



The SCBWI Tokyo Newsletter Spring/Summer 2009

Carp Tales is the bi-annual newsletter of the Tokyo chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). The newsletter includes SCBWI Tokyo chapter and member news, upcoming events, a bulletin board of announcements related to writing and illustrating for children in Japan, reports of past events, information on industry trends, interviews with authors and illustrators, and other articles related to children's literature. For inquiries or submissions, contact info@scbwi.jp. The submission deadline is May 1 for the spring issue of *Carp Tales* and November 1 for the fall issue. All articles and illustrations in *Carp Tales* are © SCBWI Tokyo and the contributing writers and illustrators. For more information about SCBWI Tokyo see www.scbwi.jp. The *Carp Tales* logo is © Naomi Kojima.

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From the Editors

The first half of 2009 has been busy for SCBWI Tokyo. The chapter has welcomed overseas visitors—John Shelley from the U.K., Alison Lester from Australia, and John Agee from the U.S.—and seen a number of new volunteers step forward, bringing fresh energy and ideas. Exciting opportunities are forthcoming as a result of this volunteer activity.

The online SCBWI Tokyo Critique Group and Translation Group (Japanese to English) continue to grow, nurturing novices and professionals alike in the arts of writing and translating for children.

*In this issue of *Carp Tales*, we bring you two interviews: one with author-illustrator Mo Willems, and another with publisher Kira Lynn of Kane/Miller. The issue also features a detailed how-to article on illustration portfolios by John Shelley; a report by SCBWI Korea Regional Advisor Jenny Desmond Walters on the Seoul International Book Fair; and updates on the Sakura Medal program and *Picture This!* programs in Japan, as well as the recent awarding of the prestigious Mildred L. Batchelder Award to a novel translated from the Japanese. Also included are updates on member activities, event reports, and notices of upcoming opportunities.*

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Holly Thompson, *Carp Tales* Editor, SCBWI Tokyo Regional Advisor
Avery Udagawa, *Carp Tales* Assistant Editor
Annie Donwerth Chikamatsu, *Carp Tales* Assistant Editor

Event Wrap-Ups

by Holly Thompson

Alison Lester: From Arnhem Land to Antarctica as a Children's Author and Illustrator **January 23, 2009**

Alison Lester loves working with children and their art, and in her travels to indigenous regions of Australia as well as to Antarctica and the Arctic Circle, she has developed projects that involve collaborating with children. While here in Japan for international school visits, Lester took us to Antarctica via a stunning



Alison Lester shares one of her books during a visit to Tokyo International School

slideshow and told us of the journal entries she sent to schools during the trip. Using her descriptions of the ice, the research ship, and the wildlife, children made illustrations that they then sent to Lester, and these she arranged and combined with backgrounds in collaborative works. She has also collaborated with indigenous

communities by working with student editors and designing murals using kids' drawings, as well as making books with communities. She also writes novels, and writes and illustrates her hugely popular picture books. She shared with us stacks of rough sketches, storyboards, dummies, and finished books that she had carried to Tokyo.

Power Portfolios with John Shelley: Learn the Secrets of Building a Better Portfolio and How to Show It Effectively **February 8, 2009**

Illustrator John Shelley returned to Japan for a private exhibition of his illustrations, as well as this information-packed presentation for SCBWI Tokyo. Shelley gave a detailed overview on creating strong illustration portfolios, and shared the dos and don'ts for meetings with editors and art directors. Drawing on

years of experience showing his own portfolio and viewing illustrator portfolios, Shelley gave advice on which works to include and which to exclude, and how best to size, order and arrange individual pieces for their greatest impact when showing a portfolio to an editor.



John Shelley giving an open portfolio critique

Following the informational talk, Shelley gave two public portfolio critiques of SCBWI Tokyo member portfolios for the benefit of all participants. He also gave private critiques to participants who had signed up in advance. See John Shelley's article in this issue of *Carp Tales*.

Manuscript and Illustration Exchange **March 14, 2009**

Members, nonmembers and new faces showed up at this Saturday evening manuscript and illustration exchange. The creative work shared for group feedback included a nonfiction magazine piece, several full picture book dummies, a Japanese legend, several picture book stories, and a poetry manuscript. About ten works were critiqued in the two-hour session. A number of these illustrations and stories have since been revised and improved; one revision has since been further critiqued through the online critique group, and some pieces are now in the process of being sent out to editors. SCBWI Tokyo wishes everyone good luck in placing their work!

**Terrific, I'm Going to Be Eaten By Sharks:
Telling Funny Stories in Words and Pictures
with Jon Agee**
April 17, 2009



Jon Agee, center front, with workshop participants and the storyboards they created in his workshop

This Friday evening workshop had us marveling at Jon Agee's not-so-linear imagination and following his crazy leaps into the absurd. Using examples from his first book *The Snow Falls* and his picture book *Milo's Hat Trick*, Agee demonstrated his particular way of discovering stories through a combination of doodling and asking a series of "what if" questions. Agee shared strategies for setting up picture book plots and stressed the importance of opposites, as well as human and animal interaction, in creating humor. He explained that he always wants kids to scratch their heads and "consider that things are not always what they seem." During the workshop Agee invited participants to develop their own story beginnings. Two brave volunteers then shared their efforts, and Agee elaborated on how he might take off with their ideas to develop plots with humor and page-turning tension. This workshop had everyone laughing and definitely kick-started a number of projects.

**Under the Hood: The Nuts and Bolts of Craft
with Literary Agent Laura Rennert**
May 15, 2009

Literary agent Laura Rennert of the Andrea Brown Literary Agency was a huge hit at the November 2008 SCBWI Tokyo Writers' Day, and she returned on this Friday evening for a packed two-hour follow-up presentation on craft. Rennert exhaustively covered the criteria for good stories, ways to create memorable characters, the essentials of solid narrative structure, the principles of strong plot and more. Many participants commented that so many ideas were generated as a result of Rennert's

two-hour presentation that they wanted to go straight home and start writing. Nonetheless, a sizeable crowd gathered for dinner, drinks and more talk about writing after the event. SCBWI Tokyo is so grateful to Rennert for presenting a second time before her move back to the U.S. At the beginning of the event, Suzanne Kamata was presented with the SCBWI Magazine Merit Award for her short story "Pilgrimage," which appeared in *Cicada Magazine*.



Suzanne Kamata, winner of an SCBWI Magazine Merit Award, with Laura Rennert

SCBWI Tokyo Networking Night
June 11, 2009

About thirty people participated in the fourth annual SCBWI Tokyo Networking Night at the Pink Cow in Shibuya. Designers, illustrators, writers, editors, new faces and familiar faces showed up to meet, greet and share information. Plenty of *meishi* cards were exchanged and many impressive portfolios were passed around. Thank you again to the Pink Cow for making this event possible.

Holly Thompson is author of the novel Ash (Stone Bridge Press), set in Kyoto and Kagoshima, and the picture book The Wakame Gatherers (Shen's Books). Regional Advisor of SCBWI Tokyo, she teaches poetry and fiction writing at Yokohama City University. See www.hatbooks.com.

Otter © Matt Burns



Writing is a Form of Sculpture: An Interview with Mo Willems

by Tim Young

Mo Willems is an animator and cartoonist who has won six Emmy awards for animation, as well as three Caldecott Honors and two Geisel Medals for his children's books. He has published more than twenty books, including the classic *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. His most recent is called *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*. The following is an edited excerpt from an interview for the Deconstructing Comics Podcast (DCP), conducted by Tim Young and published February 2, 2009. For the entire interview, visit <http://deconstructingcomics.com/?p=54>.

You've got several different series of books going—the Pigeon books, the Elephant and Piggie books, and the Knuffle Bunny books—and I noticed that in each one, you're using a different art style, a different book design.

Different—different paper stock, different pens, different format. The Elephant and Piggie books are really the only ones that were conceived as a series. I said, OK, I'm going to make a series with these characters, I really need to develop them and who they are, make sure that their design is such that they can do a lot. We can see them from the back, we can see them from the front, I can put costumes on them, that kind of thing. So they were really developed with that in mind, and I love doing them. They are the most fun books to do.

The Pigeon books were not conceived as a series, and they sort of come out when the pigeon makes me make another one (laughter). So it has to happen. Knuffle Bunny, I'm working on a third book—just starting an idea for a third book, and it will be the end. It will close. This is a trilogy. So that saga will be over. And that's the most realistic of them. That, if anything, is the sort of *Gasoline Alley*, I guess, because the characters age over time, and they're very small stories. They're very much about the idea that small autobiographical moments are worthy of telling, and the pigeon is much more slapstick, by definition.

In the Knuffle Bunny books, the backgrounds are all photos, which, I guess, you took yourself?

I did, but they're not actually photos. They are digital illustrations. They are based on photos, but I went in—in order to make them emotionally true—I took out all the air conditioners, I took out cars, I took out garbage cans, I rebuilt props, I changed signage. So none of them are pure photographs.

I see. I was showing these books to my seven-year-old daughter, and that really caught her eye, the photos with drawn people in them. She thought that was really interesting.

Which is great. You know, one of the things is that all of my books, I want them to be played, not just read. So one of the things that you can do is, you live in Tokyo, you can go out and take pictures on the street.

And kids don't draw backgrounds, usually, as well as they draw characters. They can draw characters, so cut 'em out, tape 'em, plop 'em on top. I see a lot of projects like that. And that really jazzes me.

*A draft isn't a redraft
unless you've gotten rid
of twenty percent of the
words.*

Now, the Pigeon books, you're using crayon for those, right?

Well, no, it's not crayon, it's this crazy Stabilo pencil for marking metal and glass—this really sticky, gross pencil . . . After I realized I was going to make more than one [Pigeon book], I got nervous that they were going to run out of these pencils, so I bought, you know, eight thousand of them.

Yeah, don't discontinue them now!

Exactly.

Now, what on earth ever gave you the idea that the pigeon would want to drive a bus?

Well, I mean, wouldn't *you* want to drive a bus?

I suppose so!

It's just awesome. So, imagine, I mean, the idea of a pigeon driving a bus doesn't seem that far out to me. I get that question a lot, and they say, "Why a pigeon?" and then I'll say, "Oh, because a hippopotamus

wouldn't fit on the page," and, you know, I've got all these flip answers, but the real answer is, like, *duh*. Of course a pigeon would want to drive a bus (laughing).

Even though he's going to have trouble keeping his wings on the wheel and his feet on the pedals at the same time.

Well, dream the impossible dream. I'm not talking about the practicality of it. But, I mean, every time I see a pigeon, and that little beady eye is staring at me, I can see it saying, "God. I really want to drive a bus right now." You know? That seems sort of like a no-brainer to me.

OK, I'll have to check out the next pigeon I see and see if he's got that bus-driving look on his face.

That burning passion. You know, for me, the breakthrough was, originally it was going to be a little boy who was going to stop the pigeon from driving the bus. So the breakthrough wasn't what the pigeon was doing, it was getting rid of the middleman, and letting the audience be the heavy in the story.

You mentioned in some interview that you do quite a few drafts of each book. So the story kind of evolves as you do each one, I imagine.

Absolutely, absolutely, it's a process. That's the fun part. That's the fun part.

What kind of tells you when you've finally got it right, when you've finally arrived at something that you want to show the publisher?

Well, you know, I communicate fairly quickly, I mean, I show the publisher really rough stuff. I have an editor that I've got a good relationship with, so even if I have the spark of an idea, I'll call her up and say, "I think I wrote a book." So, there's definitely a sort of a dialogue there. It's hard to explain, but, not that I'm so old or anything, but I've been doing this for a long time, and certainly in television, I've written a lot of stuff. And I don't know what's good, but I do know what's bad. My muscles are trained so that if it's not working I can tell. So all I do is, I just keep working at it until it's no longer bad. And at that point, logic decrees that it's probably pretty good. So I see it as a form of sculpture. I'm chipping away at the badness, and leaving what's there. So, you know, that's just part of it.

Tim Young is a twenty-year resident of Tokyo, where he has worked in the fields of desktop publishing, marketing, and education. His own web comic is currently shelved while he focuses on publishing two weekly podcasts: Deconstructing Comics (deconstructingcomics.com), featuring comics interviews and reviews, and Machigai Podcast (machigai.com), for Japanese learners of English.

Featured SCBWI Tokyo Member Illustrators in this Issue

Matt Burns graduated from Chapman University in Orange, California, with a degree in screenwriting, but comics and children's picture books are his true love. He has published illustrations in English workbooks for AEON Institute of Language Education. He is currently working on a children's book about a turtle named Dot who visits Japan and brings back a shell-full of omiyage to show his family in America. His website is <http://pigandcorn.blogspot.com>.

Rob Foote was born in South Africa and studied Fine Art. He has had two books published in South Africa, three in Japan, and has more on the way. He won first prize in the Coca Cola young South African designers competition in 2007. He is currently working on illustrations for Pearson Longman's *E-JAM* songbook and was selected, along with two others, to illustrate for the 2009 ASIJ Picture This! competition. His website is www.robfoote.net.

Midori Mori was born and raised in Hyogo, Japan, and graduated from the Academy of Art in San Francisco with a BFA in illustration. After working as a graphic artist, web designer and art teacher for children, she became a freelance illustrator. Mori's clients have included McGraw Hill, Harcourt, Inc., and Peninsula Youth Theater. In addition to illustrating picture books, she has also provided illustrations for greeting cards, web-magazines, packaging and edutainment sites. She is now based in Japan. Her website is www.midorimori.com.

Teri Suzanne is a bilingual educator, multi-media author, producer and free-hand cut-paper artist. She has published nine children's books and eight CDs, is author of the first Ministry of Science and Education-contracted Internet English Program for schools throughout Japan, and writes and illustrates columns for major child-related magazines and journals. Her website is www.terisuzanne.com.

Yoko Yoshizawa is a writer, translator, illustrator and printmaker. Recent publications include *Oogui hyotan (The Magic Pumpkin, 2005, 2007)* and *Samuli mame wo torikaesu (Samlee Took Back Beans, 2006)*, both from Fukuinkan. From April 2008 through March 2009 she contributed the articles, "Animal Sayings from Around the World," to the insert booklet for the monthly picture book series *Kodomo no tomo* from Fukuinkan. See <http://yokobooks.exblog.jp/>.

Publishing Children's Books From and About Japan: An Interview with Kira Lynn

by Misa Dikengil

Kane/Miller Book Publishers has become known for publishing children's books from around the world, including Japanese children's books in translation and original works set in Japan. The La Jolla, California, company recently became a division of EDC Publishing and now seeks works that "convey cultures and communities within the U.S." in addition to books from other countries. Misa Dikengil interviewed publisher Kira Lynn about how Kane/Miller acquires foreign titles and how its editorial practices have evolved.



Kane/Miller published Taro Gomi's *Everyone Poops*, which is perhaps one of the best-selling Japanese children's books in translation of all-time. It is also on Kane/Miller's Top Ten Titles list, along with three other titles from Japan: *The Gas We Pass* by Shinta Cho, *Breasts* by Genichiro Yagyu, and *Who's Hiding* by Satoru Onishi. How do the sales of Japanese titles rank in Kane/Miller's total sales figures?

Our Japanese titles make up a very large percentage of our total sales figures—about 65 percent.

In general, what is the market like right now for children's books from or about Asia?

In some ways the answer to that question is the same as for *any* children's book—it depends on the book. Is it a subject accessible to Americans? Is it a subject Americans are familiar with, at least superficially? Is there a commonality to the themes and characters?

We have quite a few successful books from Asia—and each answers the above questions differently. The answer is: there is certainly an openness to and potential for really wonderful books from Asia.

Can you describe how Kane/Miller acquires foreign titles? Does Kane/Miller actively seek foreign works at book fairs, etc., or are they mostly acquired as a result of queries from translators, agents, and/or publishers?

We attend the Bologna Book Fair and the Frankfurt Book Fair every year. Also, we've built up some nice relationships with other publishers, authors and agents around the world, so we receive quite a bit of unsolicited material throughout the year. After so many years, we've "found" books through almost every avenue—directly from authors, unsolicited and unpublished works, agents, rights centers, translation

centers, and publishers. We often work with Japan Foreign Rights Centre, which is great for us as they represent a number of different Japanese publishers.

Once you've acquired a book, how does the translation process begin?

We usually receive a rough translation from the publisher, and . . . that's it. We've found in the last ten years or so, that for us, it works better if the editor has a rough translation and goes from there. Literal translations obviously don't work. We want the intent of the author (both in terms of language and content) to be preserved and shine through. We've found it works well for the editor to be very active in that process.

Kane/Miller chooses not to print the translator's name on the cover of its translated titles. (The translator's name appears inside with the copyright information.) Is there a specific reason for this?

The original Kane/Miller publishers used translators early on. This was at a time when translated children's literature, *foreign children's literature*, was not particularly commonplace (or acknowledged). They wanted to honor and acknowledge the translator's work while still being cognizant of the marketplace and sales potential. We don't really use translators any longer, but we decided not to change that practice for reprints.

When you say you don't use translators any longer, does that mean the final published translation is really an edited version of the rough translation provided by the original publishing company?

Yes, exactly.

Kane/Miller is committed to publishing works of multicultural literature that “bring the children of the world closer to each other.” Its catalog lists books from 23 different countries of origin. Does Kane/Miller try to maintain a balance of titles from around the world or do you just look for good stories first and foremost?

Both—we actively look for titles from countries we don’t have on our list, but then they must first and foremost be good stories. While we firmly believe that there are extraordinarily talented people working all over the world, it is obviously more challenging to find those people in countries that do not (yet) have a strong tradition of children’s literature.

Kane/Miller now states in its submission guidelines that it is seeking works on “subjects which are particularly American.” Can you explain the reason for these new guidelines, which seem quite different from what Kane/Miller previously sought? Also, do these guidelines apply to original works in English only or to already published books from other countries as well?

We felt that it was time to include the United States in the “world” part of our tagline, “Award-Winning Children’s Books from Around the World.” You’re right though—these guidelines apply to only those works from American authors. That is, we don’t want books from Japanese authors on the American Revolution.

Kane/Miller is now a part of Educational Development Corporation Publishing (EDC), the United States trade publisher of Usborne Publishing Limited, a line of children’s books produced in the United Kingdom. How has Kane/Miller changed as a result of this development? What changes can readers expect to see at Kane/Miller in the future?

We’re very excited about our new company. The only change is that you can expect to see more Kane/Miller titles each season, as we are now less constrained financially and structurally. So, if we find twenty books one season, we’ll publish them.

One of Kane/Miller’s Japanese titles, *The Park Bench* by Fumiko Takeshita, comes in a bilingual (Japanese/English) edition. How does Kane/Miller decide which titles should be published bilingually versus just in translation?

This was more of an artistic decision than a language decision—the Japanese text looked so beautiful we felt it added to the overall presentation and artistic

integrity of the book.

Does Kane/Miller have Japanese readers (people who review Japanese titles)? Are you currently looking for any readers?

We don’t have any Japanese readers, as we’ve only done picture books from Japan to this point. Obviously that will change as/if we move into longer works of fiction. And then yes, we’ll be looking for readers.

Are you open to receiving queries and/or manuscripts from translators of Japanese books? Can you offer any advice to writers, illustrators, and translators who may be interested in submitting work from or about Japan?

We are open to receiving queries, but not manuscripts, as often the translator has not determined the availability of the title in question. We need to know if English rights are available before we read/fall in love with a title. Also, we don’t use translators for our picture books, so this would only apply to fiction titles. We are always looking for new work from and/or about Japan (preferably not one without the other). We read every submission—though it takes a while—so following guidelines, knowing something about the American market and what is and is not saleable here—and talent, of course—always helps.

Thank you so much for your time.

Misa Dikengil graduated from Northwestern University with a BA in Asian and Middle East Languages and Civilizations and completed post-graduate studies at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies in Yokohama. She is currently marketing English translations of Japanese picture books to publishers.

SCBWI Tokyo Translation Listserv

Are you interested in translation of Japanese children’s books into English? How do you feel about the practice of publishing an edited sample translation of a picture book in lieu of hiring, crediting, and paying royalties to a translator? Discuss this and other topics on the SCBWI Tokyo Translation listserv, a forum for discussing issues related specifically to translating children’s and young adult literature from Japanese into English. For an invitation, contact one of the co-moderators: Sako Ikegami (sako@yamaneko.org) or Avery Udagawa (averyudagawa@yahoo.com).

Power Portfolios for Illustrators

by John Shelley

Organizing an illustration portfolio can be a daunting task for beginner and pro alike. What to include? What to exclude? How to present the material? There are so many decisions to be made.

Nowadays, there are many ways of presenting artwork, from CD-ROMs and Web links to portfolio albums. I believe the basic principles remain the same whatever the medium. However, if you're about to meet a potential client—an editor or art director—or have been asked to leave a folder for viewing at someone's office, then creating an attractive physical portfolio is absolutely essential. Having an up-to-date portfolio encourages you to analyze your output and keep your work pertinent to the market, and is a necessity if you wish to have your work critiqued. It also equips you to present at schools, conferences and other speaking engagements.

Buying the Book

Your illustration portfolio is an extension of you, the artist, and your choice of portfolio is an extension of the work it contains. You owe it to yourself to present your artwork in the smartest portfolio you can afford. Placing your work in a plastic file from the hundred-yen shop gives the impression that you're a hundred-yen illustrator. Investing in a nice, sleek portfolio book, on the other hand, means that your work will be taken more seriously.

An illustration portfolio should be A4 or B3 size, A3 maximum (roughly letter size to ledger size in the U.S.). This is for ease of carrying and ease of viewing; editors' desks are often small and cluttered, and large portfolios are unnecessary. The book should have clip hinges with binder rings so that sleeves can be added or removed easily. You might find it useful to split different types of work into two separate books: one for color and one for black-and-white, for example, or one for picture books and one for older children's material.

Content: Choosing your Work

Learn to fine-tune your folio for the client you're about to meet. Before you go to a meeting, research the company, get to know its work, and adjust accordingly. If you're about to visit a children's book publisher, there's no point in showing advertising work. This may seem like common sense, but it's amazing how many people make this basic mistake. Know your clients. Don't waste their time and yours with irrelevant material. Publishers, editors and art directors are busy people, and if they don't see enough work focused to their needs, they're likely to be put off and skip over any pertinent pieces you have.

As a general rule, there should be no more than two distinct styles in a portfolio. Having just one single style is powerful and easily identifies your work, though you should always show a variation of subject matter. Two styles can show wider range and flexibility. But three or more in one book is just confusing. The client will wonder which is the "real" you. Moreover, you'll likely be forgotten about after your visit.

If you have access to a high-quality inkjet printer, fill your book with printouts rather than original artwork. Sometimes clients require you to leave your portfolio with them to view. Never leave anything that can't be replaced. No matter how big or established the company, accidents do happen.

What to Include for Children's Publishers:

- People, especially children, in a variety of poses and with different facial expressions.
- Animals.
- Movement.
- Illustrations intended for book covers (preferably titles the publisher would recognize).
- Sequential pictures showing how you handle picture book scenes over several spreads.
- Black-and-white work as well as color.
- Any published work within your children's book style, even if it's only small editorial cuts.
- A book dummy (if you have one).

What Not to Include for Children's Publishers:

- Doodles, sketches and personal work. If you really believe sketches are a crucial part of your creative output, put a few in a separate book. Produce them at the end of the meeting only if the client has time and interest.
- Unfinished pictures. They give viewers the impression of impatience and suggest that you only have a limited amount of artwork.
- Very large pictures. If you really must show them, take a photograph and show the snapshot.
- Work unsuitable for children's books or for the publisher's list.
- Work suggesting inconsistency, such as odd pieces in completely different styles. If a piece is good enough to be in your book, you should have at least three similar examples that match it in tone, style and quality.
- Old work in a style you no longer use.

The Portfolio Arc

Once you've settled on what to include, deciding which illustration should go where is one of the chief dilemmas in organizing a portfolio. The golden rules are:

- **Put the strongest, most powerful image at the front.** First impressions are crucial: the first thing the viewer sees will always resonate the most, so don't oblige him or her to wade through pages of mediocre work to come to your best material. The first picture should be your most accomplished recent work, in the style you most want to be commissioned for.
- **Create waves of powerful pictures.** Imagine the viewer is a swimmer and your pictures are waves crashing on his head. Start with a resounding, powerful image filling a whole page, followed by three or four pages of associated or stylistically similar work. For the next "wave," the viewer turns the page, and bang! Another strong, full-page image appears, maybe featuring a slightly different style or subject matter, again followed by a few pages of similar work. A good portfolio should have three or four of these "waves."
- **If you include a written profile, put it at the back, not the front.** The last pages in the book should be for older work, printed matter, and so on.
- **If you're not happy with a picture, don't show it!** It's better to have ten excellent pieces than twenty or thirty of varying quality.
- **Avoid cramming lots of small images on a page.** The more images on a page, the weaker the overall impression. One or two per page is best. If your pictures are very small, enlarge them or get a smaller portfolio.

The Psychology of Meetings

Ultimately, it is the quality of work in your portfolio that determines suitability for a commission, but careful presentation of the portfolio can stick in the client's mind and persuade him that you'll be a reliable choice.

- Before you set off for the meeting or drop-off, prepare printouts or sample copies beforehand marked with your name and contact details to leave with the client.
- Your work, your portfolio, your name card, and the way you carry yourself are all part of an overall image package, so dress to impress. If you appear smart and professional, your work will be taken more seriously than if you're in jeans and a t-shirt. First impressions are all-important.
- Be confident in yourself, but humble toward the client. The aim is to give an impression of relaxed professionalism, but not appear pushy or arrogant. Remember that editors and art directors are on your side.
- On the whole, your pictures should explain themselves and should not require a running commentary from you. A word here and there to mention which story something illustrates is all that's needed.
- Most importantly, never apologize for anything in your book! If you're not happy with a piece, don't show it.

A smart portfolio showing your work to its best advantage gives *you* an advantage. It builds your confidence and elevates your stature from "wants to be published" to "about to be discovered." Your portfolio is your best representative, so don't hold back! Research the market, find the publishers, and make those appointments.

Award-winning illustrator John Shelley (www.jshelley.com) began his art career in London. From 1987, he spent two decades in Tokyo, working extensively in commercial illustration in addition to producing over forty children's books for Western and Japanese markets. The former ARA of SCBWI Tokyo, he is now based in the U.K.

Seoul Celebrates Children's Authors and Illustrators

by Jenny Desmond Walters

Every May, Seoul celebrates books for children. This year stellar events were held all over the city, and the annual Seoul International Book Fair was the central event around which all others were planned. The fair's theme this year was "Start Over Again with a Book."

I had been waiting with eager anticipation to attend my first SIBF. I had hoped that I would walk away with a new understanding and appreciation for Korean publications, and also that I would feel the international presence of publishers from around the world as I compared the styles, art, themes and concepts of books from various countries. For the most part, I was able to achieve these goals.

As this year's guest of honor, Japan was the best represented overseas presence with twelve exhibitors and more than 2,800 book titles on display.

Seventeen countries were represented at the SIBF, and Japan, France and Thailand were the most prominent. I have to admit that I was disappointed with the turnout from the U.S., which had only three exhibitors: *Business Week*, *Time/Fortune* and the U.S. Embassy—none of which have anything to do with children's publishing.

As this year's guest of honor, Japan was the best-represented overseas presence, with twelve exhibitors on hand and more than 2,800 book titles on display. The rows and rows of Japanese children's books in the expansive Japanese Pavilion were a delight, including everything from a simple, single-topic book about acorns (*Donguri koro koro*) to detailed art and culture books. I could have spent the entire afternoon there.

Another big plus at the SIBF was the Rights Center hosted by the Korean Publishers Association. This dedicated space was used as a meeting place for rights managers from Korea and overseas publishing houses, as well as literary agents, to meet with clients and conduct rights negotiations.

While I was hoping to have more of an opportunity to network with publishers, I found this to be extraordinarily difficult as a non-Korean speaker. I had hoped that the Fair's billing as an "international" event meant that planned activities and people would be more accessible to me. However, I did not find this to be true in most cases. The ability to speak and

understand Korean was entirely necessary if one planned to participate in any of the seminars or author talks, which were offered primarily in Korean and Japanese. Just one seminar—"Trends in Children's Book publishing in China, Taiwan and Thailand"—had English-language interpretation. The only other English-language options were offered as part of book arts exhibitions: Artist Books from MEMO and Book Arts in Poland. That being said, I did find myself able to navigate the event successfully, because of the comprehensive English-version website and the fully translated conference brochure.

Taking place concurrently in the same venue was the Seoul International Book Arts Fair. I was impressed with this part of the event and found the offerings presented here to be delightfully innovative and inspiring. In this area of the exhibit hall, 42 exhibitors from nine countries presented their "unique but never outlandish" (according to the brochure) works of art.



Rows of Japanese children's books on display

In the Beautiful Books on Letters exhibition, a wonderful collection of alphabet books displayed the imagination and creativity of artists as they each expressed their unique impressions of a language's simplest form—its letters.

Additionally, in the exhibition Pop-up Book Workshop—Come Out, Letters! artists displayed

some ingenious and inventive ideas for book making. Each hand-made book on display utilized innovative pop-up designs and sensational collages to relate a special story or idea. In one display, book artists used colored paper and shapes to create pop-up consonants of the Korean alphabet.



Korean Publisher Yeowon Media's display area.

I also enjoyed the chance to stroll through the illustrations from the 2009 Bologna Children's Book Fair Guest of Honor Program, which this year featured Korea. The original illustrations that were selected for Bologna, as well as 173 other Korean illustrated children's books, were presented.

Each of these special exhibitions, along with the large marketplace where Korean children's books were available for purchase, made my visit to the SIBF a

worthwhile trip. Even though it didn't turn out to be my in-road with the Korean publishing world as I had hoped, I'm glad I attended, and I feel that I expanded my ever-growing appreciation for children's literature. During the whirlwind month of children's book events, I also met giant gorillas at the Voyage to the World of Illustration at the Seoul Arts Center, and I hugged a "Bear on a Bike" at the Book Festival for Children in Paju Bookcity (a global "city" of books and publishing). What I now know about children's books in Korea is that they are highly esteemed. The children's book industry is alive and flourishing in this country, and the talents of authors and illustrators are prized and respected. To live in a country that gives such honor and recognition to those who create worlds of delight for children is truly a privilege for me.

Jenny Desmond Walters is a children's writer whose work has appeared in AppleSeeds, Odyssey and The Mailbox magazines. Jenny has spent the last few years living in East Asia, including two years in Japan. She currently resides in Seoul, and is the founder and Regional Advisor of SCBWI Korea.

For more information, visit these websites:

2009 Seoul International Book Fair
www.sibf.or.kr/eng

Paju Bookcity Book Festival for Children 2009
<http://bookcitychild.org/english/>



Will You Be My Friend? © Teri Suzanne

News Round-up

Sakura Medal 2009

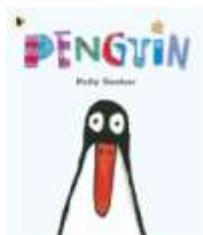
by Annie Donwerth Chikamatsu

The Sakura Medal 2009 has been awarded to books in English and Japanese in each of the following categories: picture book, chapter book, middle school book and high school book. The winning authors will each receive a medal, a certificate and an original piece of artwork from a student competition held at some of the participating schools. Next year beginning chapter books will be included as a category.

The Sakura Medal, the reading incentive program of the international schools in Japan, was initiated in the 2005–2006 school year. In this program, books are reviewed and nominated by the school librarians of nineteen international schools in Japan. The students vote for their top choices for the award. Each school has activities devoted to the selection process. Students are able to comment on the books and communicate with students from other schools on a wiki and “voice threads” for each award category. Websites and blogs have also been dedicated to the activities surrounding the Sakura Medal Selection. This year, students participated in the Sakura Brain Bowl, a competition where they answered questions about the nominated books. Winning teams from participating schools competed at a final competition hosted by the American School in Japan (ASIJ).

The nominees for Sakura Medal 2010 have already been selected. Review of books for the award begins in October each year, and the nominees are selected during a meeting in May. Authors or publishers interested in nominating books for future competitions should contact Wouter Laleman, waleman@asij.ac.jp. Books need to be published in the two years prior to the award selection. Past SCBWI Tokyo member nominees have been Holly Thompson, John Shelley and Naomi Kojima.

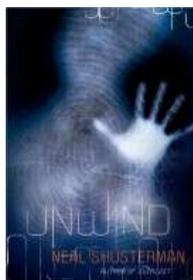
Sakura Medal 2009 Winners



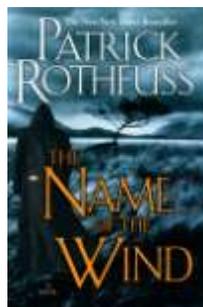
Picture Book:
Penguin by Polly Dunbar



Chapter Book:
The Name of This Book is Secret by Pseudonymous Bosch



Middle School:
Unwind by Neal Shusterman



High School: *The Name of the Wind* by Patrick Rothfuss



Japanese Picture Book:
Fushigi na demae by Hiroshi Kagakui



Japanese Middle/High School:
Yume o kanaeru zo by Keiya Mizuno

To learn more about the Sakura Medal, visit the Past Winners page at www.asij.ac.jp/elementary/library/sakura/ and the Sakura Medal Wiki at <http://sakuramedal.pbworks.com>. There is a Sakura Medal page on Facebook.

Annie Donwerth Chikamatsu's YA short story is forthcoming in *Hunger Mountain*, July 2009. She received a grant from the Highlights Foundation for the Writers Workshop at Chautauqua 2009 and has work forthcoming by Blooming Tree Press, 2010. She maintains the blog *Here and There Japan* (www.hereandtherejapan.org).

News Round-up

Picture This! Competition

by Wouter Laleman

This past school year saw the premiere of the Picture This! competition at the elementary division of the American School in Japan (ASIJ). In October 2008, I put out a call to all elementary students in grades three through five to submit stories in one of three categories: picture book, personal narrative and poetry collection.

Simultaneously, SCBWI-affiliated illustrators were invited to step forward if they were interested in being part of the project—for a commission, graciously made available by the ASIJ PTA. Choosing the illustrators from the wealth of talent on offer was possibly the hardest part of the project. We were very happy to enlist the help of Sonja de Boer, Rob Foote and Midori Mori.



One of Rob Foote's illustrations for *The House on Cider Tree Lane*, a winning story in the *Picture This!* picture book category

By March 2009, a jury of teachers, parents and illustrators had chosen the winners from the 67 student entries. Each of the artists then set to work on the ten illustrations commissioned from them. Our students were thrilled to follow the illustrators step by step as they saw the stories come to life. The illustrated winning stories and poems were eventually published using BookBlurb, an online publishing tool, and distributed to all interested parties before the end of the school year. A number of copies are now part of the regular ASIJ library collection. It has been a bit of a learning curve, but the amount of student interest, as well as the outstanding quality of the artwork, makes me feel confident that next year we will do even better.

Wouter Laleman is the Elementary School Librarian at the American School in Japan in Tokyo.

News Round-up

Moribito Wins Batchelder

by Avery Udagawa

Good news! *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit* by Japanese author Nahoko Uehashi (Scholastic, 2008)—translated by Cathy Hirano (interviewed in *Carp Tales*, Fall 2006) and edited by Cheryl Klein (interviewed in *Carp Tales*, Fall 2008)—has received the prestigious Mildred L. Batchelder Award for translated children's literature for Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic. A recent interview with Hirano about translating *Moribito* and retranslating another YA fantasy novel, *Dragon Sword and Wind Child* by Noriko Ogiwara (VIZ Media, 2007), appears on the website of the Tokyo-based Society of Writers, Editors, and Translators (SWET; www.swet.jp) and in *SWET Newsletter* Number 122.

SCBWI Tokyo Member News

Annie Donwerth Chikamatsu's short story was shortlisted in the *Pockets* 2008 Fiction Contest. A poem was selected for *Stories for Children Magazine Best of 2008 Anthology*. A game was published in *Highlights Magazine*, June 2009 and a craft in *Highlights High Five*, June 2009. Her YA short story "The Clearing" will appear in *Hunger Mountain* in July 2009. She received a grant to attend the Writer's Workshop in Chautauqua 2009.

Rob Foote recently completed illustrations for the 2009 American School in Japan Picture This! competition and is currently negotiating an illustration contract with Fantasi Books in South Africa.

Suzanne Kamata's story "Pilgrimage" (published in *Cicada*, September/October 2008) was awarded the SCBWI Magazine Merit Award for Fiction. Also, her story "Dolphin Day" was accepted for publication in *Ladybug*.

Naomi Kojima's picture book, *Singing Shijimi Clams*, will be reprinted in the July/August 2009 issue of *Spider* magazine. Kojima will be guest speaker at the Picture Book Seminar to be held October 24 and 25, 2009, at Chisana Ehon Bijutsukan in Haramura, Nagano prefecture; see www.ba-ba.net for more information.

Teri Suzanne has been contracted to write and illustrate a column, "Teri Suzanne's Super Bonding," for *Akachan to Mama*, a Japanese parenting publication. She also received a year's contract for two-page spreads of art ideas called "Teri and Mayuka's Paper World" for *Hoiku no Hiroba*, a national publication for Japanese childcare and pre-kindergarten teachers.

Holly Thompson's picture book *The Wakame Gatherers*, illustrated by **Kazumi Wilds**, was named a Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People 2009 by the National Council for the Social Studies in cooperation with the Children's Book Council.

Avery Udagawa is acknowledged in the Japanese translation of *Penelope*, the young adult novel by Marilyn Kaye, for assisting the translator, Hina Nagase. She edited and translated portions of *Kamishibai Newsletter* Vols. 4 and 5, published by the International Kamishibai Association of Japan; Volume 5 includes an unabridged version of Udagawa and **Kiyo Tanaka's** interview of Noriko Matsui, which appeared in *Carp Tales* in Spring 2008.



Mr. Hippo Taking a Nap © Yoko Yoshizawa

Bulletin Board

The 16th Tokyo International Book Fair, Asia's leading publishing trade fair, will be held July 9–12 at the Tokyo International Exhibition Center (Tokyo Big Sight). International publishers will have access to Asian publishers, importers and stores. See www.reedexpo.co.jp/tibf/english/ for more information.

The 38th Annual SCBWI Summer Conference on Writing and Illustrating for Children will be held in Los Angeles, August 7–10. See www.scbwi.org/events.htm for information and a schedule.

The 3rd Annual Japan Writers Conference will be held October 17 and 18, 2009, at Doshisha Women's College, Imadegawa Campus, Kyoto. See www.japanwritersconference.org or contact John Gribble at gribblej@gol.com. This year's conference is still in the planning stages, but presentations on picture book writing and children's theatre, as well as an SCBWI gathering, are all in the works.

Naomi Kojima will be guest speaker at the **Picture Book Seminar** on October 24 and 25, 2009, at Chisana Ehon Bijutsukan in Haramura, Nagano prefecture; see www.ba-ba.net for more information.

Editors' note: The extensive list of museums, bookstores, and other facilities in Japan offering regular exhibitions and events on the subject of children's literature is being moved to the SCBWI Tokyo website. We will continue to highlight events of particular interest to SCBWI Tokyo members in the Bulletin Board section of Carp Tales.



Squirrel © Midori Mori

About SCBWI Tokyo

SCBWI Tokyo, the Tokyo regional chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, offers support, information and community to illustrators and writers of children's and young adult literature in Japan. Holly Thompson is Regional Advisor; Yoko Yoshizawa is Assistant Regional Advisor and Illustrator Coordinator; the SCBWI Tokyo Advisory Committee includes Annie Donwerth Chikamatsu, Rob Foote, Janice Foster, Patrick Gannon, Suzanne Kamata, Naomi Kojima, Midori Mori, Gerri Sorrells, Izumi Tanaka, Patrik Washburn and Elina Yamaguchi.

Website

The SCBWI website www.scbwi.jp features information about SCBWI Tokyo, an online gallery, a speakers directory, a member books section, FAQs, a volunteer page, listserv information, useful links for writers and illustrators, announcements of upcoming SCBWI Tokyo events, and this newsletter. Bookmark the site!

Volunteers

SCBWI Tokyo is run by volunteers and always needs your help! Volunteers make SCBWI Tokyo an important and vibrant chapter of SCBWI. Volunteers can help in many ways: with their time at actual events, by helping to plan events, by assisting with translation, and by writing articles or conducting interviews for the SCBWI Tokyo newsletter *Carp Tales*. For further information contact info@scbwi.jp.

SCBWI Tokyo Listservs

SCBWI Tokyo maintains two main listservs (e-mail groups): one in English and one in Japanese. These networks link members and supporters of SCBWI across Japan in active online communities. Members of the listservs receive up-to-date information on SCBWI Tokyo and announcements of events, and share news related to writing, illustrating and publishing for children. Everyone is welcome to post comments and questions of interest to the SCBWI Tokyo community. Membership in the listservs is open to both members and non-members of SCBWI. For details e-mail info@scbwi.jp.

SCBWI Tokyo Online Critique Group

Critique groups provide support, encouragement, motivation and marketing suggestions. The SCBWI Tokyo Online Critique Group is for SCBWI Tokyo members who are serious writers and writer/illustrators working on children's or young adult literature who would like to share their work with other writers for constructive feedback online. At this time all manuscripts must be posted in English; a Japanese-language critique group may open soon. SCBWI Tokyo members interested in joining should contact info@scbwi.jp.

SCBWI Tokyo Translation Group

The SCBWI Tokyo Translation Group is for members and nonmembers involved in translating children's and young adult literature from Japanese into English. The Translation Group's listserv is a forum for discussing issues related specifically to J to E translation for children, including translation opportunities, SCBWI Tokyo translation events, online critiquing, and marketing of translations. Moderators are Sako Ikegami (sako@yamaneko.org) and Avery Udagawa (averyudagawa@yahoo.com). Please contact one of them for an invitation.

Membership

Membership in SCBWI Tokyo is included in general SCBWI membership. To join SCBWI, visit the main SCBWI website at www.scbwi.org and click on About SCBWI. Payment can be made online, by post with a U.S. bank-drawn check, or by post with an International Postal Money Order. Benefits of SCBWI membership include eligibility for grants, free posting of illustrations and publicity of published books on the SCBWI Tokyo website (www.scbwi.jp), discounted admission to all SCBWI events and conferences, and much more.



SCBWI

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

www.scbwi.org