Forest came to life. The ingenious mind of Ms. Dinsmore will inspire you to believe in the unimaginable.

**DMc:** *Brigitta of the White Forest is the first in a series. Please share with us how you created such a magical but believable world.*

**DD:** After the first draft, I knew I had to figure out this world in more detail. So, I wrote a 24 page Word Book about the history of the faeries, what other beings lived on the planet, why the faeries lived in the White Forest, the names of all the other villages in the White Forest, etc. I used the names of real cities combined with a Gaelic dictionary to come up with names of characters, objects and places. I think the Gaelic dictionary helped with some consistency of language. I would look up the definition for something, like "land," and then alter the word to make it my own. That's how I came up with the continents of Foraglenn, Araglenn, Storlglenn, etc.

I brainstormed all the faerie traits, everything from what skills each elemental faerie had to how their genes were passed down. I drew maps of the world and the White Forest. I wrote a lexicon that defined each new creature, plant, or magical item that I came up with. I HAD to in order to keep them straight.

Many people think that if you make your world imaginary, you can do anything inside that world. It isn't true. Your world has to be consistent and the rules have to be established, or it won't be believable.

**DMc:** *You have been busy developing and implementing your marketing plan. What advice would you offer to fellow author's in marketing whether their first or 10<sup>th</sup> book?*

**DD:** Never assume, especially in this day and age, that all the marketing will be done for you and you can just sit back and reap the benefits. But also know that you don't have to be uber tech savvy to work a social media strategy. I've met plenty of high tech people who are terrible at social networking, which is all about communication and building community.

For some great advice, check out Jeff Vandermeer's *Book Life: Strategies and Survival Tips for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Writer*. Also, [The Happy Accident](#) is a good reference for writers interested in social media.

**DMc:** *Please share with us your road to publication.*

**DD:** Brigitta was originally a feature screenplay. A fantasy adventure film is cost-prohibitive, however, and a huge risk for a studio if it doesn't contain a known element (i.e. a known book, known actor, etc), so I thought I might best create a fan base by turning it into a novel first.

So, initially, it was about making the story more marketable. As I worked on the novel adaptation, the story became deeper and richer. I eventually found a fabulous agency, but they couldn't sell the manuscript to any large publishing houses and we parted ways. I did two more drafts and started the agent query process again. I turned down two offers of representation, because they didn't feel like the right fit. I decided to go the small press route and skip the agent altogether.

I'm very glad I did, because I've really enjoyed how much my publisher has involved me in the process. I've learned so much and understand publishing in a way that will allow me to make good decisions the future.

**DMc:** What or whom inspired you to become a writer?

**DD:** I've wanted to be a writer for as long as I can remember and I don't know who to thank for it, perhaps my Dad for reading all the Oz books to me.

I wrote my first "book" in kindergarten (*Brace Face*) and would spend hours reading and writing in my room as a child. I do remember two books in elementary school that really fueled my passion for writing, because the protagonists were young writers: *Harriet the Spy* and *I, Trissy*. The fact that both characters were a bit subversive fed that devilish side of myself as well. *Harriet the Spy* inspired me to be an observer of people. I kept a secret spy notebook just like her for a while.

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

**DD:** I'm in the middle of editing Book Two of the White Forest series. This is the first novel I've written from scratch. There's no screenplay to use as an outline, so I was a wee bit intimidated. But, so far, it seems to be holding together. It takes place about 7 seasons (or 2 ½ years in human time) after the first books ends. Brigitta's apprenticeship has begun . . . and the White Forest is in trouble once again. Guess who's going to have to save it? ☺

**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. Danika, can you please share one with us?

**DD:** There was a brief time in high school where I stopped thinking about becoming a writer or even going to college. I was going to become a Duran Duran groupie and follow them around the world. I'm not sure how I was going to support myself, but I think it had something to do with marrying Nick Rhodes, their keyboardist.

To learn more about Danika Dinsmore fascinating world visit:

<http://thewhiteforest.com>

**AUTHOR INTERVIEW - BILL KIRK**

Children's author, Bill Kirk and I first met through Guardian Angel Publishing about a year and a half ago and have forged a wonderful cyberspace connection. Recently, Bill took time out of his busy schedule and provided me an opportunity to get to know him better. Come along for this laugh out loud (no I didn't use LOL...my girls think it's weird for their mom to use text lingo. Shh...don't tell them I just used it) interview and become inspired.

**DMc:** *The Sum of Our Parts: Circulation Celebration* is told in rhyme is an ingenious way of learning the human circulation system. Please share with us your inspiration behind this concept?

**BK:** Great question, Donna. I suppose it all started with a rhyme I wrote about all the bones in the human skeleton a few years ago. At the time, our grandson was struggling a bit with learning the bones in seventh grade science class. So, I wondered if there might be a catchy way to verbally walk him through the bones using rhyme and a jaunty rhythm to help some of the strange names stick. In the process, I figured I might as well see if it would get any nibbles from editors and publishers.

Finally, after lots of rejections, one editor I contacted liked the anatomical rhyme concept and wanted to see more. So, I decided to pick the body apart into its various systems using rhyme as the primary driver. Although it didn't work out with that publisher, soon after, I found a welcome home at Guardian Angel Publishing. Other books in THE SUM OF OUR PARTS series (muscles, skin, brain and other systems) are in the pipeline for publication over the next couple years.

As for what started me down this path in the first place, I've been a runner for over 40 years and have worked through more than my share of running injuries. I've also been a long time student of what makes our bodies tick, including studying pre-med in college—until I ran into Organic Chemistry, that is. So, learning and writing about the various body systems has been a good way for me to keep my hands on the subject. For me, it's been a fun journey.

**DMc:** You are an avid Boy Scout leader. Have you incorporated any of your writing into a lesson for your scouts to earn a badge?

**BK:** What a great idea. Now you've got me thinking. Actually, I did write a Scout related rhyme once, although not specifically for earning a Merit Badge. It was after I had completed my training in Wilderness First Aid which is a course required by at least one of the adult leaders taking any group of Scouts into remote or challenging hiking or backpacking areas such as in the High Sierras.

In a somewhat humorous fashion, the rhyme tells of a weary Scouter who has just faced treating broken bones, head injuries, cuts, shock, dehydration and altitude sickness in the wilderness. Arriving home, he debates whether to recount the details when his wife asks, "How was your day?" then decides he can't bring himself to do it. The rhyme was published in the Boy's Life online blog Cracker Barrel to generate interest in the course among adult Scouters who participate in High Adventure Team activities. Also Scouts over the age of 16 are encouraged to take the course to develop their advanced first aid skills.

**DMc:** What is the most valuable piece of advice you received when you first started writing for children?

**BK:** One positive piece of advice stands out, as well as one negative comment that turned out to be positive. The first was to go for the story first and everything else will follow. That is, if the story is solid, what's left is for the writer to figure out how best to tell it. But if the story is iffy or not well developed, it doesn't matter how well written the piece is, it will likely not get an editor's second reading or capture the interest and imagination of any reader, particularly a child.

The second comment that has stayed with me as a motivator was, "Any story written in rhyme can be written better in prose." Well, I have to tell you, that is just the challenge I need to prove the person wrong. Granted, some rhyme can be atrocious, including some of my own. But for me, rhyme is a unique form which pulls the reader into the story with the quiriness, simplicity and fun of the word play and the nature of the rhythm.

In fact, the rhythm can set the tone for the piece. Is the story filled with action? Give it a staccato beat with shorter line length. Is it a mood piece? Allow the rhythm to flow slowly and smoothly.

As for rhyme, the options are virtually endless. Do you rhyme every other line, first-third or second-fourth? Do you rhyme all four lines in a verse? Do you use internal rhyme within the lines or only rhyme the line endings? Within the first few lines of the story, the reader will likely be looking for what to expect in terms of the rhyme, cadence and rhythmic patterns.

When written well, a rhyme can provide both comfort and anticipation as the reader settles into the rhythm and awaits the next rhyming sequence. Besides, it's a lot of fun to write....

**DMc:** What has been your most memorable experience as a writer to date?

**BK:** I was asked via e-mail by the mother of a young student in Texas if he could use a baseball rhyme, "The Cubs' Last Game" for a poetry recital at his school. I had written the rhyme when my grandson, Dylan, was playing Little League baseball. The mother and her son

had been searching for a poem and had come across my rhyme on The Baseball Almanac website under The Casey Collection.

I was thrilled to know someone was reading and using the rhyme and was even happier when the mother e-mailed me a few weeks later to say her son had won first place in the competition. He had actually drawn out a large baseball diamond to lay on the floor. During his recital, he played the parts of the players in the rhyme, even running the bases to "score" the winning run.

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

**BK:** Ah, so many rhymes and so little time. One story in particular has been "in progress" for over three years. My working title is "A Whale Of A Tale In The Midst Of A Gale." I'm not sure it will ever see the light of day but it's been a fun project to get back to it every couple months as I fiddle with lines, add verses, resolve conflicts and try to bring the story full circle to a conclusion.

The manuscript has gone from sort of a long-ish regular rhyming story to one that is now written in a series of chapterettes. I suppose it may turn out to be nothing more than an ongoing warm-up practice piece to help me keep my head in the rhyming game—maybe a little like the warm-up vocal exercises a singer uses before a performance.

Otherwise my writing interests include non-rhyming poetry, humor and satire. And I even have an international conspiracy novel that's been on the drawing board for two decades. Needless to say, my slush pile abounds.

**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. Bill, can you please share one with us?**

**BK:** Hmmm.... Let's see. I'll tell this story for the kids out there. When I was younger, my family used to visit my grandparents' farm in Mississippi. There was no running water, no electricity and no bathroom except an outhouse. There was also a smokehouse and a chicken house. So, there were lots of chores to do and kids had to come up with their own fun.

During one visit, when I was about six years old, my cousins and I were sliding down the tin roof of the chicken house. It may sound strange but what a great slide it was! We would slide down almost to the edge, then scramble back up to the peak and go again. For added excitement, the dare was to slide down head first—until, that is, I didn't stop myself soon enough and slid off the roof head first. The good news is I didn't hit the ground on my head. The bad news is I fell head first into a 50-gallon barrel of slop. For those adults familiar with farms in the old days, you will know what slop is, as in slopping the hogs.

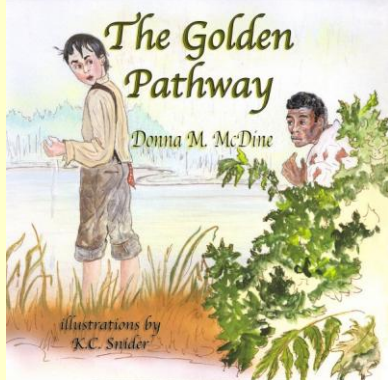
Needless to say being submerged in slop with no way to get myself out was about as close to "Fear Factor" as I had come to that point in my life. It seemed like an eternity. But fortunately my cousins quickly jumped off the roof and dumped me out, spilling slop all over the ground. Of course, the pigs were thrilled with their unexpected feast. As for me, after I had stopped coughing, gagging and sputtering, none of my cousins wanted to get too

close to me, at least until I got cleaned up in one of my grandma's famous super-chilled, well-water washtub baths. Brrrr!!!

Be sure to visit Bill at: <http://www.billkirkwrites.com>

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## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



Just in time for the 2010 Holiday Season.

**Personalized Autographed Book:**

*The Golden Pathway*  
by Donna M. McDine

**FREE shipping** via US Postal Service for the remainder of 2010.

**Visit:** <http://www.donnamcdine.com/> and order yours today for the young muse in your life.

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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>

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The 2010 holiday season is rapidly approaching and now is the time to brainstorm and write your fictional short stories, non-fiction articles, and/or poetry ideas around the 2011 Guardian Angel Kids Theme List.

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

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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 / [dmcdine@optonline.net](mailto:dmcdine@optonline.net) / 845-359-6646  
<http://www.donnamcdine.com/dynamicmediareleases.html>

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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/>

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## NEWSLETTERS





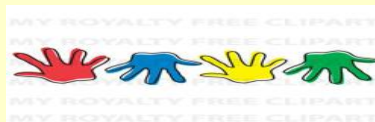
Looking for the latest children's literature news? Don't have time to scour all of the blogs out there (and we know there are a ton!), but would like to be pointed in the direction of some of the best articles and gossip?

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!*

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## 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.

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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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## 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/>

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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://leaschizeditor.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://leaschizeditor.com>

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### 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](mailto:donna@donnamcdine.com) with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line and you will be removed.

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