

WESTERN TALE SPINNER



SPRING!

Green THINGS are shooting out of the garden, pushing aside dirt, and...some of them, I'm not even sure what they are! I'm hoping they'll reveal their natures at some point however... rather like writing thoughts that emerge as we work! Onward, Writers and Illustrators!

Alison Acheson (ed)



A newsletter published by the Canada West Chapter of the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Information published in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement by SCBWI and/or SCBWI-Canada West.

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What's Inside

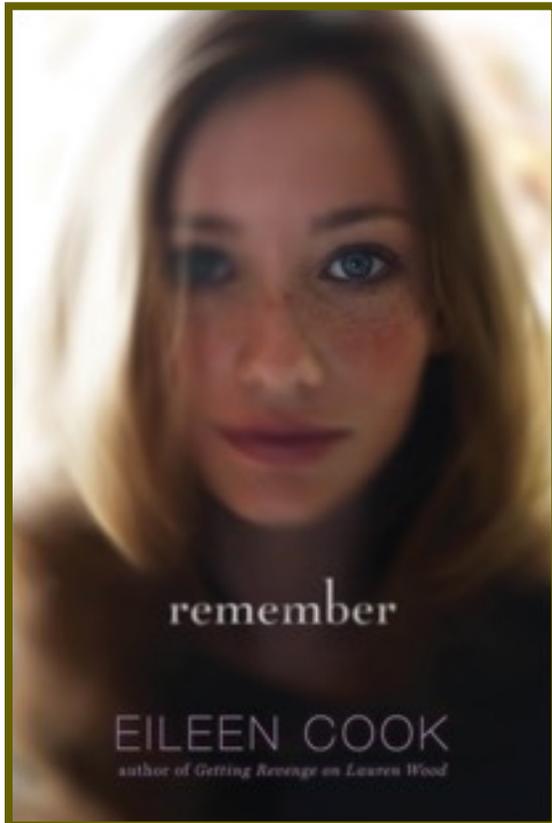
2. Good News!
4. Saying Farewell to Pamela – by Ruth Daly and Ken Kilback
6. NYC SCBWI Re-cap - by Patricia Pinsk
9. Words Come to Life - by Yasmin John-Thorpe
9. Friends of Sheila A. Egoff - A REQUEST by Sheryl McFarlane
11. Event Horizon by Ken Kilback

Illustrations by Anita Miettunen

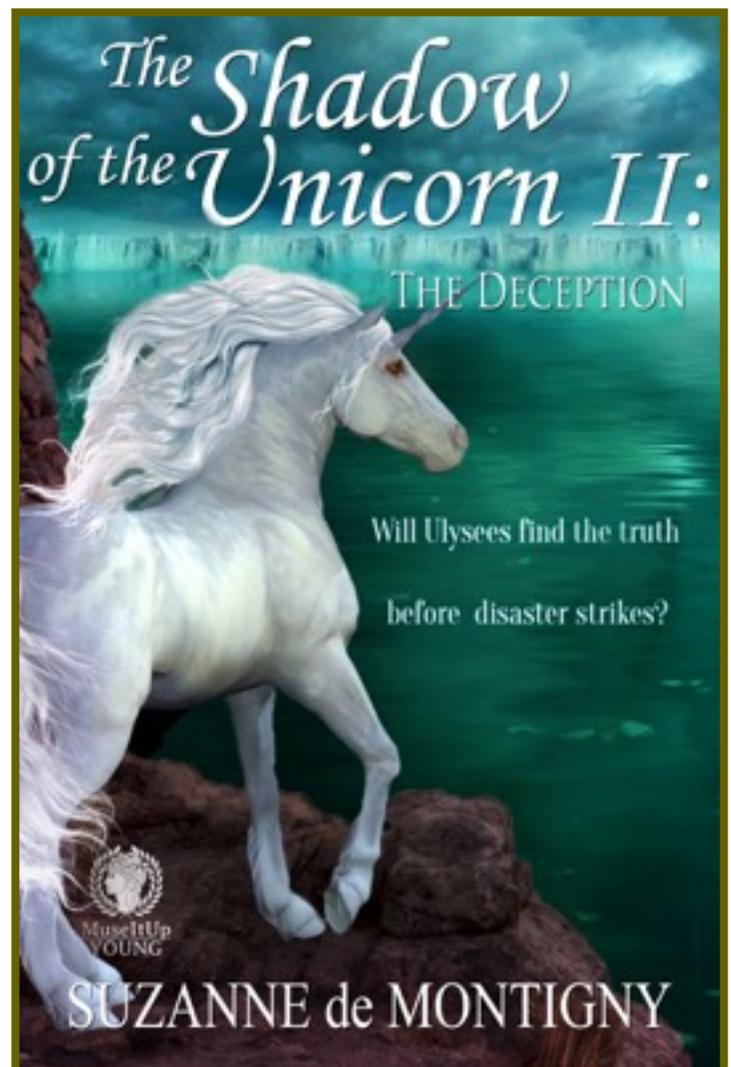
WESTERN TALE SPINNER

GOOD NEWS...

Eileen Cook has a new book, **Remember**, published with Simon Pulse.



Suzanne de Montigny's tween novel, the *Shadow of the Unicorn: The Legacy* was released in early December as a print book. The sequel, **The Shadow of the Unicorn II: The Deception**, was released in e-book form March 17th.

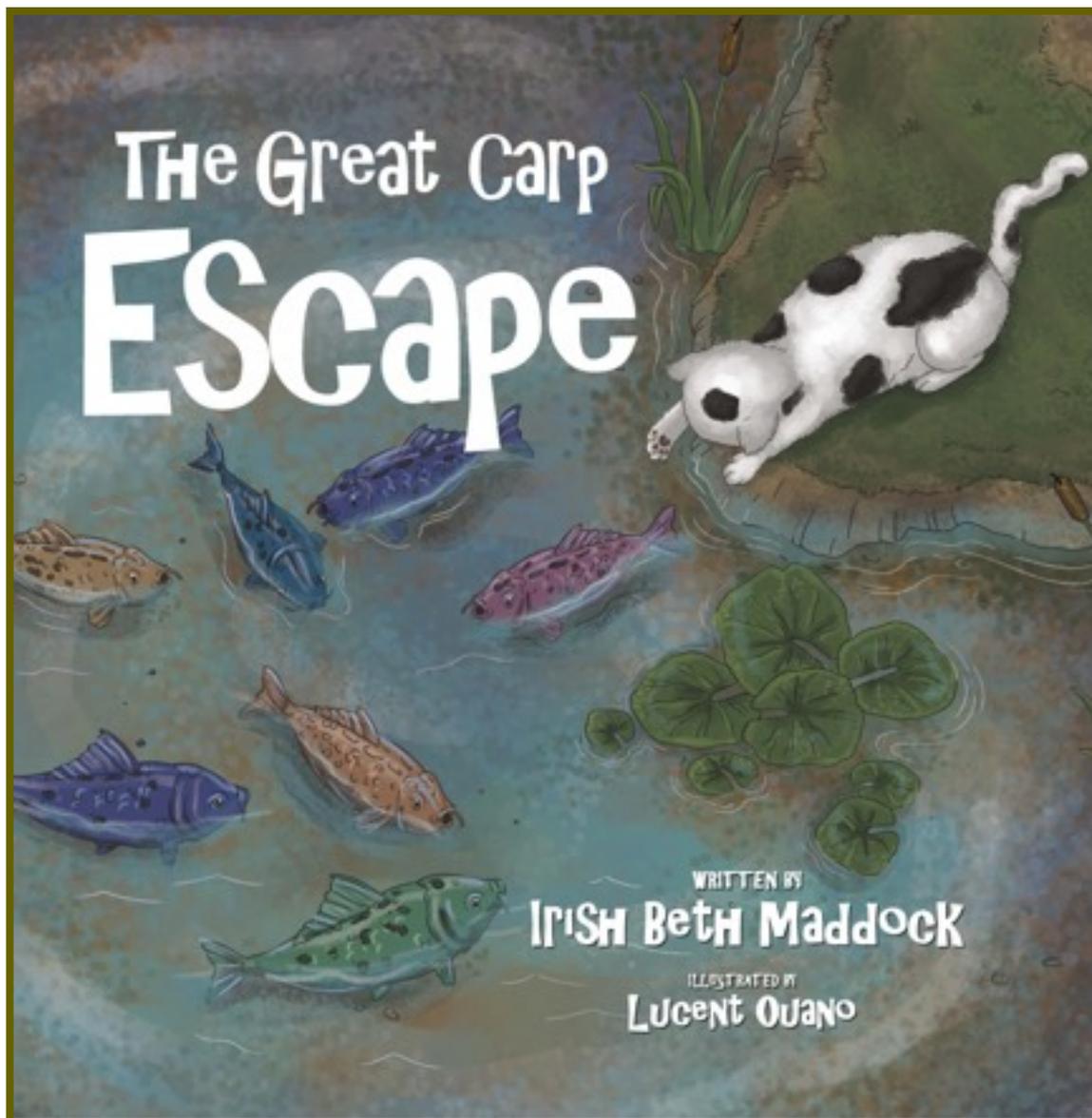


WESTERN TALE SPINNER

GOOD NEWS...continued...

Frances Hern has two poems in *Dear Tomato*, an international crop of food and agricultural poems for children that range from light-hearted to seriously thought-provoking, from haiku to free verse. *Dear Tomato* is available from Amazon sites and, as of May, from Ingram booksellers at www.ingramcontent.com.

Irish Beth Maddoks', *The Great Carp Escape*, an inspirational fish "tail" based on a true story about Vernon, BC, is now available online and in a book store near you (distributed by Ingram and Word Alive Press out of Winnipeg). Ebook and audio book formats coming soon.



WESTERN TALE SPINNER

Saying Farewell to Pamela

In case you didn't know, Pamela McDowell has been our Program Coordinator in Calgary for nearly 5 years...

Pamela McDowell is one of those writers who is inspiring, talented, and completely approachable. These qualities have made her an amazing Program Coordinator for our area over the past few years.

During this time, Pamela organized successful day-conferences and scheduled an interesting and varied program of speakers for both writers and illustrators on a bi-monthly basis. She also kept members up to date with SCBWI news, the local kidlit scene, and encouraged support of local children's writers by communicating book launches, signings, and other publishing news. Pamela worked hard to promote SCBWI in the Calgary community and encouraged other members to do the same.

Our meetings have become a great place for meeting other children's writers and illustrators, and Pamela always drew attention to publishing successes of our local members. Pamela is a great encourager and has generously shared her knowledge and experiences in the field of children's writing on many occasions. Because of her efforts, we have learned a huge amount about writing for children.

Pamela's first chapter book, *Ospreys in Danger*—an Orca Echoes book—was published in 2014. Seeing the book's journey first hand, from concept to publication, has been a true inspiration. It's something that encourages all of us to stick with this crazy writing business and not give up!

And so, on behalf of the SCBWI members in Alberta, we will miss you, Pamela! Thank you for all your hard work and commitment to our group, and we wish you continued success as an author.

Ruth Daly

SCBWI Canada West member, Calgary

and from Ken Kilback:

Pamela officially became SCBWI Canada West's Program Coordinator for Calgary in mid-2010, when she expressed an interest in making sure networking and programming continued to happen in that city. From the beginning, she was a pleasure to work with, always eager with ideas and determination to help out writers and illustrators in their journey as artists and in their ability to connect with others following similar creative paths.

The Speakers' Series became very popular and successful there, and hosted a wide variety of presenters—from local authors and illustrators to local editors and publishers, from tax specialists to specialty bookstore owners, and many more. In addition, she organized two conferences. The first, in 2010, was a two-day conference that focused on building your writing craft and preparing for publication; our guest speakers here were Crystal J. Stranaghan and Jared Hunt, Publisher and Senior Editor of Gumboot Books. The second, in 2011, focused on the theme of Collaboration and featured several different presenters: illustrator Lincoln Agnew; author-illustrator Georgia Graham; author Hazel Hutchins; and professional freelance editor Pat Kozak. And just recently, in 2014, Pamela was herself a presenter at SCBWI Canada West's WestCwic in Vancouver, at which she spoke on writing for hire and why people would—and *should!*—consider that as an option.

And during this time as Program Coordinator, Pamela was, of course, writing herself. By 2010, she had already published one non-fiction book, *Straight Talk About...Teen Pregnancy* (Crabtree). After that, a lot happened

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

with her writing!! In a very short time, she had many many non-fiction books published on different topics: Remarkable People such as *Michael Phelps* and *Selena Gomez*; Early Canadian books on such things as *The Fur Trader* and *The Storekeeper*; Animals in My Backyard such as *Black Bears* and *Bald Eagles*; First Nations such as *Tools and Weapons* and *Ceremonies and Celebrations*; and other science and social studies books such as *Bugs That Bite: Lice* and *Dirty Jobs: Exterminator*; and many more. In addition, she also had her first chapter book published in 2014 by Orca, *Ospreys in Danger*, a book that has just recently been nominated for the 2015 Crystal Kite Award and for the 2015 Green Earth Book Award.

Obviously, Pamela was very busy during her time as Program Coordinator and several times she warned me that she would have to resign from her role very very soon. I purposely kept very quiet on the matter and prayed and hoped that she would not resign. She didn't, and she thankfully kept on in the role for a few years longer. However, this time she was certain about the decision and the timing, and so here we are, sadly saying farewell to someone who has been and will continue to be a wonderful leader in the SCBWI family.

Thank you, Pamela, for your determination, your leadership, your thoughtfulness, your talent, your approachability, and your easy-going manner. It has been a great blessing working with you as the Program Coordinator. We are very sorry to see you leave, but we know you will continue to be a leader for other people wanting to write for children and you will continue to be building up your success as a writer.

We wish you all the very best indeed!! And thank you once again for everything!!!

Ken Kilback, Regional Advisor
SCBWI Canada West



Pamela McDowell

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

Inspiration, motivation and determination: The NY SCBWI recap

by Patricia Pinsk

This was my first time at the New York Society of Children's Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) conference (#NY15SCBWI). So this was a big deal for me. I planned and prepped for the big day. I felt ready.

Keynotes and illustrator intensive

There were lots of inspirational keynote speakers. Laura Vaccaro Seeger spoke about her writing and illustration process. She gave us an inside peek at her list and doodle-packed journals. She spoke about the importance of always keeping a notebook of some sort with you to jot down ideas every day.

Some of her key points also included:

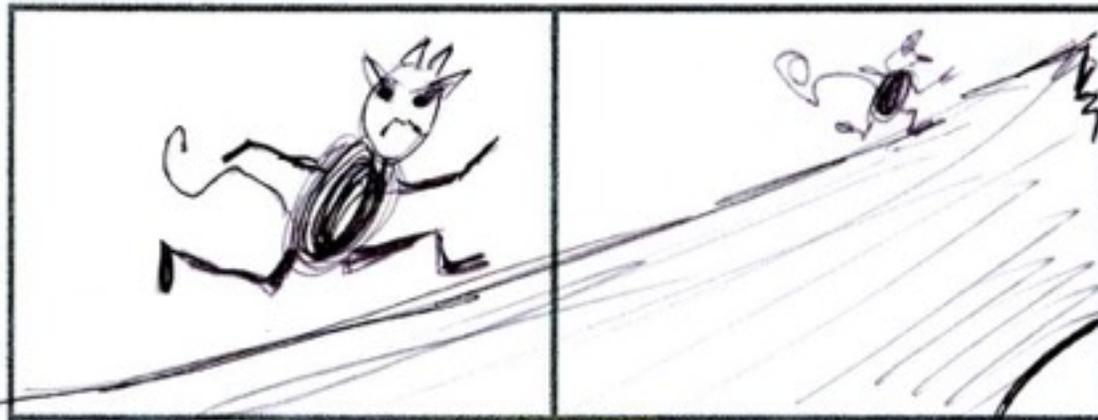
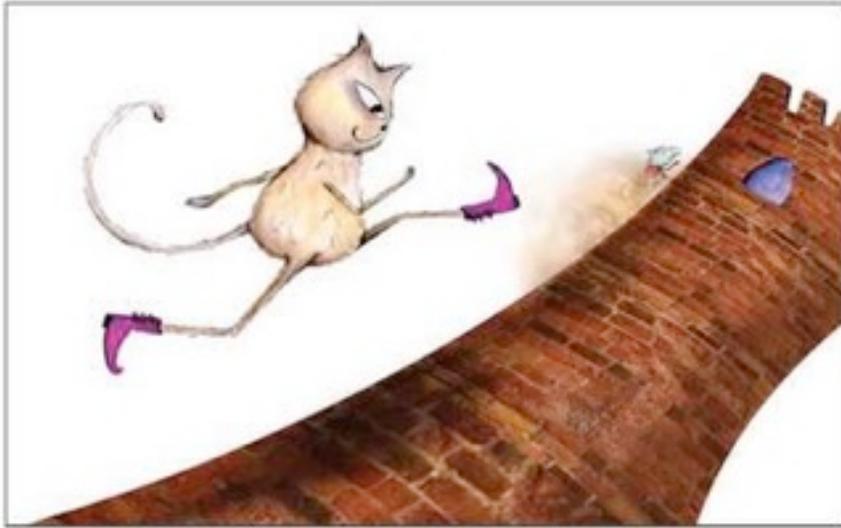
- 1 Have a compelling story to tell—even if it's a simple book (e.g. her book *Green is more than just about color*).
- 2 Think about the use of color, texture and fonts to help tell your story.
- 3 Use repetitive illustrated elements to show how a character gets bigger or smaller (e.g. her main character in *Bully*; the fence remains the same size, but *Bully* gets bigger).

I participated in the illustrators' intensive: *Generating a Picture Book Story*. We had to write and story board a picture book. We based our story on an illustration that we had brought to this workshop. I'm not a writer by default, so this was a great learning experience for me. I used one of my *Puss n' Boots* illustrations. The story took on a completely different theme in this exercise. The story was now all about a cheese-obsessed mouse who made the mistake of stealing a bite from his arch enemy The Cat. Pan to a big chase scene and kerfuffle...

(On the following page, you'll find Patricia's wordless storyboard illustrations):

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

Pinsk continued...



- no words -

Rough storyboard: 2 page spread of angry cat chasing mouse. It's based on the original illustration, but is now part of a different story -- © Patricia Pinsk

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

Pinsk continued...

What I learned from this workshop was the following:

- 1 The best ideas come when you don't allow yourself to filter things. That is, just create. Leave the left brain stuff for later.
- 2 Nothing motivates better than an absolute deadline (2 hours in this case).
- 3 If you don't let fear get in the way, you will be amazed at what you can do in a short amount of time.

Conference keynote speaker highlights

There were so many other amazing speakers at this conference. Some of the highlights include:

- Editor's panel: It's a great time to be in children's books – sales are soaring.
- Hervé Tullet: Kids need new books, new ideas. My favourite word is "Ahhh!" If I can elicit that word from children, I am very happy.
- Kwame Alexander: Don't let other people's "No" define your "Yes!!" *The Crossover* was rejected 20 times by publishers.
- Jennifer Laughran: The best queries are like good skirts: they are short enough to be compelling, and long enough to cover everything important.
- Laura Vaccaro Seeger: Sometimes a problem can make something so much better once you find a solution.
- Margaret Raymo: Don't try to follow what's hot or popular now. Follow your own muse.
- Anthony Horowitz: The only difference between a successful writer and an unsuccessful writer is that the unsuccessful writer gives up.
- Henry Winkler: We must teach our children where they are great, not where they must go

Patricia Pinsk (<http://www.patriciapinsk.com/>) lives in Vancouver. She holds a BFA from Vancouver's Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (now called Emily Carr University of Art and Design), a Certificate in New Media from Vancouver Film School, and a Certificate in Technical Writing from Simon Fraser University.

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

Where Words & Imagination Come to Life

by Yasmin John-Thorpe

The words in the title are the words in every ad for the Tucson Festival of Books, which has been held for the past seven years in March on the University of Arizona campus in Tucson.

As a writer spending winters in Arizona I originally visited the festival as an observer, but when I witnessed the energy, I wanted to be a part of this festival. I had actually accompanied a fellow author, Lorna Schultz-Nicholson, who attended in 2014 as a contributing author with her books. After her book-signing event we dropped in to several panel discussions, agents' Q&A sessions and authors' workshops. In the fall of 2014 I signed up to participate as an author with my two children's books. Before I tell you about my experience, let me give some background on the festival, now in its seventh year.

The entire event is free; even parking on the campus is free for the two-day event, which has reached record numbers over the years. Last year, more than 120,000 people attended. It is now ranked as one of the top four book events in the country. The community of Tucson, businesses, groups, and university are participants in the event. The university's science department takes up a large section of the "mall" area of the campus, hosting science experiments for attendees, while the astronomy department sets up telescopes and hands out information to families about the universe and galaxies.



WESTERN TALE SPINNER

John-Thorpe continued

The children's area is vast, with places to play, and to listen to story-time by authors. There is a stage, where plays written by children are performed by actors. Awards are given out for story writing contests for young and adult writers. Schools set up tents to enroll new students, and all manner of crafts, books and music supplies are available. There is even a large tent giving away free books. The whole area is like one giant market. In this scene you can find all types of food and drinks.

While authors' book-signing takes place in tents across the area, most of the workshops, panel discussions and Q&A sessions are held within the campus buildings, in classrooms, lecture halls and theatre. The whole festival is run like a well-oiled machine thanks to an army of volunteers.

This year, some of the best-selling authors presenting workshops and hosting book-signings were Amy Tan, Mitch Albom, Dave Barry, Scott Turow, Ridley Pearson, Greg Lles, Alan Zweibel and Sam Barry. This group of authors is also known as The Rock Bottom Reminders, an oldies rock cover group, who kicked off the festival with a concert on the Friday evening before the start of the festival's Saturday and Sunday events.

Now, in 2015, I would be one of the authors participating with my two new, niche market children's books. I paid my fee and was given the allocated place and time. I only had a short time slot to sell my books. There is a SCBWI group here and I tried contacting them to check if I might pay and sit the two days in their tent. I never received an answer to my email. I did the same with the local Arizona Writers Group. Again, no reply. (Editor's note: This might have something to do with such things being handled by volunteers...??)

Well, off I went with no pre-conceived expectations. I am an unknown author, one of close to 400 participating in the festival. I was offered a share of an eight-foot table, in a tent at the Children/Teen Author Pavilion, with seven other authors, for two and a half hours.

I have done book-signings before. For this event, I practiced my tried and true rules. I arrived early, two hours before my assigned time. The session was the first on Saturday morning. I was asked to come in by 10 a.m., fifteen minutes early to set up. My excitement at being a part of the event had me arriving by 8:15 a.m. I got there before the three volunteers. I chose my spot, took one of the table cloths left for the volunteers, and was set up by the time they made an appearance. I was given my name tag and table sign.

Being set up that early paid off. I made my first sales to the three volunteers before the crowds began filing past to visit authors' presentations. My selected spot at the end of the table close to the sidewalk and walkway put me in the hot Arizona sun, but I was able to attract and greet everyone walking by. The wind was gusting that day, as I held up my two books and called out "Good Morning" to all. A smile is a wonderful thing. My happy smile brought numerous people off the path to my table.

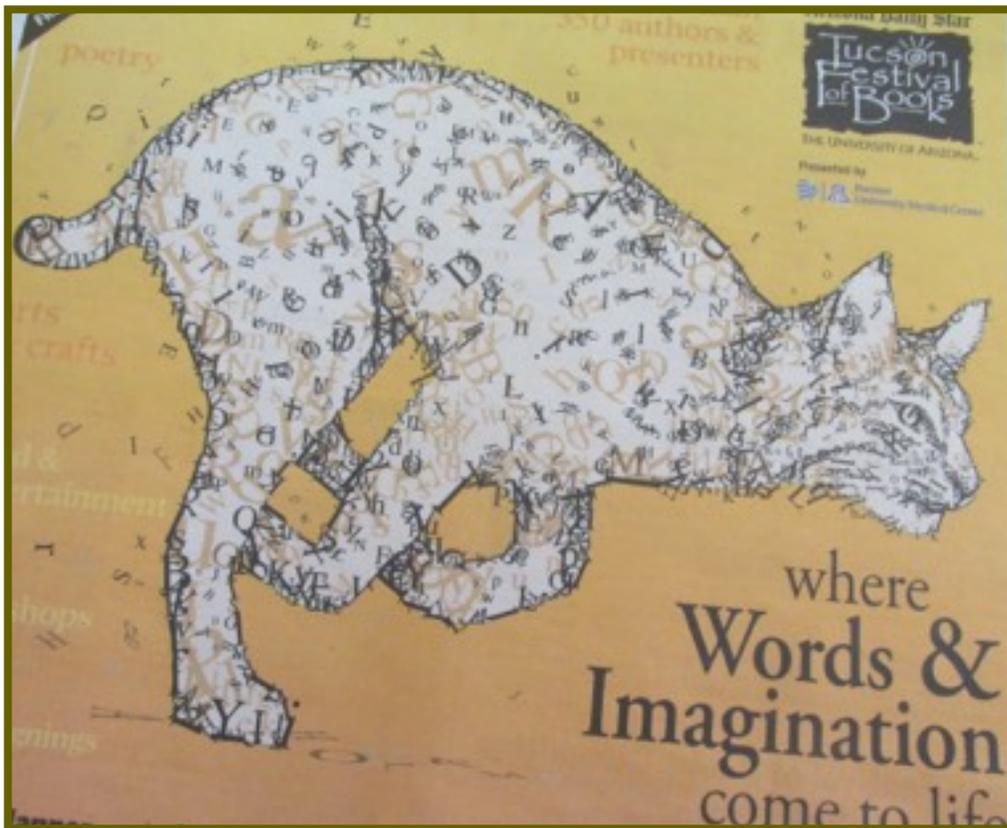
WESTERN TALE SPINNER

John-Thorpe continued

I must mention here that I observed the other authors were all sitting at their spots. Three others finally got up and began to chat with potential buyers, and made sales. For my effort, I was happy to sell 32 copies of my books - 17 copies of the first book and 15 copies of the second. I did not have bookmarks to hand out, which is always recommended. I did have postcards of the illustrations in my books, which were given free for every book sold. This turned out to be a great draw with the grandparents, parents and children.

I headed home, so tuckered out I did not attend any of the other sessions offered. I was a very happy participant. I will apply to attend the Tucson Festival of Books 2016. Dates have been announced—March 12 & 13. Please check the website at - www.tucsonfestivalofbooks.org

I hope to see some of the SCBWI members down this way in 2016. Please email me at Yasmin@yasminjohnthorpe.com for any details.



Friends of Sheila A. Egoff — an important request!

On behalf of a newly formed group, *Friends of Sheila A. Egoff*, I am writing to ask you for a financial donation to support the Sheila A. Egoff Children's Literature Book Prize, awarded annually at the B.C. Book Prizes Gala. The Egoff Prize honours the author of a book for children or young adults. The category includes chapter books, fiction, non-fiction and biography. Sarah Ellis, Vi Hughes, Judi Saltman, Kathryn Shoemaker and I recently founded this group in order to continue the legacy of support provided for many years by the British Columbia Library Association (BCLA). At this time the prize needs support from *The Friends of Sheila A. Egoff* to ensure that it continues to be awarded annually.

This prize has always been vital in highlighting and rewarding great children's books created by British Columbia's children's book creators. The prize supports all aspects of children's literature by recognizing excellence in writing and by promoting sales, which in turn supports Canadian children's book publishing and children's booksellers. It was named for Sheila A. Egoff, O.C, Professor Emerita of UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, in recognition of her work as the first critic of, and a passionate advocate for, Canadian children's literature.

Those of us on the founding committee have each pledged \$100 this year to the prize. We now ask you to join us by making a financial donation so that we reach our goal of \$2000. If twenty people give \$100 each we will reach our goal. If forty people give \$50 each we will reach our goal. If we raise more than our target amount the additional funds will go toward the support of next year's prize.

To make your donation, please write a cheque to The B.C. Book Prizes. On the memo line please write: for the Sheila A. Egoff Prize. Mail your cheque to the B.C. Book Prizes, #901-207 W. Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1H7, Canada.

You will receive a full tax receipt for your donation.

If you have already contributed please excuse duplicate requests you may have received.

Thank you so much for your consideration. We look forward to seeing you at the B.C. Book Prizes on Saturday, April 25, 2015 at the Pinnacle Vancouver Harbourfront Hotel (currently the Renaissance Vancouver Harbourside Hotel).

If you would like further information or clarification, please contact Kathie Shoemaker at kshoe@telus.net

Sheryl McFarlane,
Author of more than a dozen award-winning books for kids and teens www.sherylmcfarlane.ca (email at: sherylbooks@gmail.com)



**illustrations by
Anita Miettunen**

**“Butterflies” above and
“Daisies” below**



WESTERN TALE SPINNER

Event Horizon

By Ken Kilback

SCBWI Western Washington's annual conference is from **April 17 through 19 2015** in Redmond. Guest speakers include editors Carter Hasegawa and Michelle McCann; agents Christa Heschke, Rachel Orr, Mandy Hubbard, and more; authors Kirby Lawson, Jolie Steklie, Sharon G. Flake and more; and author-illustrators Nina Laden and David Wiesner. To register or for more information, please go to www.wwa.scbwi.org .

New Westminster, BC, is holding its annual **Lit Fest New West** from **Friday April 24 through Saturday April 25, 2015** at Douglas College. Children's authors Lois Peterson and Jacquie Pearce are two of the people providing workshops at this event. For more information, go to www.artscouncilnewwest.org/litfest .

The 29th annual Vancouver Children's Book Festival, **BookFest 2015**, is being held in Nanaimo on **Saturday May 2 2015**. Special guest speakers include authors Vikki VanSickle, Roy MacGregor, Catherine Austen, Sarah Turner, Terri Mack, Lucky Budd and Gary Kent; author-illustrators Mike Deas and Wallace Edwards; and illustrators Bill Helin and Kim LaFave. For more information, please go to www.bookfest.ca .

The **TD Canadian Children's Book Week** is being held from **May 2 through May 9 2015** this year. This event celebrates children's book and the importance of reading. Close to 35, 000 children, teens, and adults participate in activities held in every province and territory of Canada. For more information, go to www.bookweek.ca .

The annual **Calgary International Children's Festival** is from **May 20 through 23 2015** in different venues at Arts Common and Olympic Plaza. Lots of fun stuff for kids and parents and more. For more information, please go to www.calgarykidsfest.ca .

The annual **Surrey International Children's Festival** runs from **May 21 through 23 2015** at both the Surrey Arts Centre and Bear Creek Park. Lots of fun stuff for people of all ages. Author David Bouchard is one of the presenters at the festival. For more information, please go to www.surrey.ca/childrensfestival/ .

The annual **Vancouver International Children's Festival** takes place from **May 25 through May 31 2015** on Granville Island in Vancouver. Lots of fun stuff for kids and parents and children's writers and illustrators alike! For more information, go to www.childrensfestival.ca.

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

The annual **Northern Alberta International Children's Festival** is in St. Albert, Alberta from **May 26 through 30 2015**. Lots of fun stuff for people of all ages. For more information, please go to www.stalbert.ca/experience/international-childrens-festival/.

SCBWI Canada East is holding its conference **The Art of Story** on **May 29 through 31 2015** in Montreal. Guest speakers are editor Cheryl Klein; publisher Allyn Johnston; art director Lily Malcolm; agent Heather Alexander; authors Bruce Colville, Linda Urban and Kari-Lynn Winters; and author-illustrator Marie-Louise Gay. For more information or to register, please go to <https://canadaeast.scbwi.org/events/the-art-of-story-2015/>.

The annual **Winnipeg International Children's Festival** takes place **June 4 through 7 2015** at The Forks. Lots of entertainment and activities for people of all ages. Please go to www.kidsfest.ca.

The annual **PotashCorp Children's Festival of Saskatchewan** runs from **June 5 through 7 2015** in Saskatoon. Lots of fun stuff for people of all ages. For more information, please go to www.potashcorpchildrensfestival.com.

The **Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop Summer 2015** is happening the week of **July 13 through 17 2015** in Oceanside, Oregon. Featured presenters include: Editors Julia Maguire and Katie Bignell; agent Rachel Orr; and authors Christine Fletcher, David Greenberg, Deborah Hopkinson, Victoria Jamieson and Ruth A. Musgrave. Go to www.occbww.com for registration and conference details.

The **Saskatchewan Festival of Words** is happening from **July 16 through 19 2015**. A variety of speakers are scheduled to be there, including authors Susin Nielsen and Kevin Sylvester. For more information, please go to www.festivalofwords.com.

The annual **SCBWI Summer Conference** in Los Angeles is running from **July 31 through August 3 2015** this year. Conference information is not yet up, but check in at www.scbwi.org as the details become available.

The **Surrey International Writers' Conference** is happening **Friday through Sunday October 23 through 25 2015** in Surrey, B.C. This year's program is not yet posted, but check in at www.siw.ca for registration and conference details as they become available.

Note: SCBWI Canada West distributes information about events, but passing along this information does not constitute an endorsement. Interested persons must follow up on all aspects of these events on their own.