

Illustrators: Markets and Graphic Novels

by Jim Haynes

Welcome to the new year and new challenges. This column is one of mine. This month we'll talk about markets and such. I also welcome e-mailed suggestions and comments to JimBetsyHaynes@comcast.net and will ask some of our members, who have more experience than I, to join in.

When Betsy and I first joined the Society it was SCBW, there was no "I" in it. It was added later. More and more, illustration has become an integral part of children's books. Generally the spectrum of children's books is larger than the term would imply: two-lap picture books (sitting on a parent's lap), easy reader or chapter book, middle grade, and young adult/teen. All of these require varying degrees and types of illustrations and it is up to the illustrator to choose which is more in tune with his or her forte.

Getting Into Graphic Novels

One of the hottest markets today is graphic novels. The graphic novel basically began in Japan, but many companies are picking up on it. The Penguin Group's new imprint, Razorbill, and Puffin Graphics are both expanding into the graphic young-adult market. Puffin is planning on versions of *Black Beauty*, *Call of the Wild*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Macbeth*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Treasure Island*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. Houghton Mifflin's Graphia subsidiary is also into quality graphic teen novels. Check 'em out on www.graphiabooks.com.

U.S. comic book companies are responding to traditional publishers' movement into their field by creating their own novels. For example: Marvel Comics has a new imprint, Marvel Press, which is publishing 12 character-based novels for grade school, young adult, and adult.

Libraries across the country are establishing graphic novel sections. Graphic novels are not just for teens. They're being published for all ages. If graphic novels seem interesting, you can check some of them out there.

Finding Markets

How do you find the best market for your work? First you may want to purchase a *Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market* or an *Artist's & Graphic Designer's Market*, which lists beaucoup markets, their needs and methods of submission, depending on the type of work. You can also find possible alternatives by—one more time—visiting your library's children's section, checking out the different types of books, and writing down the names of the publishers. You may be able to go online and find the submission requirements of a publisher, but maybe not.

Basically there are five types of markets:

- Mass market books** are sold in supermarkets, newsstands, drugstores, etc.
- Trade books** are either hardcover or paperback and are found in bookstores and libraries.
- Textbooks** may feature lots of illustrations to explain their subjects.
- Small press books** are produced by small, independent publishers.
- Backlist titles** are of no interest to the aspiring illustrator.

Some publishers accept freelance art submissions, others require submission through agents only. The *Market* books tell whether or not they do. When freelance submitting, generally you should send one to five nonreturnable samples with a brief letter. Never send the original. Most prefer 8½" by 11" or smaller that will fit in a drawer or can be pinned to a bulletin board. You should follow up with postcard samples every few months to keep your name in front of the art director. You can also check to see if they accept e-mailed TIFF or JPEG files.

Payment? Most publishers pay based on the size of the publisher, the type of project, and the rights purchased. Lots of luck to you. I know what you're going through.