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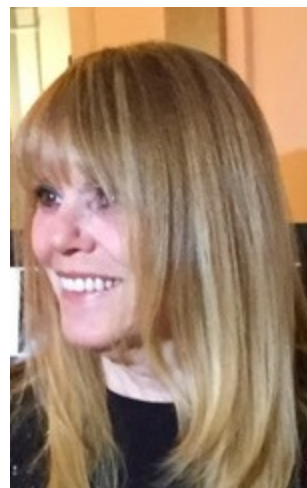
JDLA

Newsletter

The Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency Celebrates 24 Years!

Welcome to our Spring issue! So many deals, so little space. Here are just a few, along with some interviews we hope you'll enjoy. Thanks for reading!

Congratulations to our client Lindsay Harrison, winner of the 2025 Writers Guild Award for "The Young and the Restless" - Outstanding Writing Daytime Drama!



Recent Highlights

Non-Fiction Book Sold



Matt Browning's *THE GILMORE GIRLS POP CULTURE REFERENCE GUIDE* for the show's superfans to Rick Rinehart at Lyons Press by Stephen Fraser at The Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency (North American rights).

Adult Novel Sold

Author of the *RHYMER* series and Bram Stoker finalist Gregory Frost's *THE SECRET HOUSE*, set during Tyler's presidency, about a cursed White House and the enslaved staff who risk all to stop the mysterious evil, to Christopher Payne at JournalStone, for publication in June 2025, by Marie Lamba at The Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency (world).



Middle-Grade Novel Sold

Librarian and nonbinary author Steph Cherrywell's middle-grade *THE INK WITCH*, a hilarious coming-of-age novel that is *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* meets *Brave*, where a trans girl discovers that her boring, overprotective mom might actually come from a dangerously powerful family of witches, to Erika Turner at Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, by Marie Lamba at The Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency for publication in September 2025 (world).

Agent Spotlight: Zabé Ellor

Zabé Ellor joined The Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency in August 2018, after previously interning at the agency and at Inklings Literary, and serving as a Publications Assistant at IOP Publishing. He graduated from Cornell University in 2016 with a dual degree in biology and English. He is the author of four novels: NO BETTER THAN BEASTS (Roaring Brook), SILK FIRE (Solaris), MAY THE BEST MAN WIN (Roaring Brook), and ACTING THE PART (HarperTeen).



Q: What is the most rewarding part of your work as an agent?

A: Nothing really compares to that moment where you tell an author, especially one you've worked with for many years, that they're going to be published. There's so much hard work that goes into this, even after a writer signs with an agent, and I love when I get to see it pay off.

Q: What are some trends you currently see in the market?

A: The market is in an interesting place. As we've seen with trends like romantasy, which was fueled in many ways by self-published writers, the industry can be slow to adapt to a trend. But when the industry identifies a trend, it is often quite skilled at capitalizing on it. I think going forward we will see a lot more desire within the industry to capitalize on what is currently popular rather than attempting to set trends.

Q: What is there about agenting you want writers to know?

A: An agent's work doesn't end when they get a book deal for a client. I spend a good deal of time working with my published clients to get them the resources they need to be successful. My focus isn't on just one book, but an author's whole career.

Q: Why should authors have an agent?

A: While there are many more options today than in the past for writers to pursue publication, an agent offers unparalleled expertise in navigating a complex and sometimes opaque industry. Even writers who have found a good deal of success self-publishing will often turn to agents to negotiate deals that can expand their careers. A good agent is a business partner, and can work with authors at different stages of their careers to achieve their goals.

Author Spotlight: Helen Kampion

Helen's debut picture book, co-authored with Renée Lyons, is **ROLLIN' ON DOWN THE LINE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON'S 1964 WHISTLE STOP TOUR FOR CIVIL RIGHTS** (Sleeping Bear Press). She was born in England, lived in Germany, attended kindergarten in Japan, and schools in California, Virginia, and Florida. She enjoyed a successful career in high tech sales and marketing. In addition to an MBA, Helen holds an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College.



Q: Congratulations on your debut book, *ROLLIN' ON DOWN THE LINE: LADY BIRD JOHNSON'S 1964 WHISTLE STOP TOUR FOR CIVIL RIGHTS* (Sleeping Bear Press). What is it like to see your name in print for the first time?

A: To see my name, and my co-author Renée Lyons' name, on a book is surreal. It's a combination of awe and excitement for me. I keep asking myself, "Is that really my name?" And the first time I saw *ROLLIN' ON DOWN THE LINE* in a bookstore, I literally jumped up and down.

Q: The Junior Library Guild chose your book as a Gold Selection, a very prestigious group of books. Did that honor surprise you?

A: Yes! This was our first book, so to be recognized by The Junior Library Guild was unbelievable. What an honor! And to be in the company of such wonderful books is just amazing.

Q: You had a co-author with this book, Renée Lyons. How did you work together on this project? Can you describe the process?

A: Renée and I live in different states, so we used Google Docs to work on the manuscript. We kept the agreed-upon text in black, and each of us used a different color for revisions. This way we could see what each other wrote. Then we would discuss, edit, and add to the main text. Since we are both strong women, there were times when each of us insisted on keeping/deleting some text. To avoid ruining our friendship, we set up a "chit" system. Each of us had three chits that we could use if we felt strongly that something should be included or not, as long as it didn't impact the overall story. It worked really well.

Q: You have an extensive background in marketing. How has that helped you in promoting your picture book?

A: I learned two very important skills as a sales rep in high tech that have made promoting my book easy and lots of fun. First, I learned how to cold call, meaning calling up strangers to ask for an appointment. I have no fear reaching out to bookstores, libraries, museums, or schools. I even called the Democratic National Convention to see if I could sell my book there. (Couldn't.)

Second, I learned how to handle rejection. If a book store or school says no to me, I never take it personally. I take it to mean my book isn't right for their programs or events and move on. To date, I've done numerous bookstores and blog posts, and my co-author and I even traveled to Austin, TX to present to teachers and librarians at a joint event sponsored by the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum and the Lady Bird Wildflower Center.

Q: What new projects are you working on?

A: I'm not happy unless I have multiple projects going at one time. Currently working on:

- Seasonal picture book
- Stem biography
- Graphic novel
- Completing a middle-grade novel

Illustrator Spotlight: Scoot McMahon

Scoot McMahon (scootcomics.com) is a versatile cartoonist and the creator of SAMI THE SAMURAI SQUIRREL (Action Lab) and the co-creator of AGENTS OF S.L.A.M. (Oni Press), WRAPPED UP (Oni Press), THE ADVENTURES OF CTHULHU JUNIOR AND FRIENDS (Source Point Press), and DEADMAN TELLS THE SPOOKY TALES (DC Comics). Scoot's upcoming projects include co-creating and illustrating the graphic novels OLLIE ISLAND by Dave Scheidt (Penguin Workshop) and NINJA KAIJU by Franco Aureliani (Papercutz).



Q: When did you start drawing, what is your training, and when did your interest in comics and graphic novels begin?

A: According to my parents I started drawing when I was two years old. I don't have any memories of NOT drawing. My interest in comics started at a young age too. I watched a lot of cartoons and animated movies and those same characters appeared in comic books too, so it was a natural fit! I improved my

drawing and storytelling skills in college at Bowling Green State University, where I graduated with a degree in Two-Dimensional Studies in Art (with an emphasis on illustration).



Excerpts from Ninja Kaiju illustrated by Scoot McMahon



Excerpts from Ninja Kaiju illustrated by Scoot McMahon

Q: Your upcoming works are middle-grade graphic novels full of humor and action. OLLIE ISLAND is described as Tony Hawk's Pro-Skater meets WILLY WONKA, and NINJA KAIJU is about a ninja who steals a secret formula, transforms into a giant monster, and becomes the center of an epic battle between mad scientists. Are you most drawn to humorous action in comics? How would you describe your style?

A: Yes, humorous action with a little bit of "spooky" or "strange" sprinkled in seems to be my sweet spot! I've been told my style reflects the entertainment that inspired me as a kid: Disney animated TV shows like Ducktales and Darkwing Duck, mixed with Ghostbusters and Ninja Turtles, and a dash of Super Mario Bros and Sonic video games!

Q: Illustrating a graphic novel is very time-intensive. How long does the process usually take? And do you have any tips for others on how to streamline the process?

A: Yeah, it can be overwhelming sometimes. The process usually takes about 6-7 months to draw a book (longer if I'm coloring), after the script is approved. There are rounds of changes and edits that are included in this time. I try to set

a goal to complete 1 page per day and once in a while I'll use the weekend to knock out 4-5 pages if I can. My tips are that you can't be a perfectionist when drawing comics. Listen to music, or a podcast, or anything that gets you in the drawing zone and have fun. If you're having fun drawing it, chances are people will have fun reading it too.

Q: In addition to illustrating original works, have you also been a part of IP projects? How do they differ when it comes to being the artist? Do you prefer one over the other?

A: Yes, I've done a few IP projects. Most recently I drew a short Man-Bat story, written by my pal Franco Aureliani, for his DC Comics graphic novel DEADMAN TELLS THE SPOOKY TALES. So far, I've been pretty lucky with IP work and they've let me draw the characters in my style, so I haven't experienced too many restrictions there. I prefer working on my own creator-owned books and characters because my version will be the definitive look of the character, but I'd be lying if I didn't say I'd LOVE to draw a Scoot McMahon style TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES, SPIDER-MAN, or BATMAN book one day!

Q: Any advice for someone interested in breaking into graphic novels?

A: Approach drawing comic books/graphic novels with the same enthusiasm you had for drawing as a kid and you'll find happiness. And hopefully with happiness, you'll find success! Good luck!

To see the work of illustrators represented by JDLA, please visit our website at www.jdlit.com/illustrators.

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