

J. Aday Kennedy - Interviews Children's Author, Donna M. McDine  
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January 2, 2009

**Write What Inspires You! Newsletter**

**By Donna M. McDine**

**Publication Frequency: Monthly**

**Distribution Method: Email with .PDF file attached**

**Length of Existence: One month**

Coming off the inspiration of The 2008 Muse Online Conference, Donna is embarking on the maiden voyage of her debut FREE newsletter, "Write What Inspires You!" to be published December 2008 and monthly thereafter. It is my intent to deliver to you on a monthly basis a combination of:

- Author, Illustrator, and Editor Interviews
- Book Reviews
- An essay column entitled, Reflections or Dreams (which can be non-fiction or fiction)
- Proclaim Your Successes! Section, so we all can cheer one another on.
- Audience: Peers in the Children Publishing Industry

**Donna M. McDine Editor/Children's Author**

Donna M. McDine ~ is a native of Rockland County, New York and lives with her husband and two daughters. She writes, moms, and is a personal assistant from her home in Tappan. Donna is a 2007 graduate of the Institute of Children's Literature, Writing for Children and Teenagers program and is currently enrolled in the ICL's Advanced Book Course. She is also a member of the SCBWI and Musing Our Children Group. Donna's publishing credits include *over 15 print and online ezines*. She placed 12<sup>th</sup> in the *77<sup>th</sup> Annual Writers Digest Writing Competition* in the category Children's/Young Adult Fiction and her cover letter to Boys' Quest for ice-fishing article is published as a sample in the *2009 Magazine Markets for Children's Writers* issue. In addition, she has two accepted non-fiction articles pending publication with *Boys' Quest*, December 2012 and *Hopscotch for Girls*, April 2014. She is also a children's book reviewer for the Muse Book Reviews, The National Writing for Children Center, and the Stories for Children Magazine.

Learn more about Donna's writing career at: <http://www.donnamcdine.com>, sign her guest book and receive a FREE copy of "Write What Inspires You! Author Interviews," compiled by Donna M. McDine.

Although her background is in office management, she focuses her creative energies on writing for children and young adults. Using her children, extended family, and their friends as inspiration, she consistently studies the children's magazine markets for submitting of articles and short stories. Donna also continues to participate in children and young adult writing workshops, conferences, and critique groups on an ongoing basis to sharpen her writing skills.

**J. Aday: Donna, I have to admit I've considered writing a newsletter. It seems like a daunting task. What was your biggest concern about pulling it off and how did you lay that concern to bed?**

**Donna:** My biggest concern at first was why would someone want to subscribe to my newsletter, what makes me worthy of putting out such a newsletter. I'm a list person and immediately wrote out my pros and cons. The pros heavily outweighed the cons. My gut told me, what do you have to lose...so I went for it. I went ahead and sent out Media Releases and posts to children writer discussion boards and my writing groups and my efforts resulted in positive responses. Even before the debut issue in December 2008 was released my opt-in subscriber list stood at a little more than 75 subscribers. To tell you the truth I was quite shocked and pleased. As of this interview I'm at 90 subscribers and momentum continues to build. Not as much at first, but steady enough. I feel like a child receiving the perfect gift and shout out a YIPPEE every time I receive in opt-in request.

**J. Aday: In an email to me, you mentioned your copy editor. What is their job? How did you choose them?**

**Donna:** I attended the Eastern NY SCBWI conference in June 2008 and without prior knowledge of her attendance, I met fellow Muse It Up Club member, Lori Calabrese. We immediately bonded face-to-face, after knowing each other through cyber-space and to our delight we met Stephanie Hoina at the conference. The three of us forged a positive bond quickly and we started up our own critique group. Since June we are continually in touch critiquing one another's work and supporting one another in writing and personally. Stephanie is not a copy editor by trade, but her attention to detail is in-depth and concise. She not only suggests a

change, but why...making it much clearer and positive for the change. Stephanie's job is to read through the newsletter with a fine tooth comb before its release to make sure no sneaky typos find their way in and the flow of writing is understandable.

**J. Aday: What purpose will your ezine serve your readers?**

**Donna:** The purpose of my ezine newsletter is to provide interviews on a monthly basis from authors, editors, and illustrators, giving the reader a glimpse into the daily musings of the children publishing industry. Also, included is a submission column entitled, Reflections or Dreams (more detail below), one book review per month usually tied in with the author or illustrator interviewed and of course a Proclaim Your Successes column for fellow writers to announce their accomplishments. I'm currently booked through June and a sneak peak for the February 2009 issue includes interviews with author Lori Calabrese, editor Jon Bard of Children's Book Insider, illustrator Jeff Miracola, book review of Welcome to Monster Isle, and Reflections or Dreams article by author L. Diane Wolfe.

**J. Aday: How are you generating subscribers?**

**Donna:** I am learning the marketing techniques as I go along and to date I have been successful with Media Releases, posting announcements at children writers discussion boards, including the newsletter in my signature line of my emails, having an opt-in selection at the top of my website, and of course word of mouth. Over the past several months I am becoming more comfortable with my abilities as a writer and have discussed my writing career and my newsletter more openly. Networking IS key!

**J. Aday: Will you accept submissions from writers?**

**Donna:** At this time I accept submissions for the Reflections or Dreams column. The guidelines for submission are: select to write a poem or an article (fiction or non-fiction) around the topic of "reflections of your writing" or "dreams for your writing." No more than 500 words. The column will not include more than one article or a combo of one poem and one article for the Reflections or Dreams column. This is a non-paying market.

**J. Aday: How will you determine its success or failure?**

**Donna:** The best way to gauge the success of the newsletter is continued momentum of opt-in subscribers, interview subjects, and submission to the Reflections or Dreams column.

**J. Aday:** What goals have you set for 2009, the first year of publication?

**Donna:** The main goal set for 2009 is to continue with marketing, contacting interviewees, and growing the opt-in subscriber list on a consistent basis. I'd like to see the opt-in list grow to at least 200.

Jessica, thanks for the opportunity to be interviewed. I enjoyed your questions and look forward to our continued contact in 2009!

It sounds like you're primed for success. Good luck with your new venture. I hope it lives up to all of your hopes and dreams.