



Sonja McGiboney

Author News

November, 2026

November Greetings!

Tomorrow, after an 8-hour drive with my dog Evie, (we elected to leave Jazzy with Dale) I will be living permanently in NC. If you want my new address, send me an email.

While I feel Halloween is fun, Thanksgiving is heartwarming. Except for the stress of cooking a bird that you eat only one time per year, the pies and side dishes are all yummy to make and eat at any time. But I must ask, how many of you eat green-bean casserole on days that are NOT holidays? Just wondering.

As a child, I remember being thankful for Apfel kuchen. My Mom only made it a few times a year and it was my favorite. As a grown-up (I think I'm one of those now,) I am thankful for my family. I don't care if we eat turkey with all the hoopla, or Chinese takeout, being together and sharing experiences, is precious.

On the author front, while I'm in limbo between states, I rekindled a project I started several years ago when I scanned over 4000 documents, photos, letters, etc. The McGiboney aunts and grands spent years researching genealogy and gathered the aforementioned papers over a few decades. Now I am transcribing memoires etc. and creating a book, or rather several books, with all the information.

I'm still working on children's books, but for now, my mind is occupied with history.

A Love Story, Turkey Style
By Sonja McGiboney



Simon was a turkey and had a gift so rare,
For in the months of Merriness, he'd hide out like a bear.
On the mountain, round the bend, Simon found a crack.
It was big enough for Simon, plus, a few months' worth of snack.

In September he would gather, the fruits and nuts around.
While other turkeys strutted, Simon hid all that he found.
The others stopped and giggled and with Simon they would squabble,
"Why do you work so hard each day?" They'd ask and loudly gobble.

"I know, I know, what's coming soon, I know what I have seen.
I'd rather work and be prepared, then gobble, strut, and preen."

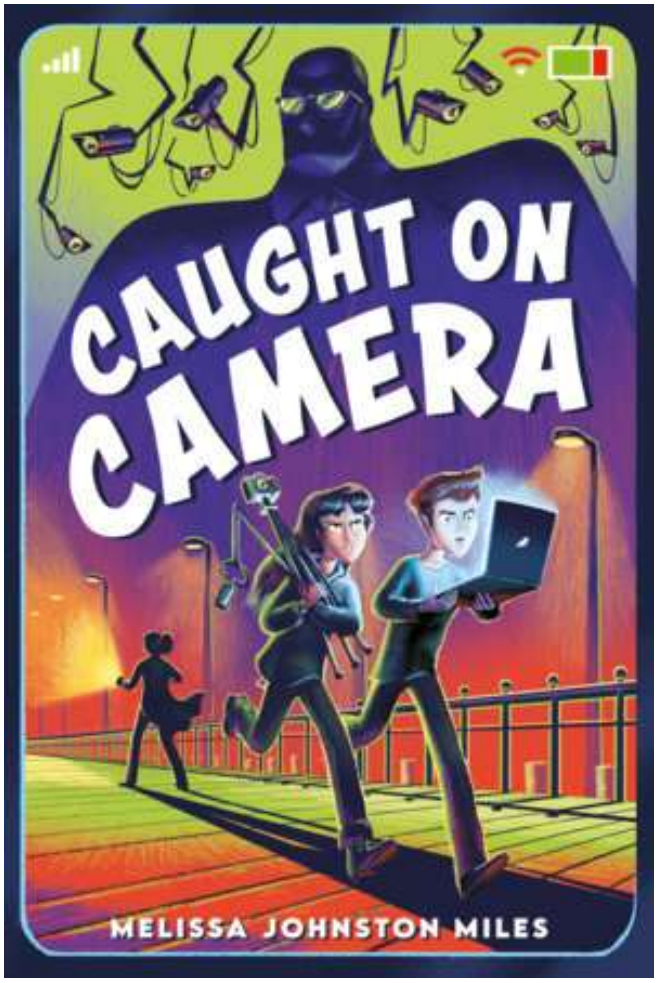
Continued on page 6.

Seven Thanksgiving facts from the article: 44 Fun Thanksgiving Facts to Wow Your Dinner Guests BY Tamara Gane FACT-CHECKED BY Marcy Lovitch UPDATED ON Sep. 30, 2026 See all of the facts here: https://www.rd.com/article/thanksgiving-trivia/

1. **Not every president recognized Thanksgiving:** Thomas Jefferson was the first president to refuse to declare a Thanksgiving proclamation. He felt the holiday, full of prayer, inappropriately crossed the boundary separating church and state.
2. **President Calvin Coolidge was gifted a raccoon to eat for Thanksgiving dinner:** In November 1926, Vinnie Joyce from Nitta Yuma, Mississippi, sent President Coolidge a live raccoon to serve for Thanksgiving dinner. But instead of putting it on the menu, Coolidge adopted the raccoon as a family pet and named it Rebecca!
3. **It's estimated 50 million pumpkin pies are consumed on Thanksgiving Day alone:** Americans eat more pie than turkey on Thanksgiving. Americans devour an estimated 50 million pumpkin pies each Thanksgiving Day.
4. **Pardoned turkeys were sent to Disney: From 2005 to 2009, pardoned turkeys got the VIP treatment**: They were sent to Walt Disney World or Disneyland to serve as the honorary grand marshals of Disney's Thanksgiving Day Parade.
5. **A town once postponed Thanksgiving because of pumpkin pie:** In 1705, the townspeople of Colchester, Connecticut, were so dedicated to the dessert that they elected to postpone the holiday because foul weather had interfered with their molasses shipment. Without molasses, they couldn't make pumpkin pie, and without pumpkin pie, Thanksgiving just wouldn't be the same.
6. **Black Friday is a busy day for plumbers:** It turns out that enough people clog their sinks and garbage disposals on Thanksgiving to make it the busiest day of the year for these handy folks.
7. **Thanksgiving inspired the first TV dinners:** In 1953, the folks at Swanson didn't sell as many Thanksgiving turkeys as expected. In fact, they had some 260 tons of unsold turkey on hand. Inspired by the meals served in trays on airplanes, Swanson salesperson Gerry Thomas used the turkeys to create the world's first TV dinners. They sold for 98 cents each. These ready-made meals were an immediate hit, and Thomas received a $300 a month raise and a $1,000 bonus for coming up with the idea.
8. **Canada celebrates Thanksgiving too:** Canadians, however, offer Thanksgiving wishes in October, when they give thanks for a safe voyage that took place more than 40 years before the Mayflower crossing.
9. **The first Turkey Trot was held in Buffalo, New York:** The first Turkey Trot was established in 1896 in Buffalo, New York. Six runners showed up to participate. Now there are m more than a million participants showing up for Turkey Trots across the nation.
10. **A very familiar Christmas carol was written for Thanksgiving:** James Lord Pierpont reportedly wrote "Jingle Bells" so it could be performed by his father's Sunday school class on Thanksgiving.

https://www.rd.com/article/thanksgiving-trivia/

Guest Author: Melissa Johnston Miles



Caught on Camera

by Melissa Johnston Miles

After a summer of non-stop news footage of Senator Jefferson Morgan's suspicious death just days before his testimony against the global crime ring Double Helix, Dominic does not expect to spot him in live webcam footage of Times Square looking very ... alive!

Dominic knows he saw him, but he can't convince anyone to believe him. Desperate to prove he's right, and to bring Senator Morgan to justice, Dominic creates a podcast to share his conclusions about Morgan's identity. It goes viral in a way he never imagined.

Can Dominic uncover the *real* story behind Senator Morgan's fake death, evade underworld operatives, stay one step ahead of a (potentially!) untrustworthy rogue federal agent, handle new social ticks and anxieties brought on by his sudden fame AND navigate the pitfalls of middle school social hierarchy . . . without losing sight of the things that make him, well, *him?*

This thrilling middle grade adventure from Georgia-based teacher Melissa Johnston Miles shows the power of seeing and thinking differently from the status quo, and how being brave enough to embrace what makes you unique has the power to change the course of millions of lives.

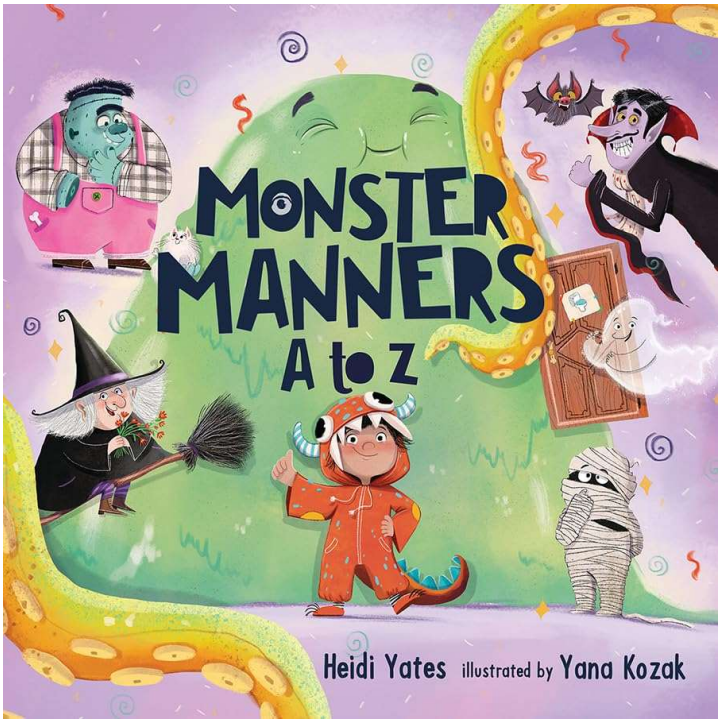
A high-stakes adventure thriller perfect for 8–12-year-olds about a neurodivergent young podcaster pushed on the run after spotting a supposedly dead senator on a livestream.

Melissa is a (published and listed) member of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and serves as a regional advisor. She writes everything from picture books to Young Adult novels. Her debut Middle Grade Novel is being published through Moon + Bird, an imprint of Watkins Media. She's represented by Kristen Terrette of Martin-Newens Literary Management.
Melissa also published three stories in The School Magazine. *Scaring the Skeptics* is a ghost story set in an old inn in Annapolis, MD that appeared in the November 2023 issue of Orbit. *London's Great Stink* is a nonfiction story in the February 2024 issue of Touchdown. *Ultra Secret: How an Ordinary Young Woman Helped End a War*, a biography, was in the August 2025 issue of Touchdown.
She is a pediatric nurse and certified K-12 educator, passionate about community literacy. You can also find samples of her writing on her blog, and also in three published flash fiction anthologies (Vine Leaves Press) here.



Pre-order yours at Bookshop.org

Guest Author: Heidi Yates



Monster Manners A to Z

by Heidi Yates (Author), Yana Kozak (Illustrator)

Boogie on, fiends! This not-so-spooky tale of well-behaved magical creatures will make a humorous addition to your Halloween read aloud books.

Invited to your first Monster Bash and shaky on what to expect? Have no fear! From A to Z (Aliens to Zombies), monsters have had millennia to master good manners. Ogres don't spread germs, vampires never bite, and werewolves follow rules! As readers journey through a monstrous party, they'll witness 26 creatures demonstrating etiquette and attitudes for everyone to practice--monsters and kids alike.

Find the book on Amazon

Heidi Yates is a children's book author and illustrator who creates whimsical, witty, and occasionally spine-tingling stories. She has a particular weakness for mythical creatures, as seen in her 'dé-boo' picture book, MONSTER MANNERS A to Z (Beaming Books 2026).

Heidi received her BFA from The Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University. She is an active member of SCBWI as well as Julie Hedlund's 12x12 Picture Book Challenge, and was honored to be a 2021 #PBChat mentee under author Josh Funk.

Heidi splits her time among the lush green forests of Oregon, the sunny Arizona desert, and the packed aisles of bookstores everywhere. When she's not reading a story, she is usually creating one. Inspiration is all around. It doesn't matter if she's hiking, biking, or taking nature photos, Heidi can always find a seed for a story.

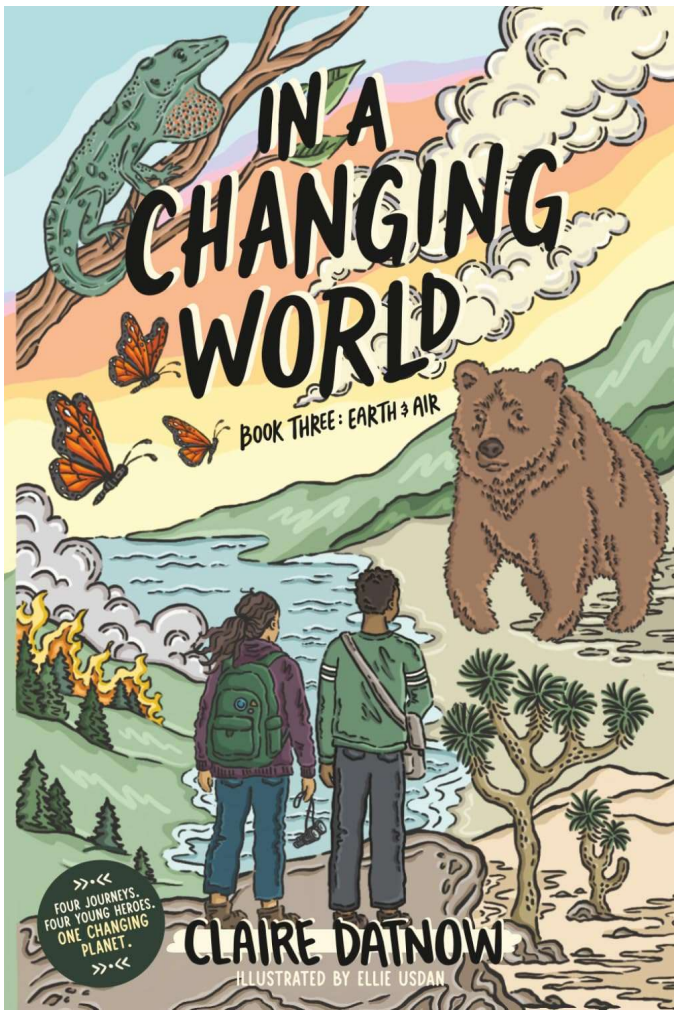


Recognition:

- 2018 SCBWI-AK Conference Writers Award recipient
- 2019 PBChat mentorship runner up
- 2021 PBChat mentorship with Josh Funk

https://www.heidiyates.com

Guest Author: Claire Datnow



In a Changing World: An Eco Adventure (The Four Elements , Cli-Fi Trilogy)

by Claire Datnow (Author), Ellie Usdan (Illustrator), Boris Datnow (Photographer)

Can four ordinary teens change the future of a changing planet?
When nature begins behaving in unexpected ways, four young people from different corners of the world discover that courage, curiosity, and friendship may be their greatest superpowers.
On a Caribbean island recovering from a devastating hurricane, **Alvin** races to uncover how tiny lizards are adapting to a world transformed overnight
In the mountains of Mexico and across North America, **Mari** and **Dana** follow a baffling mystery as monarch butterflies abandon the migration route scientists have relied on for generations.
On Alaska's rugged Kodiak Island, **April** must overcome fear after a terrifying bear attack while helping protect both people and wildlife.
In California's Mojave Desert, **Josh** embarks on an extraordinary journey that reveals the ancient secret behind the survival of the iconic Joshua tree—and why its future now rests in human hands.

Filled with unforgettable adventures, authentic science, indigenous knowledge, and inspiring young heroes, *In a Changing World* blends heart-pounding action with real discoveries from today's changing world.

Buy on Amazon

Claire was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa, which ignited her love for the natural world and for diverse indigenous cultures around the globe. Claire taught creative writing to gifted and talented students in the Birmingham, Alabama Public Schools System. Her published works include a middle grade Eco mystery series, The Adventures of The Sizzling Six. She received numerous scholarships and awards, including, The Blanche Dean Award for Outstanding Nature Educator, the Alabama Writers Cooperative Middle Grade Award, and Monarch Mysteries (Book 6 eco mystery series) long listed for the Green Books Award. During her tenure as a teacher, Claire and her students developed a nature trail, recently named in her honor as the Alabama Audubon-Datnow Forest Preserve.



A Love Story, Turkey Style

By Sonja McGiboney

Soon the winds of winter, blew leaves from all the trees.
The squirrels hid all their acorns and water drops did freeze.
Simon knew the time was now to make the yearly trek
While other turkey's strutted, Simon hid to save his neck

Boom, Boom, Boom, The mountain echoes roared.
Boom, Boom, Boom, Simon slept and gently snored.

On the mountain in the crack, eating nuts and berries,
Simon waited for snow to melt. In safety he did tarry.
The summer came, the summer went, and it was fall again.
But Simon had a problem, with a turkey named JoAnne.

Her feathers soft as pillows, her voice just like a sparrow,
Her chirping dainty, merry and bright, hit Simon like an arrow.
JoAnne was all for strutting, "Come show me what you got!"
Simon tried explaining, but it was all for naught.

JoAnne had eyes for Joeseph, whose strutting was the best!
Simon strutted round and round, but soon lost all his zest.
On the mountain in the crack, eating nuts, forlorn,
Simon cried, his heart in two, wishing he'd not been born.

Boom, Boom, Boom. The mountain echoes lobbed.
Boom, Boom, Boom. Simon shook and gently sobbed.

The summer came, the summer went. The winter winds did blow.
When Simon found his love JoAnne, she was without her Joe.
"Oh, Simon it was awful, poor Joe, my dearest Joe,
Begged me follow in his steps, but I couldn't, wouldn't go!"

"I hid among the cat tails, as you hide inside your cave,
And watched poor Joe strut his last, my Joe, he was so brave!
But brave is not the answer. Your cave is so much better,
Simon, if you'll have me, I'll stay with you forever!"

The summer came, the summer went, the colors full and bright.
Simon and his love, JoAnne, saved nuts from morn to night.

Boom, Boom, Boom. The mountain echoes ran.
Boom, Boom, Boom. Simon hugged his dear JoAnne



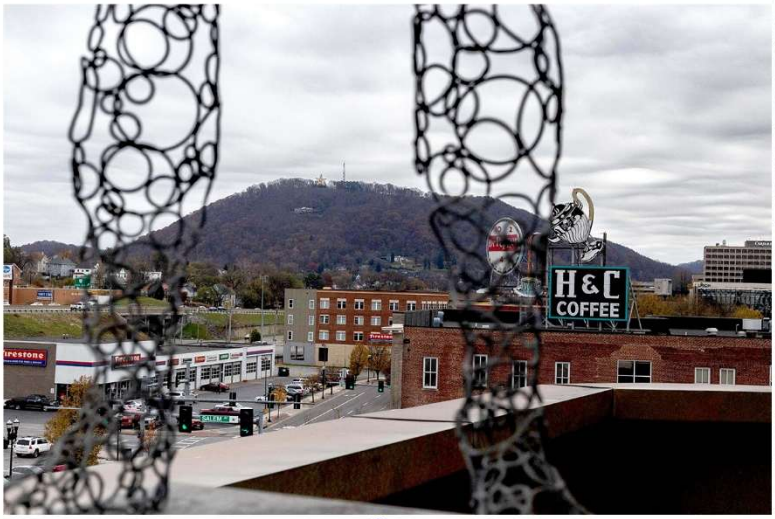
I've traveled a lot being an army spouse, and spent Thanksgiving in many different places. Can you figure out where these photos were taken? All were taken in places that I visited during the Thanksgiving holiday. The person with the most correct guesses will win a free Jazzy Book signed and sent to their favorite child.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

7.





8.



9.



10.

Crafts that you can make just by looking at the picture!
(But I included the link for you too!)



https://iheartcraftythings.com/thanksgiving-apple-turkey-craft.html



https://fun-a-day.com/colorful-pumpkin-seed-fall-art/



https://howdoesshe.com/crafting-with-kids-easy-thanksgiving-place-cards/

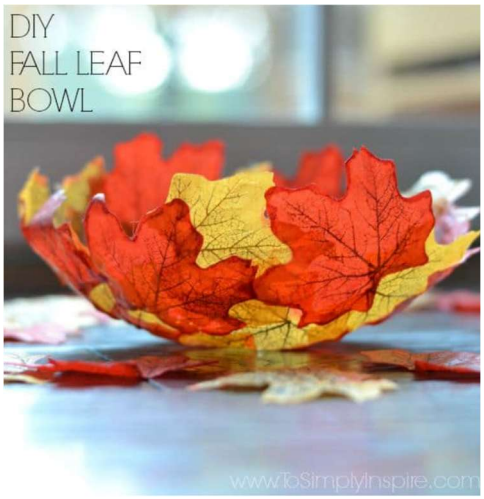
Crafts that might need directions!



https://hip2save.com/diy/string-art/



https://onelittleproject.com/beaded-pipe-cleaner-pumpkins/



https://www.tosimplyinspire.com/diy-fall-leaf-bowl.html

Marketing! Oy Veh! Social Media Content

Everyone says, “Put yourself on social media.” But what does that mean? Here are some things you can do, content ideas, photo ideas, etc., to help with that. Remember, vertical orientation is best for videos that people will probably be viewing on a phone.

1. Earned media: Get other people, influencers, to talk about your book on their social pages. Either pay them, or exchange favors. Or, just have such a great product that they do it without your asking.
2. Post in advance: Look at Julie Fruitticher, her book, If You Met a Fairy, comes out March of 2027. She’s now making fairy houses all over the place and posting videos and pictures of them on her social pages. Check them out. https://www.facebook.com/julie.f.schroeder.9 and https://www.instagram.com/p/DC9Q8PIxKVk/
3. Unboxing videos: I know, they seem corny to me, but people love watching other people open presents. Unboxing your books & the swag that you got, (especially stuffies) can get more people interested. Set it up so there are kids watching and show how they get excited over your book.
4. Take your book on a trip. Take your book, or the swag, on a trip around the city, the library, or school, or wherever. Think of the old traveling cutout, Flat Stanley, and do the same.
5. Photographs of your book. Not just the cover, but on a table next to coffee and cake, in the hands of someone at a library, on a plane, in a waiting room, anywhere people might be reading and enjoying it.
6. Tell the backstory: Record yourself talking about how the book came about, include photos or other people, etc. to make it interesting. If there’s an animal, include the animal, or one like it.
7. Record a commercial / trailer: Make sure the first 3 seconds are good to keep them from scrolling. I just viewed about 15 book trailers and these are the ones I liked. (sorry about ads.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jOlvsf1pK8 In the first three seconds the narrator says, “This is a bad seed.” And you are hooked by that voice. The art helps too. A few more: HORRIBLE BEAR! by Ame Dyckman & Zachariah OHora, The music hooked me. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjZ6MMbxof4&list=PL88D35C15FBEBDFE7 and No Place for Monsters by Author & Illustrator: Kory Merritt https://youtu.be/Iebw5YxoMBU and here’s mine for Jazzy’s Twelve Days of Christmas: https://youtube.com/shorts/cUbvr-3_uIU?si=GAvmuhdypBLoP40y There is a lot I’d change now, like it’s too long, I’d use a different voice, and Jazzy isn’t in it enough, but it’s cute.
8. Teasers: Share a little of your book and leave them hanging. If it’s a picture book, have an adorable child reading part of it. Maybe share the first two images (if your publisher/illustrator allows)
9. Run Giveaways: I’ve done a few of these, mostly, I share a post that says something like, “Get a Christmas Card or Valentine from Jazzy.” I ask parents to send me their email and address. I get one or two subscribers that way. But if you are doing a book launch, or signing, then these are good ways to get people to come.
10. Align with a charity or cause: Partner with a charity or local group and give part of your profits to their cause. This will increase your visibility as they share your post. Think outside the box. A book with a dog for a subject can be paired with things like the SPCA, animal assisted therapy groups, pet stores that are also conducting a fundraiser, or a kindergarten class that’s talking about animals.



The coloring pages are AI renderings of my original photos.

For the coloring page this month, I did something different. I wondered, “If I were a turkey and fell off a truck in NYC, where would I hide?” Well, If I were a turkey I would answer, “Why, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. I can blend in with a display.”

These are the two picture that I took at different times, because there never would be a live turkey in the museum. I combined them in Photoshop and used AI to make a coloring page.

A photo I took at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History



My turkey photo



My combination of the two photos.



