



*Boston Authors Club*

## May 2018 News & Events

To join BAC or to renew your BAC Membership for 2018  
**CLICK HERE**

### In This Issue

- **May 22 BAC Panel: *So You Want to Write a Children's Book?***
- **Featured Authors: Nandini Bajpai, Josh Funk, Nancy Tupper Ling and Ammi-Joan Paquette on writing and publishing**
- **BAC Members: *New Books, Readings, and Events***
- **Yesteryear at the BAC: *Mother Dickson's Chickens and Peter Cottontail***

## Authors and Agents Panel on May 22

So You Want to Write a Children's Book?



On **May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m.**, join children's authors Nancy Tupper Ling, Josh Funk, Nandini Bajpai and Ammi-Joan Paquette at **Whitelam Books in Reading, MA** ([whitelambooks.com](http://whitelambooks.com)) for an informative and fun evening as they discuss what it takes to turn an idea into a picture book or a novel. The authors will provide insight into the publishing scene of children's books, while Ammi-Joan will speak to her role as a literary agent as well.

Join renowned children's authors Nancy Tupper Ling, Josh Funk, Nandini Bajpai and Ammi-Joan Paquette for an informative and fun evening as they discuss what it takes to turn an idea into a picture book or a novel. The authors will provide insight into writing and publishing successful children's books, while Ammi-Joan will speak to her role as a literary agent. **May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** at **Whitelam Books in Reading, MA** [whitelambooks.com](http://whitelambooks.com)

### Authors Panel on May 22

## Insights from Four Featured Authors

*The four authors speaking at BAC's May 22 program share their experience and advice in a four-part interview this month.*



## Josh Funk

*Q: From your action packed-web site, it looks like you are speaking, traveling, and writing new books at a blistering pace. Do you have a super-productivity secret? And if you don't want to reveal it, can you tell us a little about the process you follow to get from book idea to book complete?*

**Josh:** I don't think I have a super productivity secret. It's just that when I get excited about an idea, I immediately and furiously write, share, revise, and repeat with enthusiastic passion until the story is really great ... or I realize it's a dead end and not worth pursuing. And frankly,

the latter might be more important. While I have my fair share of ideas, drafts, and even completed manuscripts that just aren't quite good enough, I've gotten a lot better over the years at realizing which ideas *aren't* going to end up working out or just aren't that marketable from a business sense. And the sooner I realize that, the less time I'll waste on writing stories that will ultimately go nowhere. When working toward publication, it's important to learn both the *craft* of writing AND the business of publishing; both are equally important. As I spend my days as a software engineer, it took me a while to learn both, as each of the concepts were foreign to me. But focusing on the business side as much as I did has certainly helped me succeed. And maybe more importantly, it's helped me identify (earlier on) when I'm failing.

## Ammi-Joan Paquette (agent and author)



*Q: What question do aspiring children's authors ask you most frequently in your literary agent role – and what do you say in response?*

**Joan:** I think any "most" question is hard for me to figure out. But I do frequently get authors asking me what is my best advice for getting published. And to this I would answer: (a) Read – widely, diversely, incessantly; (b) Write – every new thing you write is a product of your growth and experience as a writer, constantly evolving; and (c) Don't give up – the journey can be long and winding, and is different for each person. But there is always a finish line if you stick on till you make it there.



## Nandini Bajpai

*Q: There are so many aspects to writing successful children's and YA books - from coming up with and writing the story, to finding a publisher and then promoting the book. Are there any aspects that you particularly enjoy? What parts are the most challenging--and has the challenge changed as you have written more books?*

**Nandini:** The part that I enjoy the most about writing a children's book is coming up with the story idea and the beginning phase of writing when it's fresh and exciting and can change in multiple directions. There are just so many possibilities!

Completing the first draft is hard work though-- things can really get bogged down in the 'murky middle'. For me, once the first draft is done it is much easier to revise. Feedback from critique partners and beta readers really help me get to a polished manuscript. This part has become easier the more I've written.

Having a manuscript out on submission to publishers is nerve wracking, and my least favorite part of the process, though again I'm less stressed about it now than before. Once the manuscript is acquired it's great to have an editor to work with. Watching the cover art and design of the book get their final shape is wonderful.

I don't love promoting the book online, but I do like school, library, and bookstore visits. It's amazing to meet and get feedback from readers in person or through letters and emails--especially ones that have never seen someone like themselves in a book before.

## Nancy Tupper Ling

*Q: Congratulations on your fourth book, *The Yin-Yang Sisters and the Dragon Frightful*, coming out this fall. Looking back at the process of getting your first book completed and published, and comparing it to this new title, does it get easier with each book? If so, in what ways?*

**Nancy:** I would love to inspire other writers by saying it gets easier with each book. I would also love to eat a hot fudge sundae on the top of the Eiffel Tower, but I've yet to experience this. Ha!



What I will say is the journey is long and winding, and along the way my patience and passion has grown exponentially. My desire to create books that end up in the hands of young readers has compelled me to keep learning the craft. Four books in, and I'm still taking workshops, refining my writing, collecting rejection emails (they do get more encouraging along the way), and persisting. That moment when you finally hold your published book in your arms? Well, it's really nothing short of miraculous! But miracles do happen, with a lot of hard work in between.



## News About BAC Authors

*The BAC newsletter is published the first week of every month. Please send news about your activities, speaking, and new books (along with related pictures) to [bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com](mailto:bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com) by May 26 for publication in the June -July 2018 newsletter.*

## Yesteryear at the BAC by Scott Guthery



### LATE-BLOOMING SUCCESS, CHILDREN'S WRITING GROUPS, AND THE PROLIFIC PETER COTTONTAIL

*In reading over the entries in Mildred Buchanan Flagg's *Notable Boston Authors: Members of the Boston Authors Club 1900-1966*, I was struck by how many entries ended with a sentence that began something like "Funeral services were held at ..." but it wasn't until I was doing some background checking on this month's featured Boston author of yesteryear that I discovered why so many entries ended with such a sour note.*

*The entry for Marguerite Stockman Dickson in *Notable Boston Authors* is a very lightly edited version of the obituary of Dickson that appeared on page 11 of the October 12, 1953, edition of the*

## Vocational Guidance for Girls



Marguerite  
Stockman Dickson

***Boston Herald. Notable Boston Authors was published in 1965 so it is unlikely that copying went the other way. To be sure, in her own entry in her book, Flagg describes herself as "the Editor and Compiler of this volume" so we now have a glimpse of one of the sources of material she was editing and compiling.***

**Marguerite Stockman Dickson** (1875-1953) wrote seven children's books, all after she was well into her sixties. The first of these, *Bramble Bush*, was a 1945 Junior Literary Guild selection. Of particular interest to members of the Boston Authors Club, however, might be that Dickson hosted a productive salon for authors of young reader books. According to her *Herald* obituary,

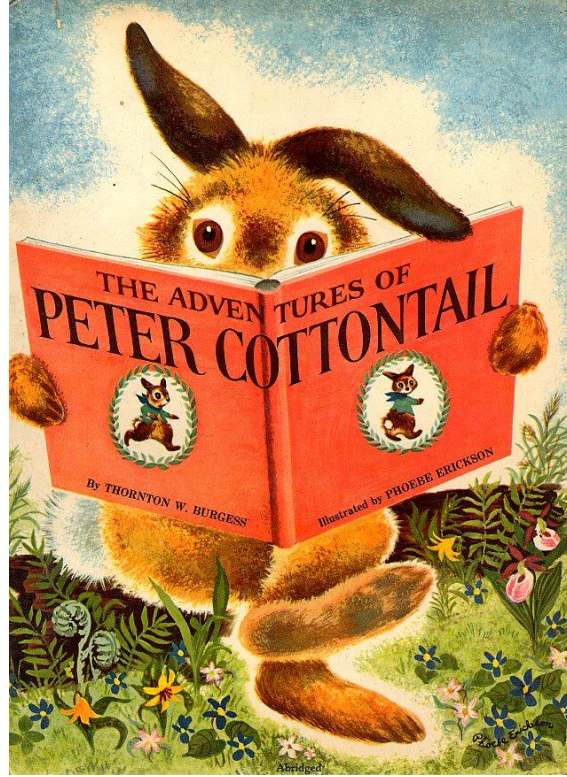
*Mrs. Dickson presided over a group of women writers of books for juveniles, and once every two weeks played host to them at criticism sessions in her home. "We don't call ourselves anything as a group," one member said, "but if we were to choose a name, it certainly ought to be 'Mother Dickson's Chickens.'"*

The obituary goes on to note that "This literary group has written and published 28 books, in addition to those by Mrs. Dickson."

Dickson is better known in education circles for the history textbooks she wrote early in her career *From the Old World to the New: How America was Founded and Settled*, and *New American History for Grammar Schools* to name just two. But above all she is known for *Vocational Guidance for Girls* published in 1919 by Rand McNally. Far from being a catalog of women's work, the book is centered on homemaking as a career that demands managerial talent and scientific expertise. Demanding respect for this career, Dickson writes in forceful riposte to views a century on:

*"Some of the women who uphold the doctrine of equality between the sexes make the mistake of thinking and of teaching that there can be no equality without identical works. ... Our contention is rather that women have higher rights than that of identical work with men. They, above all other workers, should have the right of intelligent choice of work which they can do to the advantage of themselves, their offspring, and the community."*

I found five other authors of children's and young reader's books in *Notable*. Without question, the most prolific children's author and BAC member of this era was **Thornton W. Burgess** with, according to WorldCat, "490 works in 2,119 publications in 2 languages and 34,076 library holdings." If Peter Cottontail lights up a memory, WorldCat goes on to say that there were 60 editions of Burgess' *The Adventures of Peter Cottontail* published between 1914 and 2018. Over a century on and still in print.



---

---

## REMINDER Renew Your BAC Membership for 2018

**Full membership dues are \$50 annually and Associate memberships are \$25 annually for the calendar year. You can join and renew online by [clicking here](#). If you would rather pay by check, please make your check out to Boston Authors Club and mail it to the following address:**

**Nancy Tupper Ling  
Boston Authors Club  
1600 Providence Highway #247  
Walpole MA 02081**

| BOSTON AUTHORS CLUB | [bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com](mailto:bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com) |

STAY CONNECTED



*Boston Authors Club*