

AS THE ERASER BURNS

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THE LEARNING SIDE

8th ANNUAL NEW YORK SCBWI CONFERENCE

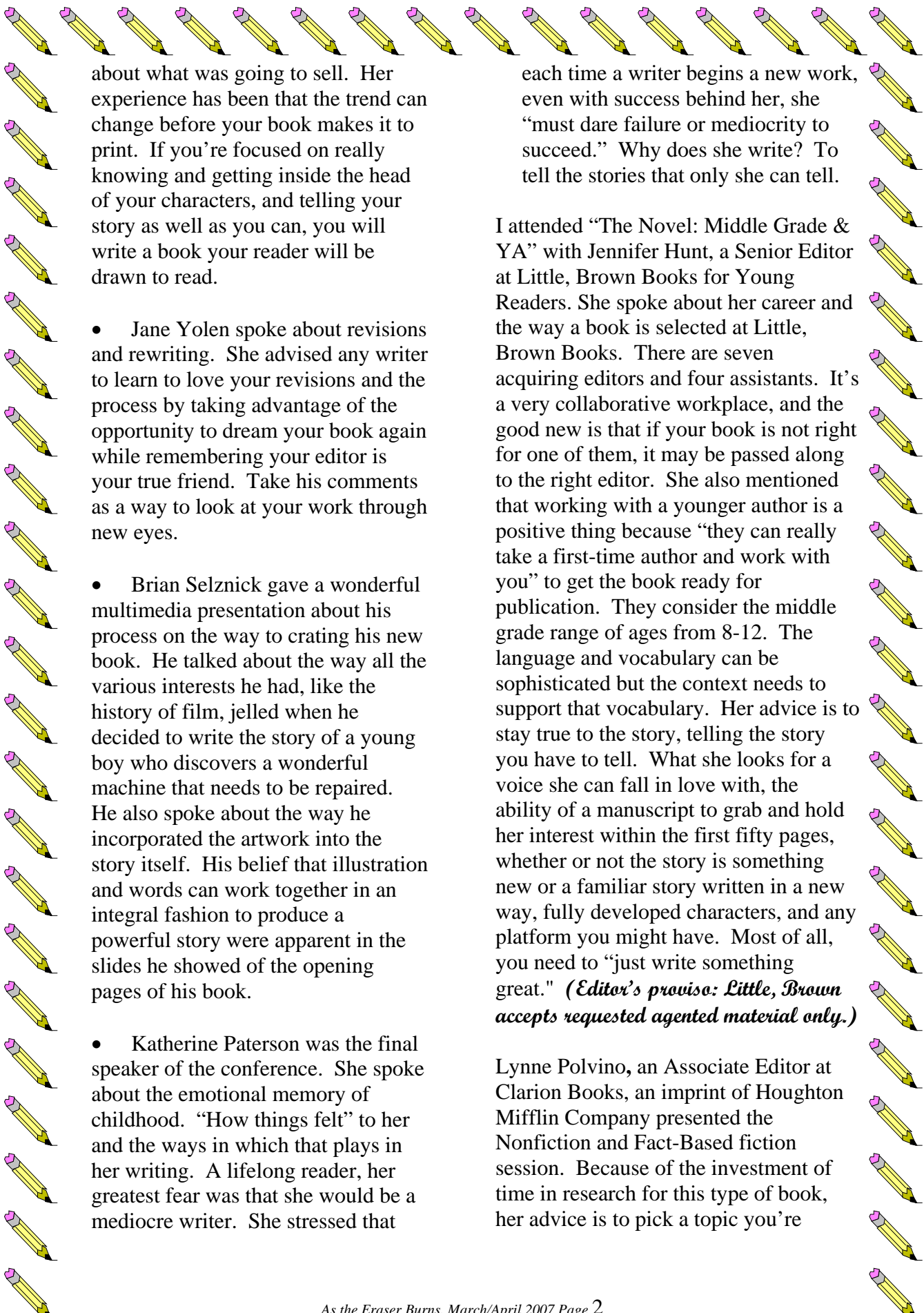
By Gina Hagler

The energy at the Eighth Annual SCBWI Winter Conference was palpable. With 1000 attendees plus Susan Cooper, Robie H. Harris, Ann Brashares, Jane Yolen, Brian Selznick, and Katherine Paterson all speaking, it was impossible to leave without feeling inspired.

- Susan Cooper gave the first keynote on the role of imagination in writing. Imagination is key and it is the one piece of us that hasn't changed since it was formed when we were kids. She said the advice to write what you know best is good advice, but "what we know best is what is hidden in our deep subconscious. We'll know it when we look back and see the pattern in our writing." Your real ideas come out of the haunting imagination or subconscious. Ideas "come like a hawk dropping out of the sky and can fly away just as unexpectedly so keep paper and pen nearby always."

- Robie H. Harris spoke about censorship, saying; "our librarians are the real heroes in our democracy" because they are on the front lines, standing in front of others to defend their choice of books. Ms. Harris doesn't write to push the envelope, but to give kids the accurate information they need and deserve. Her litmus test for including something in one of her books is if the text or art is something a child needs to know to keep healthy and safe, and is in the best interest of the child.

- Ann Brashares encouraged us to write our stories without worrying



about what was going to sell. Her experience has been that the trend can change before your book makes it to print. If you're focused on really knowing and getting inside the head of your characters, and telling your story as well as you can, you will write a book your reader will be drawn to read.

- Jane Yolen spoke about revisions and rewriting. She advised any writer to learn to love your revisions and the process by taking advantage of the opportunity to dream your book again while remembering your editor is your true friend. Take his comments as a way to look at your work through new eyes.

- Brian Selznick gave a wonderful multimedia presentation about his process on the way to crating his new book. He talked about the way all the various interests he had, like the history of film, jelled when he decided to write the story of a young boy who discovers a wonderful machine that needs to be repaired. He also spoke about the way he incorporated the artwork into the story itself. His belief that illustration and words can work together in an integral fashion to produce a powerful story were apparent in the slides he showed of the opening pages of his book.

- Katherine Paterson was the final speaker of the conference. She spoke about the emotional memory of childhood. "How things felt" to her and the ways in which that plays in her writing. A lifelong reader, her greatest fear was that she would be a mediocre writer. She stressed that

each time a writer begins a new work, even with success behind her, she "must dare failure or mediocrity to succeed." Why does she write? To tell the stories that only she can tell.

I attended "The Novel: Middle Grade & YA" with Jennifer Hunt, a Senior Editor at Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. She spoke about her career and the way a book is selected at Little, Brown Books. There are seven acquiring editors and four assistants. It's a very collaborative workplace, and the good news is that if your book is not right for one of them, it may be passed along to the right editor. She also mentioned that working with a younger author is a positive thing because "they can really take a first-time author and work with you" to get the book ready for publication. They consider the middle grade range of ages from 8-12. The language and vocabulary can be sophisticated but the context needs to support that vocabulary. Her advice is to stay true to the story, telling the story you have to tell. What she looks for a voice she can fall in love with, the ability of a manuscript to grab and hold her interest within the first fifty pages, whether or not the story is something new or a familiar story written in a new way, fully developed characters, and any platform you might have. Most of all, you need to "just write something great." (*Editor's proviso: Little, Brown accepts requested agented material only.*)

Lynne Polvino, an Associate Editor at Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Company presented the Nonfiction and Fact-Based fiction session. Because of the investment of time in research for this type of book, her advice is to pick a topic you're

By Sarah Maury Swan



personally passionate about; research first to be sure there's enough information available for your work; remember this is something you'll live immersed in for several years; decide, based upon the primary sources available to you, whether this will be straight nonfiction or historical fiction; explore what images are available to you and what the cost will be so that you have some idea of your ideal budget for these images; write a lively text that is true to the facts; and look for the editors at a house who has an interest in your type of book.

As for what's selling? Various panelists mentioned different things, but in general picture books are holding strong and steady, poetry is doing well, as are nonfiction, the graphic novel, and middle grade and YA novels. In the middle grade and YA categories, paperbacks sell better than hardcover.

All in all, I'm very happy I decided to attend this conference.

Gina Hagler's work has appeared in *Faces*, *Odyssey*, and *Washington Parent*. She received a Letter of Merit from the 2005 Magazine Merit Contest for her "Wildfire!" feature in *Odyssey* magazine

FURTHER GLEANINGS FROM THE CONFERENCE

Betty Mayfield learned some important news at the conference. The word count guidelines we've all been adhering to have been ripped to shreds by the likes of J.K. Rowling. Even third graders are reading her tomes. And the consensus is kids like to stretch their vocabularies, so don't shy away from tough words.

ILLUSTRATOR'S CORNER Interview with Kelli Nash

Kelli Nash had the coolest thing happen to her. She got the commission to illustrate a mural for the panels of the "Wetlands on Wheels" 35-foot-long mobile classroom trailer. You can see her art work as the trailer tours the state visiting schools, libraries and festivals. I thought you'd like to know the process she used to get from concept to trailer.

First off Kelli, where did you study art?


















I've studied art all my life! It was something I felt compelled to do! Took every art class I could from elementary to high-school. I eventually graduated from American Intercontinental University in Atlanta, GA with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design and Illustration- *Cum Laude*.

How did you get the job to do the mural? Was there some kind of competition or an advertisement in an art journal?


















I found a posting on-line about this particular project on Craigslist. (<http://baltimore.craigslist.org>) It's a community forum for anything you can think of including artists and writing gigs. I replied to the posting via email and sent a website link to view samples of my art work. (www.ArtWanted.com/KelliNash)




















Also, www.ArtWanted.com is an artist community. Artist can post their work for FREE!!!! It's a great way to send clients samples of your work fast instead of snail mail. Did I mention for FREE!!!!




















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













Kelli- When I posted the ad, I had no idea it would generate as much interest as it did. Environmental Concern received dozens of responses. However, when we clicked on your samples, we instantly fell in love. Your style is exactly what we had envisioned. We would love to work with you on this project.




















I can still remember I felt like I hit the lottery and was totally jumping out of my skin with excitement!




















How did you decide which animals to include in your mural? And how did you know what they looked like?












At the initial meeting, the clients wanted a freshwater wetland to stay native to the Eastern Shore of Maryland. They had a library of references for every kind of wetland environment: birds, plants, reptiles and mammals. The illustration features 24 species of animals and 9 species of native plants. I also created a fun sheet that lists all the species and students try to find them on the trailer as a learning activity.

























Did you have to traipse through wetlands to get a feel for the habitat?












I certainly did! The clients gave me a tour of their grounds in St. Michaels, MD. I took pictures of many different












kinds of plants, marshes, ponds and insects.












Did you paint just from photos or did you get to see these animals in the flesh?












I mainly stuck with painting from photos. However, I also lived on the water for 20 years growing up so I was certainly familiar with wild life in the flesh. I remember the different kinds of interaction between species and wanted to convey a lot of movement in the mural as well.












What is the size of your original drawing? And did you keep any rights to the paintings?












The original size of the illustration is 13" X 40" The copyrights belong to the client Environment Concern, Inc. I t was agreed that I could retain the original artwork which proudly hangs in my office.












What media did you use?












Colored Water Pencils, Acrylic and Pen and Ink.












How long did it take you to complete the project?




















Three months! With no revisions! Thankfully!



Explain how your paintings went from their original size to trailer size.






The original artwork is professionally scanned into sections because of its awkward size. Once it is in digitized format at a high resolution, the artwork is blown up to the trailer dimensions.





Artwork is printed on vinyl panels that are then adhered onto the exterior of the trailer in sections. The final result is a gigantic artscape of the wetlands.



What's next on the agenda for you?



My ultimate goal is to become a children's book illustrator. So lately I have been preparing my marketing packets to submit to publishers. I also do commissioned paintings for residential and commercial spaces.






If you would like more information on the "Wetland on Wheels" mobile classroom, please visit www.wetland.org









What's Current in the Market



By Sarah Maury Swan











Sources for this column are Children's Book Insider, Children's Writer, Publisher's Lunch, Harold Underdown's Purple Crayon site. Contact information for the various publishers can be found in Children's Writer & Illustrator's Market (CWIM) or Book Markets for Children's Writers (BMCW) or Magazine Markets for Children's Writers (MMCW). Abbreviations are: cb=chapter book; mg=middle grade; ms=manuscript; nf=non-fiction; pb=picture book; YA=young adult



A number of the entries are about publishers who don't accept queries or unsolicited manuscripts. I included them anyway in case someone has had dealings with the person mentioned. I don't included news about people on the sales end of the business, because we, as writers and illustrators, don't really have much, if any contact with them. If you wish me to include that information, please let me know and I'll see what I can do.





Changing Scene






Amy Ehrlich is hanging up her red and blue pencils after many years at **Candlewick Press** as staffer, editor-in-chief, and editor-at-large.





www.candlewick.com (BMCW pg. 129; CWIM pg. 122)




Marshall Cavendish Children's Books newest publisher is Margery Cuyler. www.marshallcavendish.us (BMCW pg. 134; CWIM pg. 123)






Chronicle Books created the children's publishing director position and gave it to Bill Boedeker. www.chroniclekids.com (BMCW pg. 144; CWIM pg. 125)




Front Street founder, Stephen Roxburgh, is now also publisher of **Boyd's Mills Press**.







www.frontstreetbooks.com (BMCW pg. 211; CWIM pg. 139)





Congratulate Deborah Kaplan on her promotion to v-p, executive art director of fiction for **Penguin Young Readers Group and Puffin Books** and Linda McCarthy on her promotion to art director of fiction.



www.penguin.com/youngreaders (BMCW pg. 363; CWIM pg. 173)



Also in the Penguin/Putnam Group, Alisha Niehaus is now an editor at **Dial Books for Young Readers**, having moved over from DK, and Susan Kochan is associate editorial director at **G. P. Putnam's Children's Books**. www.penguinputnam.com (BMCW pg. 364; CWIM pg. 174)



Quercus, an imprint of **Phranimid Press**, is moving into children's

publishing. Suzy Jenvey, recently at Faber, will be the publisher of their new imprint. They say they will launch in 2008. But don't send them unsolicited manuscripts, just get to know their editors somehow.

www.quercuspublishing.com/Quercuspublishing.html

Changes at **Random House Children's**, (The UK branch) include the promotion of Jennifer Arena to executive editor; Diane Landolf to editor, and Nick Eliopoulos to associate editor. Chris Angelilli is now editor-in-chief of Golden Books

www.kidsatrandomhouse.co.uk (BMCW pg. 526; CWIM pg. 20 7)

At the end of March, Elizabeth Law, left her position as Associate Publisher at **Simon & Schuster Children's**. Susan Burke is now an editor at Atheneum.

Trish Boczkowski moved up to editorial director of Simon Spotlight Entertainment and **Emily Westlake** became an associate editor at Simon Spotlight Entertainment. **Ursula Cary** joins them as associate editor. Editorial assistant, **Kimberly Ainsworth**, is calling Little Simon home.

www.simonsayskids.com (BMCW pg. 403; CWIM pg. 185)

Eleni Beja is moving to **Scholastic's** trade publishing division from Houghton Mifflin as an associate editor, reporting to Andrea Pinkney. Rachel Griffiths is now an editor under David Levithan at **Scholastic Press**. www.scholastic.com (BMCW pg. 394; CWIM pg. 178)

Children's Writer has interesting articles on various aspects of the market each month. The April issue

focuses on concept books, adventure tales, and religious nonfiction.

Book Markets

According to the articles, markets for concept books are: **Boyd's Mills Press**, www.boydsmillspress.com (BMCW pg. 122; CWIM pg. 121); **Cartwheel Books**, www.scholastic.com (BMCW pg. 133; CWIM pg. 123);

Charlesbridge, www.charlesbridge.com (BMCW pg. 135; CWIM pg. 123);

Chronicle Books, www.chroniclebooks.com (BMCW pg. 144; CWIM pg. 125);

Intervisual Books, www.intervisualbooks.com (BMCW pg. 251);

Kar-Ben Publishing (imprint of Lerner); www.karben.com (BMCW pg. 260; CWIM pg. 151);

Little Simon, www.simonsayskids.com (BMCW pg. 280; CWIM pg. 185);

Pelican Publishing; www.pelicanpub.com (BMCW pg. 341; CWIM pg. 169);

Rising Moon, Luna Rising, www.risingmoonbooks.com (BMCW pg. 376; CWIM pg. 176);

Third World Press, www.thirdworldpressinc.com (BMCW pg. 426); and

Tricycle Press, www.tenspeedpress.com (BMCW pg. 433; CWIM pg. 190.)

Markets for adventure books are: **Brown Barn Books**,

www.brownbarnbooks.com (BMCW pg. 125);

The Creative Company,
www.thecreativecompany.us
(BMCW pg. 156; CWIM pg. 127);

Dover Publications,
www.doverpublications.com
(BMCW pg. 179);

Gibbs Smith Publisher,
www.gibbs-smith.com (BMCW pg. 214; CWIM pg. 139);

Just Us Books,
www.justusbooks.com (BMCW pg. 258);

Milet Publishing, www.milet.com
(BMCW pg. 297; CWIM pg. 160);

and Canadian publisher, Moose Enterprise,
www.mooshidebooks.com (BMCW pg. 304; CWIM pg. 204.)

Religious book publisher is Living Ink Books, www.amgpublishers.com
(BMCW pg. 95)

MAGAZINE MARKETS

Religious markets are: Celebrate, www.nph.com WordAction Publishing Company 2923 TROOST AVE, KANSAS CITY, MO 64109 (MMCW pg. 91; CWIM pg. 129/The address and website are different in these books, but they do have useful info.)

Focus on the Family Clubhouse Jr., www.clubhousemagazine.com
(MMCW pg. 135);

Group Publishing, www.group.com (MMCW pg. 142); Guideposts Sweet 16, www.sweet16mag.com (MMCW pg. 143; CWIM pg. 229);

Lifted, www.liftedmagazine.com
(MMCW pg. 177);

My Friend,
www.myfriendmagazine.org (MMCW pg. 195; CWIM pg. 236);

Nature Friend,
www.naturefriendmagazine.com
(MMCW pg. 198; CWIM pg. 236);
Partners, www.clp.org (MMCW pg. 213);

Pockets, www.pockets.org (MMCW pg. 216; CWIM pg. 238);

Shine Brightly, www.gemsgc.org
(MMCW pg. 237; CWIM pg. 241);

and Sparkle, www.gemsgc.org
(MMCW pg. 241; CWIM pg. 242.)

But do check their guidelines carefully; some religious magazines stick to a very conservative take on the bible.

CONTESTS

CHILDREN'S WRITER has contests several times a year. Check their website for details.

www.institutechildrenslit.com
(MMCW pg. 100)

Check guidelines for Delacorte's Yearling contest for middle grade fiction at

<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/writingcontests/#middlegrade>



GOOD NEWS

Debbie Clayman's (writing as **Deborah da Costa**) book **HANNUKKAH MOON** is due out in September with enchanting illustrations.

Gretchen M. Laskas' book **THE MINER'S DAUGHTER** came out at the beginning of February.

A boxed set of **Lois Szymanski's** **LITTLE PONY Books** is due for release at Christmas time. She also has editors liking two other manuscripts, so keep your fingers crossed.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mona Kerby, our regional advisor, has made a beautiful website for us.

<<http://www2.mcdaniel.edu/scbwi/>>. Among the things listed is the July 7-8 Annual conference, which has lots of interesting speakers. Check it out. Be sure to volunteer to help at the conference.

And lastly, your editor is down on her creaky old knees begging you to write articles for her. If you go to a conference, please tell us about it. If you want to share helpful hints on marketing your books, before and after publication, we love to read about them. Please tell me what you want in the newsletter. Thanks, Sarah Maury Swan.

As the Eraser Burns
The MD/DE/WV Newsletter
c/o Mona Kerby, SCBWI Regional Advisor
Graduate & Professional Studies,
McDaniel College
2 College Hill
Westminster, MD 21158-4390

www.SCBWI.org