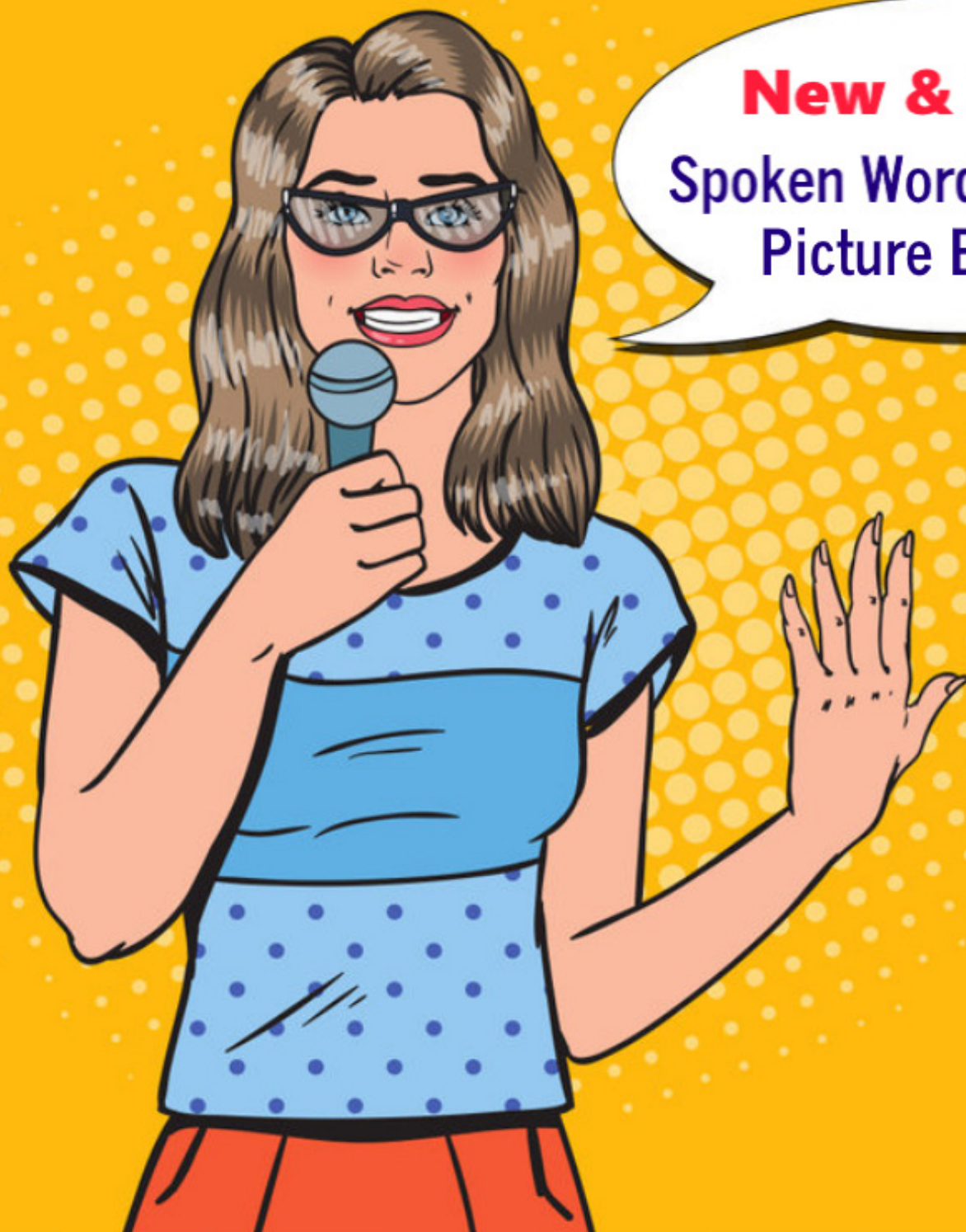


# Children's Book Insider

The Children's Writing Monthly  September 2021



**New & Hot:**

Spoken Word Poetry  
Picture Books

**ABOVE THE SLUSHPILE  
SUBMISSION CODE:**

**Great River Literary**

# Table of contents

At Presstime: New Market Listings, Conferences and Contests.....	2
Genre Spotlight: Spoken Word Poetry by Jean Daigneau.....	4
Agent Spotlight: Mary Cummings, Agent & Founder Great River Literary interview by Lynne Marie.....	6
Bonus Tip: Streamline Your Word Count with Styles by Carol Doeringer.....	9
Writing Workshop: Can a Character-Driven Author Become a Plot-Driven One? by Jane McBride.....	10
Featured Interview: The Barefoot Dreams of Alda P. Dodds interview by PJ McIlvaine.....	12
Book Publishing Today: Hybrid Publishing -- Is it right for you? by Brooke Van Sickle.....	15
Librarian Spotlight: Colleen Tierney Library Manager of Hutto Public Library in Texas interview by Sharon O. Blumberg.....	18

## This issue's contributors

**Sharon O. Blumberg** is a recently retired school teacher, having taught Spanish and English for over 20 years. In addition, she is a children's writer and voiceover artist. Her voiceover website and additional bio can be found at: <http://voiceofsharonolivia.com>

**Jean Daigneau's** book, *Code Cracking for Kids*, was published by Chicago Review Press in October 2019. She's been published in newspapers and magazines, including *Highlights* and *Fun for Kids*, and her work has appeared in *Guide to Literary Agents and Children's Writers' and Illustrators' Market*. She is a former regional and assistant regional advisor for SCBWI Ohio North and currently serves on the executive board. Jean is represented by Vicki Selvaggio, Associate Agent at the Jennifer Di Chiara Literary Agency.

**Carol Doeringer** is a CBI subscriber and a writer. Read her nature blog, "Tales from a West Michigan Wood," along with kid-friendly nature resources and activities, at [www.caroldoeringer.com/](http://www.caroldoeringer.com/)

**Lynne Marie** is the author of *Hedgehog Goes to Kindergarten* and *Hedgehog's 100th Day of School* (Scholastic), *The Star in the Christmas Play* and *Let's Eat Around the World* (Bearing Books), *Moldilocks and the 3 Scares* (Sterling) and more forthcoming, as well as numerous stories and articles in magazines, including *Highlights for Children*, *High Five*, *Baby Bug*, *Family Fun*, *Hopscotch*, *Turtle*, *Spider* and *Writer's Digest*. Her website is <http://www.literallylynne.com>

**Jane McBride** is the author of 38 novels (writing as Jane McBride Choate), numerous short stories and articles including pieces in 16 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* anthologies, and the CBI Managing Editor. See her Amazon Author Page at <http://bit.ly/JaneMcBrideChoate>

**PJ McIlvaine** is a Jill of all trades when it comes to writing: kid lit, screenwriter, journalist, blogger. She is the author of *Little Lena and the Big Table* (Big Belly Book Co., May 2019) and *Dragon Roar* (MacLaren-Cochrane, TBD). PJ is also a co-host of #PBPitch, the premiere Twitter pitch party for picture book writers and illustrators. Follow PJ's magical adventures at her website <https://pjmacwriter.com>

**Brooke Van Sickle** is the CEO & Publisher at BiblioKid Publishing. She's also an award-winning children's book author and writing coach at Journey to Kidlit. You can learn more about her at her website [brookevansickle.com](http://brookevansickle.com)

Published 12 times/year by Children's Book Insider, LLC,  
901 Columbia Road, Ft. Collins, CO 80525-1838.  
mail@CBIClubhouse.com  
<http://www.writeforkids.org>

ISSN 1073-7596

Publisher: Laura Backes  
Layout: Shellie Dougherty  
Editor/Agent Spotlight Editor: Lynne Marie  
Genre Spotlight: Jean Daigneau  
Featured Interviews: PJ McIlvaine  
Chief Operations Officer: Jon Bard

*Children's Book Insider, The Children's Writing Monthly* is an electronic monthly newsletter that is included in the paid membership to the Children's Writing Knowledge Base (<http://www.CBIClubhouse.com>). The cost of membership is \$49.95 per year, or \$5.49 per month if billed monthly. For more information, go to <http://writeforkids.org/come-join-the-insiders/>

Text copyright © 2021 Children's Book Insider, LLC. Subscribers may reprint up to 300 words with credit to Children's Book Insider, [www.writeforkids.org](http://www.writeforkids.org). For longer reprints, email Laura Backes at [Laura@CBIClubhouse.com](mailto:Laura@CBIClubhouse.com).

*Children's Book Insider* makes every effort to verify the legitimacy of small and new presses and literary agents before printing information in "At Presstime." However, authors and illustrators should always proceed with caution when approaching publishers or agents with whom they are unfamiliar, and read contracts carefully. All "At Presstime" listings are current at the time of initial publication. Members are urged to verify listings past the month of publication.

# Colleen Tierney

## Library Manager of Hutto Public Library in Texas

interview by Sharon O. Blumberg

**L**et's talk with Colleen Tierney, Library Manager of Hutto Public Library. She will tell us the kinds of books children and young adults enjoy reading. In addition, we'll discover reading trends and age ranges for current book categories.

**SHARON BLUMBERG:** Please tell us a little bit about yourself, and how you came to be a librarian who helps children enhance their love of reading.

**COLLEEN TIERNEY:** I have been a librarian for 17 years, most spent in elementary libraries. I started my career in public libraries. I love being a librarian and never would have thought this would have been my career path. I was a good reader as a child but I didn't enjoy reading. I did love libraries but was intimidated by the "keepers of books" that would shush my silly self upon entering their sacred doors. It wasn't until I had kids of my own and took them to the library, did I understand that libraries weren't just for quiet bookworms. After I had my first child I looked into becoming a librarian. I realized that it was possible to be a librarian, and love children and books, not just keeping them in perfect order! I am a patron-focused librarian who is deeply driven by equity and access as my primary purpose as a public servant. Excitement and joy about books do not need to be contained to a library whisper in my library.

**SB:** How do you help children find books they will enjoy reading?



**CT:** I always start by asking what they read last and what they enjoyed about it. Or I ask what their favorite book is. This is a sneak peek into their personality and their interests. I think most readers are trying to recreate the last reading experience that they enjoyed and that is especially true for children.

**SB:** What kinds of books are most popular for different age ranges?

**CT:** Young adults are interested in books that talk about what is really going on in the world, so realistic fiction. Graphic novels and Manga are popular with teens right now as well. As for younger readers, funny books are extremely appealing. Children want to be entertained when they read, and humor is the type of entertainment that will have them coming back for more.

**SB:** Have you noticed any trends in children's reading habits?

**CT:** Graphic novel interest is exploding. There are not enough of them to satisfy readers' hunger. They seem to be grabbing the interest of many different reading types. The challenge is to keep enough in the library for all the readers! There are a lot

of books/series being turned into TV series and/or movies and that always increases popularity as well.

**SB:** What age groups are attracted to illustrated books?

**CT:** Younger readers definitely, but with the in-

## *Colleen Tierney...continued*

crease in publishing of graphic novels, it seems, older and older readers are enjoying illustrated books. They are so accessible to young people. They seem to be less intimidating. I am a firm believer in allowing children to make selections that appeal to them because then they will LOVE reading. The research shows that reading is reading and the impact on the developing brain is the same whether the book has pictures or not.

**SB:** Do you find that children are attracted to books their friends like?

**CT:** Absolutely, especially as they get older. Younger children tend to follow the beat of their own drum but after kindergarten, unfortunately, it seems that they begin to notice what the herd is reading.

**SB:** Are there holes in the market for the kinds of books that children are asking for?

**CT:** There needs to be more books that have pictures as well as text on the page, like the *Dogman* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. The presentation in these books make reading less intimidating and more palatable for reluctant readers, but other readers as well.

**SB:** What kinds of books are great read-alouds for storytimes?

**CT:** Books that tickle the kids' funny bone. There is no greater joy than reading a book that makes children laugh. The hardest part is not laughing at their laughing—it can be quite contagious and will throw off the flow of the story! I love doing voices and making the characters come alive so I have to be careful to not crack myself up with the voices I use.

**SB:** Are there any authors that are currently pretty popular with children and young adults?

**CT:** Well, if the library consisted of mostly just Mo Willems and Dav Pilkey books, all our young readers would be satisfied. I seriously think that they forget that any other authors exist. It is a challenge to turn them on to something other than *Elephant and Piggie* and *Dogman*.

**SB:** Is there anything else that I've not asked, that you would like to include?

**CT:** I genuinely believe that all children have the capacity to love books and appreciate stories, it is just a matter of exposing children to them, early and often. Language acquisition and literacy happen quite naturally and beautifully when children are exposed to stories from birth. It is never too early to begin to teach children the love of books.

