

news & notes

BY STEPHEN MOOSER

MARTHA WESTON GRANT

Wendy Wahman is the 2019 recipient of the Martha Weston Grant. She received \$1,500 to cover her expenses to attend the annual Summer Conference in Los Angeles. This year a runner-up grant of tuition to the Conference was awarded to **Lori Evert**.

Thanks to Grant Coordinator Lissa Rovetch and the judges, consisting of herself, Ashley Wolff, Julie Downing, Susan McCombs, and Dory Weston, who received many outstanding applications, all of which reflected Martha Weston's generous spirit.

After publishing over fifty picture books and easy readers as an illustrator and/or author, Martha (Hairston) Weston published her first middle grade novel shortly before her death. Martha always took time to encourage others, and the Hairston family established the Martha Weston Grant to honor and continue her efforts. Applications will again be accepted in early spring. Rules and procedures can be found on the website.

NATASCHA BIEBOW: MEMBER OF THE YEAR

The newly designated Stephen Mooser Member of the Year Award was presented at the SCBWI annual Summer Conference to our British Isles Co-Regional Advisor, **Natascha Biebow**.

Thanks to her creativity and leadership, she built her SCBWI chapter into one of the largest in the world, and accomplished all this while juggling

family responsibilities, along with an editorial and writing career. For her efforts on behalf of British children's book writers and illustrators she was recently awarded an MBE—Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire—conferred on her by Her Majesty the Queen.

Excellence defines her. The British Isles Chapter, its members, and the SCBWI is grateful for her service, and pleased to honor her with this special award.

THE 2019 ON-THE-VERGE EMERGING VOICES AWARD

The two recipients of this year's award go to **medina**, who submitted a middle grade manuscript entitled "The One Who Loves You the Most," about a twelve-year-old Latinx adoptee living in a white neighborhood who comes out as queer, and **Amira Kunbargi**, who submitted a picture book manuscript entitled "When a Girl Dreams," a biography of Fatimah Al-Fihri, founder of the world's oldest university.

The Emerging Voices Award is part of the SCBWI's ongoing effort to foster diverse and underrepresented voices in children's publishing. The winning manuscripts will be made available to select agents and editors via a secure website.

Amira Kunbargi and medina both received a paid trip to the 2019 SCBWI Summer Conference in Los Angeles to meet editors, agents, and other industry professionals.

The On-The-Verge Emerging Voices Award is made possible through the generosity of Sue and Martin Schmitt of the 455 Foundation. Sue wrote: "Diverse writers need to know that not only do their voices and stories matter—but are necessary! We live in a world where we must strive to understand other points of view and each other for the betterment of humankind." Visit our website for more information.

ANN WHITFORD PAUL-WRITERS DIGEST MANUSCRIPT AWARD

Sherry Smith of Glen Ellen, California, is the recipient of this year's \$1,000 award offered to encourage the development of an excellent picture book. Two honorable mentions went to **Gayle Webre** and **Midge Ballou-Smith**.

The SCBWI is grateful to Ann Whitford Paul and Writers Digest for making this grant possible.

KWELI COLOR OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE MANUSCRIPT AWARD

SCBWI, in partnership with Kweli Journal, endowed an all-inclusive trip to the annual Summer Conference in Los Angeles to the writer with the best manuscript in the critique sessions during Kweli's Color of Children's Literature Conference. SCBWI member and author **Lisa Stringfellow** from the New England Region was the winner. Lisa is a writer of middle grade fiction and has a "not-so-secret fondness for fantasy with a dark twist . . ." Included with Lisa's prize was the Writer's Intensive workshop and an additional manuscript critique, as well as an onstage presentation of her winners' certificate. SCBWI embraced the opportunity to work with Kweli in supporting writers of color. Kweli's mission is ". . . to nurture emerging writers of color and create opportunities

for their voices to be recognized and valued [by] creating a community and programming based on artistic excellence and rigor . . ." This dovetails with SCBWI's mission of supporting the creation of high-quality books for kids. Lisa Stringfellow epitomizes all of this with her work.

STUDENT WRITER AND ILLUSTRATOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to the Student Writer Scholarship recipients **Madeline Olsen** and **Maeghan Klinker**. The Student Illustrator Scholarship recipients are **Michelle Janco** and **Paria Peyravi**.

For more information about these awards, visit the SCBWI website.

ILLUSTRATION MENTORSHIP AWARDS

The Illustration Mentorship Award is given at the Annual Summer Conference in Los Angeles. The goal is to identify, develop and nurture publishable illustrators. The winners are chosen by a separate panel of judges from the Portfolio Award, including SCBWI Board members.

The winners of the 2019 Mentorship Awards are:
Eddie Edwards
Tenaya Lena
Neena Phan
Rob Sayegh Jr
Marcelo Verdad
Vivien Wu

PORTFOLIO SHOWCASE AWARD

This year's honorees are **Tenaya Lena** and **Anna Davis court**. The Grand Prize winner is **Andy Musser**.

The two honorees each receive a phone conversation with an art director for a portfolio/style/illustration critique. The Grand Prize winner will receive an

all-expense paid trip to New York and appointments with three art directors. Visit the website for more details.

NEWS AND NOTES

Members may already be aware of two ongoing issues affecting authors and illustrators, one involves new tariffs and the other the counterfeiting of books.

TARIFFS

The Trump administration's threat to add tariffs on \$300 billion in Chinese goods has publishers strongly lobbying the administration to exclude, in particular, children's books and Bibles from those tariffs. The two categories will be especially hard hit because of the special paper, printing technology, and skills needed to produce those books. The good news is that the tariffs are postponed until December 15, meaning books will have already been shipped and on shelves for the holiday season. SCBWI members should monitor the situation online and lobby your congressional delegation to oppose the new charges if they do go into effect in mid-December.

COUNTERFEITING OF BOOKS WIDESPREAD ONLINE

SCBWI members not already aware that their work is subject to counterfeiting are advised to do an online search of your titles to see if anyone has brazenly copied your book and posted it for sale on Amazon or another site. The practice is quite widespread and requires vigilance on the part of authors and artists in order to take down the counterfeited work. Amazon has been cooperative since they bear certain legal responsibilities to respect copyrighted material. However, they primarily rely on complaints from those affected by the offenders. Authors and other victims lose the entire value of the sale, while Amazon gets its cut no matter who posted the book. An in-depth article on this growing problem will appear in the next *Bulletin*.

REMEMBERING LEE BENNETT HOPKINS

Lee Bennett Hopkins, beloved by children, teachers, librarians and the wider children's book community, died August 8 in Cape Coral, Florida, with his husband, Charles Egita, at his side. He was eighty-one.

A longtime member of the SCBWI, he had won a Golden Kite Honor in 1996 for his autobiographical poetry collection *Been to Yesterdays*, which also received the Christopher Medal later that year.

A renowned champion of poetry for children, he published more than one hundred anthologies as well as a number of books of his own poems.

As an elementary school teacher, he discovered the power of poetry to educate his young students, "I found that using poetry with them was a very miraculous thing, particularly with slower learners," he explained. "Poems are usually short, vocabulary simple, and I've always maintained that more can be said or felt in eight or ten lines than sometimes in an entire novel."

Later, as an editor at Scholastic, he successfully lobbied for poetry to be used throughout the school curriculum.

We join the world of children's poetry in mourning his passing.

For the past few years the SCBWI has been honored to administer the Lee Bennett Hopkins Award for poetry and will continue to do so in Lee's memory. Details of the award can be found on our website.