

Author Interview With Tricia Gardella by Itsy Bitsy Book Bits

For those new to your work, please tell us a bit about yourself, your books and your genre/s

- I've been publishing since the 90s, first as traditional then after some time off as an independent. I write picture books because that is what calls to me and I truly believe this is where lifelong reading begins.

What lessons have you learned as a writer?

- Discipline and there are more layers to publishing a book than you had ever imagined.

In your everyday life how do you give back to the world?

- I used to do a lot but now I'm hoping that what I write might do that job for me.

Name two authors you wish more people knew about

- Kirby Larson and Karen Kushman. There two popped into my head, but there are so many!!

What are some of your hobbies?

- knitting, crocheting, rug making, cooking, gardening, anything to do with fiber arts

When reading reviews, what is something you love to see written?

- I can tell you what I don't like, I don't want them simply telling me the story line. I have reviewed picture books for years. Some work, some don't. I want to know why something worked for you. Way too many picture books are written in poor verse in this day.

What are you currently working on?

- My main focus--probably for the rest of my life-- is my Mouse National Park series

What books are currently in your to-read list?

- Several months ago I began reading all the Newbery winning books and have now read over 25 of the 120 +/- winners. If i can get to the honor books, the count goes up to 400+. To be fair, I had read a few of them in past years. But now I'm on a mission.

What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

- That I don't necessarily think like they do.

What is your writing routine with a new book? Do you outline your stories or do you do what the characters tell you to do as you go along? Mix of both?

- Most books that I get down to writing insist on being written. Some come from a title that pops into my head, some come from something I see or hear about. My series books are different.. They just come because I once-u[on-a-time had an idea that I enjoyed playing with.

If you came with a warning label, what would yours say?

- Can be overpowering

What do you need in your writing space to help you stay focused?

- Nothing. What I need at this point in my life is a way to unfocus.

What comes first for you — the plot or the characters — and why?

- The story idea. But sometimes the character is the story idea. Why? Because a story comes to you the way it comes. I have never been one who lacked for ideas. But, that being said, I had an ice cream parlor for 16 years. What better place to set a picture book? And I have never had one idea about ice cream or an ice cream parlor.

What is the most difficult part of your writing process?

- Marketing. Tho I'm enjoying learning that too.

What time of the day do you usually write?

- Early morning then slowly wind down through the rest of the day.

What movie could you watch over and over again?

- I honestly don't know. I don't even turn my TV on anymore. I read a LOT!

What's your favorite snack?

- Corn chips

As a reader and author, are there certain themes and stories that you gravitate towards?

- family, tradition, fun. Historical fiction, mystery/suspense, nonfiction, anything well-written.

Do you write one book at a time or do you have several going at a time?

- Several. Most of my books are never completely written until they are published. One of my favorite parts of writing is rewriting.

If you won the lottery what would you do with the money?

- **Keep on publishing. And maybe find the miracle answer to how to get my books seen and selling. Plus I would love to offer funding to DESERVING beginning authors. Way too many today don't take the time to learn how to write.**

You are filling out this interview as part of a tour with Itsy Bitsy Book Bits. What made you choose Itsy Bitsy Book Bits?

- **Kim Ann. She can't speak highly enough of you.**