

Independent Publishing Trail Blazers

Do you have indie questions? Depending on the indie path that you are considering, you may contact one of the three advisors below that best fits your direction.

Indie publishing would include hybrid publishing (combines aspects of traditional and self-publishing), vanity publishing (publishers do it all for a price), self-publishing (the author does it all) and digital. All of these various publishing methods would fall under the indie umbrella.

In an effort to provide the most current and accurate information for our members we have three indie advisors: Melissa Bailey - Picture Book, David Stricklen - Middle Grade and Melanie Hooyenga - Young Adult. You should also consider their particular path to publishing. Who may best answer your individual questions?

Meet the SCBWI-MI INDIE ADVISORS



David Stricklen – SCBWI-MI Indie Coordinator & Middle Grade Author

In a former life, David was an airport police chief with 30 years experience in law enforcement. After retiring, David went all in on his creative side. He has written a series of three sought-after MG fantasy adventure books: *Beneath and Beyond*, *Through the Eyes of the Beast* and *The Heart of the Swarm*. His new release is a contemporary MG fiction entitled *Ripley Robinson and the Worm Charmer*, which is reviewer recommended by KIRKUS Review and featured in their monthly magazine. His books and school visits are filled with magic and creativity. David's reverse perspective painting was a Grand Rapids ArtPrize (largest attended art competition in the world) 3D

2018 popular vote finalist and a post prize Colors of Community 3D & 2D popular vote first place (ArtPrize category).

David is on the Michigan Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI-MI) leadership team and is also the Michigan SCBWI indie coordinator, Grand Rapids Shop Talk coordinator and the overall Michigan Shop Talk Administrator.

David has also created a MG student review website called Tween Lit Review. On this unique website, authors may submit manuscripts to be reviewed by the actual target audience.

Contact information:

Stricklen@gmail.com

Websites:

BOOKS: www.BlackWaterPond.com

Student Manuscript Review: www.TweenLitReview.com

ArtPrize: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VR-PYprnRjI>

David's Books:

The Blackwater Pond Series:

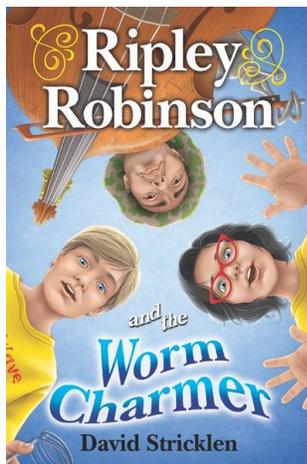
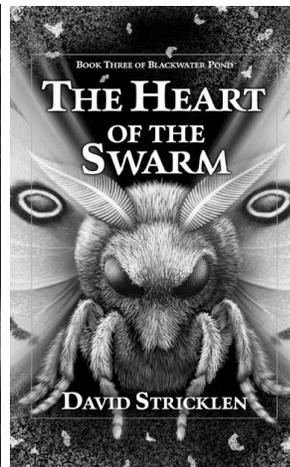
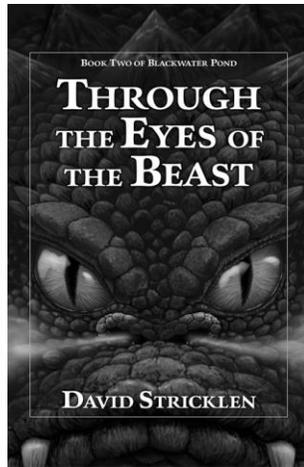
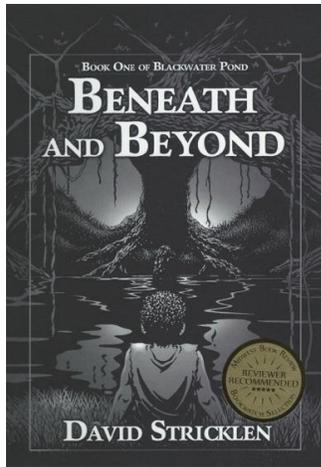
Beneath and Beyond (Book 1)

Through the Eyes of the Beast (Book 2)

The Heart of the Swarm (Book 3)

The Ripley Robinson Series:

Ripley Robinson and the Worm Charmer (Book 1)



David's Indie Path to Publishing

I consider myself a hybrid author, as I pick my own dream team. I hire out the editing, proofing, artwork, etc. My goal was never to do it as well as the traditional publishers. My goal was to exceed the national average with the book quality (hard covers, best paper, one of a kind artwork), writing, and unique plot.

- **Editing:**

Hired an editor with 30 years of experience

- **Proofing and typesetting:**

Hired a professional proofer and typesetter

- **Artwork:**

Artist Dan Sharp has done 70-ish book covers and interior art. Also, has done work for Disney, Hanna-Barbara, Scholastic and Warner Brothers.

- **Printing:**

I use a (local) internationally-known printer that does printing for the traditional guys like Veggie Tales etc. No shipping cost for me as I pick up the books at the printer.

- **Promotional:**

Facebook, Amazon, Goodreads, bookstores, Kindle, book fairs, school visits, website and word of mouth. My real success is in the school visit area. Besides a little action on the website, the others do not move many books.

- **Validation:**

Ripley Robinson was reviewer recommended by KIRKUS Review and featured in their monthly magazine. The book will be on their 2020 "Books Worth Discovering list". I have a Midwest Book Review "Book Watch Selection" gold sticker for both Beneath and Beyond and Ripley Robinson. I have positive reviews from Writers Digest Magazine for books 1 and 2.

- **Promotional materials:**

Business cards, bifold brochure, ink pens with artwork wrapped around the barrel and tattoos with artwork promoting book two and gummy worms for Ripley Robinson and the Worm Charmer.

- **School visit program:**

I present to 6th or 7th grades. I do a one-hour power point presentation to one or two individual classes. I do not do assemblies because it is not as interactive. I try to inspire students to read as well as write. I discuss the creative process involved in students making up stories on their own. I use several magic tricks as memory queues to reinforce some key points and keep it fun. At the end, the students give me a place, problem, character, etc. and I create stories on the fly. Students may purchase autographed books at a discounted rate. I return to the same schools every year and do the same grade thus every student in the system will have me at some point. I have been doing these visits since 2010.



Melanie Hooyenga – Young Adult Author

Multi-award winning young adult author Melanie Hooyenga writes books about strong girls who learn to navigate life despite its challenges. She first started writing as a teenager and finds she still relates best to that age group.

Her award-winning YA sports romance series, the Rules Series, is about girls from Colorado falling in love and learning to stand up on their own. Her YA time travel trilogy, The Flicker Effect, is about a teen who uses sunlight to travel back to yesterday. The first book, FLICKER, won first place for Middle Grade/Young Adult in the Writer's Digest 2015 Self-Published eBook awards, and the Rules Series has won ten awards, including Finalist for MG/YA in the BookLife Prize.

When not at her day job as Communications Director at a local nonprofit, you can find her wrangling her Miniature Schnauzer Owen and playing every sport imaginable with her husband Jeremy.

Contact Information:

melaniehooa@gmail.com

Links:

melaniehooyenga@gmail.com

<http://www.melaniehoo.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/MelanieHooyenga>

<https://twitter.com/MelanieHoo>

<https://instagram.com/melaniehoo/>

Melanie's Indie Path to Publishing:

I'm a very linear writer, and I need to know the end of a story before I start writing. When I first get an idea, I write down my ideas as fast as they come, then I put those mish-mashed ideas into a timeline so I can see how they fit together in a three-act structure. From there, I create my outline — or guide, as I like to call it — which gives a sentence or two description of what happens in each chapter.

When putting the book together, I use several rounds of readers, many of whom I've worked with for years, as well as an editor who I trust. My background is in graphic design and marketing, so I also create my own covers and handle all the marketing myself.

I've queried literary agents several times over the years, but I enjoy the control of self-publishing. I published my first novel, *Flicker*, in 2012 and looking back, it's alarming how little I knew about the process. I'm excited to take what I've learned over the past eight years and help others on their path to publication.

Melanie's Books:

The Flicker Effect Series

Flicker (book 1)

Fracture (book 2)

Faded (book 3)

The Rules Series

The Slope Rules (book 1)

The Trail Rules (book 2)

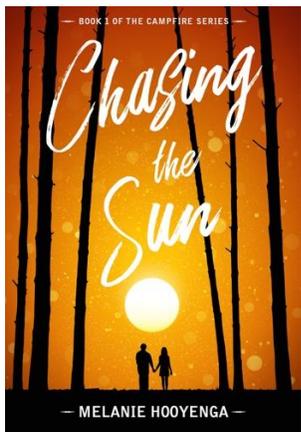
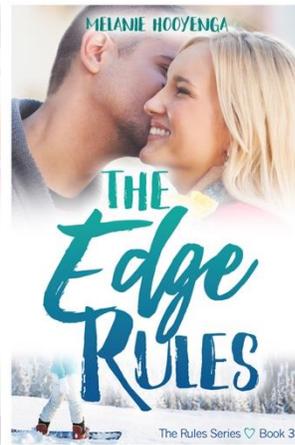
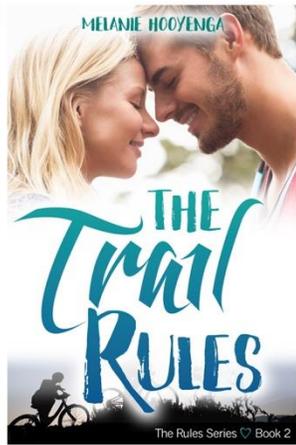
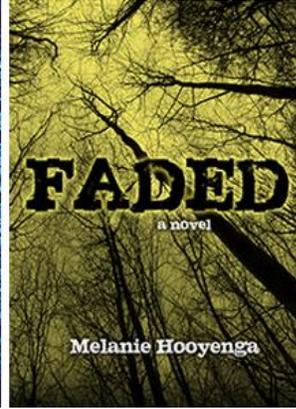
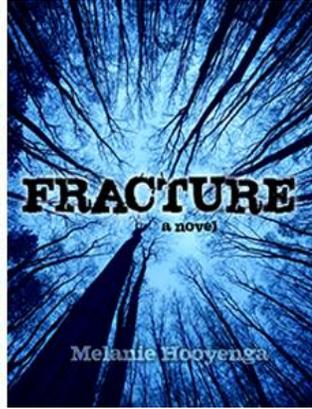
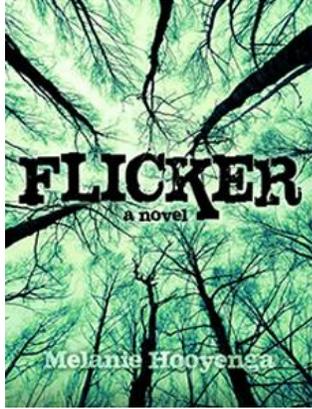
The Edge Rules (book 3)

The Book of Good

(guided gratitude journal)

Chasing the Sun

(The Campfire Series #1)



Anthologies:

The Art of Taking Chances (The Friend Rules)

Love on Main (Sunflowers & Lavender)



Melissa Bailey – Picture Book Author/Illustrator

Hi! I'm Melissa, but feel free to call me Mo. I've been a member of SCBWI since 2013 and have been illustrating children's books since 2009, including 2 award-winners and a feature in Kirkus Review's 2019 Fall Preview. In 2018, I reached my goal of becoming an author-illustrator with *Pug Is Happy* (published by a pygmy indie publisher) and have co-authored and illustrated the upcoming picture book *Imara's Tiara* (fall 2020). With the help of SCBWI, research, experiences clients have generously shared with me, and my own insatiable curiosity, I've worked hard to learn all I can about the ins and outs of the children's book publishing industry (both traditional and indie) and try my best to keep current with ever-evolving trends and changes. I'm here to help make your publishing journey less confusing and more successful.

Contact Information:

melissa@mbaileyart.com

Links:

www.mbaileyart.com

<https://www.instagram.com/mbaileyart/>

Melissa's Indie Experience:

- A picture book expert and aficionado. Reads over 500 picture books a year (yes, she counted) – she doesn't just read them, she studies them.
- Picture book author-illustrator
- Illustrator of 50 children's books, including 2 award winners

- Has worked with 30+ self-published authors – she’s observed, been deeply involved in book creation and the publishing process, advised at times, and learned from their successes and mistakes.
- Book designer – has designed 50+ book covers and formatted 30+ books for print
- Direct experience working with or communicating with the following printers: Friesens, Bang Printing/CJK Group, MCRL Printing (an overseas printer), KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing), Ingram Spark, and others
- Has worked with a few vanity or indie publishers: Story Monsters Inc., Mascot Books, Pygmy Giraffe Publishing
- Marketing: experience using social media as a marketing tool (Instagram & Facebook), book fairs. Clients have shared their experiences marketing & selling on Amazon, radio & TV appearances, author visits.
- Editing, proofreading, picture book critiques
- Melissa also created our Indie SCBWI-MI logo.

Melissa’s Books:

Imara’s Tiara (coming fall 2020)

Steve the Dung Beetle: On a Roll – 2019 Moonbeam Silver Medal for Best Illustrator

Pug is Happy

The Pesky Fly – featured in Kirkus Review’s Fall Preview, 2019

