

Children's Book Guild News



CHILDREN'S
BOOK GUILD
of WASHINGTON, DC

Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

[Printer-Friendly Version \(pdf\)](#)

Sunday, October 24, 2021

Pages

[Home](#)

[Guild Member Blogs](#)

[Busboys and Poets](#)

About Me



Monthly News

The Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC is a professional organization of authors, illustrators and children's literature specialists promoting high standards in children's literature since 1945. Visit us at <https://childrensbookguild.org/>

[View my complete profile](#)

November 2021

Upcoming November Program

A Conversation with Newbery Honors Award-Winning Author Christina Soontornvat



At 1 p.m. on Thursday, November 18, the Children's Book Guild's Zoom Speaker Series will feature a conversation with award-winning author Christina Soontornvat. Christina will share thoughts on her career, which includes writing both fiction and nonfiction. She will also talk about her upcoming projects.

In 2019, Christina won two Newbery Honors for the middle grade fantasy book *A Wish in the Dark* and her non-fiction book, *All Thirteen: the Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team*. The latter also received a

Siebert Honor and a Horn Book honor. She has written more than a dozen books for children. Her picture books include *The Ramble Shamble Children* (illustrated by Caldecott Honoree Lauren Castillo) and *Simon at the Art Museum* (illustrated by Christine Davenier). She is the author of the beloved *Diary of an Ice Princess* chapter book series.

She grew up behind the counter of her parents' Thai restaurant in a small Texas town and is proud of both her Thai and her Texan roots. She makes regular trips to both Weatherford and Bangkok to see her beloved family members (and eat lots and lots of Thai food!). In addition to being an author, Christina holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and a master's degree in Science Education. She spent a decade working in the science museum field, where she designed programs and exhibits to get kids excited about science. She is passionate about STEM (science, technology engineering, and math) and loves learning.

She lives in Austin, Texas with her husband, two young children and one old cat. You can read more about Christine [here](#).

Register Now!

Also in This Issue:

1. President's Letter
2. October Program Recap
3. An Invitation from Kwame Alexander and The Kennedy Center
4. Save the Date for New Member Month!
5. Member News

From Guild President Erica Perl

How is it November already?!

I don't know about you, but that snuck up on me. Feels like stores were just phasing out the flip-flops and then, boom, here we are! I guess that means that "the holiday season" will soon be upon us, and I for one am hoping Guild members can find some way of coming together to celebrate. If you have not yet filled out a quick (really! three questions!) survey about how we might do that, we need to hear from YOU. Please click [here](#) to give us your feedback.



Those who joined us for our second virtual meeting of the 2021-2022 season had the distinct pleasure of hearing Dr. Jewell Parker Rhodes talk about *Paradise on Fire* and many of her other books. She was so warm and imparted so much wisdom – I was prepared to be impressed (all those heavy-hitting, award winning books!), but I was also charmed. Her humor and enthusiasm for research are infectious. Her approach to constructing dramatic stories got me thinking about my own projects in new ways. As is so often the case, I came away grateful to the Guild for the gift of quality time with one of the greats.

Speaking of the greats, we sadly lost two recently: Jerry Pinkney and Gary Paulsen. A lovely tribute to these two literary lions is this [passage by Paulsen with a classic Pinkney cover image](#) created by Debbie Cohen, with an assist from Yukari Matsuyama. Jerry and Gary will be missed for their kindness and compassion as much as for their artistic accomplishments.

Our speaker this month (as you might have read above) will be Christina Soontornvat. Not only did she win two Newbery honors this year, and not only does she have wonderful stories about researching her book about the cave rescue of the Thai boys soccer team, she is the author of soooo many different kinds of books. Don't miss out! Kudos to the program committee for such a wonderful series of speakers.

Erica

In Case You Missed our October Program...

A Conversation with Jewel Parker Rhodes

By Fred Bowen

Watching award-winning author Jewel Parker Rhodes speak to the Children's Book Guild via Zoom on October 21, I was reminded of the opening line of Bob Dylan's song, "Cold Irons Bound."

The 2016 Nobel laureate growls,

I'm beginning to hear voices and there's no one around

Rhodes told the Guild she does not plot her books or use outlines. "I wait to hear my character and my character's voice." Rhodes said her husband claims she even talks stories in her sleep.

As someone who wouldn't think of starting a book without a detailed outline, I could barely believe what Rhodes was saying. But clearly this process works wonderfully for her. Rhodes is the author of more than fifteen books including such bestsellers as *Ghost Boys* and *Black Brother, Black Brother*. Her books have also garnered many awards such as an American Book Award, a Coretta Scott King Honor and a Walter Dean Myers Award. Rhodes did not set out to be a writer. Brought up in a poor section of Pittsburgh mostly by her loving grandmother, Rhodes attended Carnegie-Mellon University expecting to study drama. But when she saw a book written by a Black female writer (she didn't mention what one) she changed to be an English major.

Although she always wanted to write for a younger audience, Rhodes wrote several adult novels until she "was good enough to write for kids."

Her most recent effort, *Paradise on Fire*, was published in September. The idea for the book started when Rhodes was speaking before a typically White audience at a Wyoming writer's conference and noticed a row of Black teenagers in the back of the auditorium. Rhodes learned the young people were part of a City Kids DC program in which urban youths go West to learn about nature and the wilderness.

So, in *Paradise on Fire*, the main character, Addy, leaves her city and her grandmother and goes West in a summer wilderness program. She and several new friends learn survival skills such as hiking, climbing, and how to start campfires. Then comes the forest fire, the kind that have been ravaging California and other Western states.

Rhodes said she studied films of the forest fires "to make the fire come alive." As she read passages from the book it became clear her study time was well spent. The words are almost flames chasing and choking Addy in a nightmare of fear.

For Rhodes, every book is a work of imagination. Calling upon her early

drama background, Rhodes said, "I imagine my way through everything." Rhodes said it is a very emotional process that is connected to her unconscious.

Paradise on Fire also gives Rhodes a chance to talk about the issue of global warming and what humans are doing to wreck the environment. She has never shied away from difficult subjects but keeps her language accessible for her readers. "I like writing hard books," she explained. Kids, according to Rhodes, need to know about terrorism, racism and environmental degradation.

When asked what her next book would be about, Rhodes mentioned that her books *Ghost Boys* and *Black Brother, Black Brother* were being made into movies and then spoke vaguely about research in New York and skateboarding. No matter what the subject, I am sure Rhodes will find a quiet place and the voices will come.

An Invitation from the Kennedy Center's Theater for Young Audiences and Kwame Alexander

Acoustic Rooster's Barnyard Boogie: Starring Indigo Blume

Two picture books written by Guild member Kwame Alexander have been adapted (by him and fellow guild member Mary Rand Hess) into an original musical for young audiences premiering in November at the Kennedy Center: [Acoustic Rooster's Barnyard Boogie: Starring Indigo Blume](#). Kwame has generously invited Guild members to join and celebrate with a limited number of complimentary tickets to one of the performances on these dates:

- Thursday, November 18 at 7 pm
- Friday, November 19 at 7 pm

Reserve free tickets [here](#) before 5 pm on November 10. They are being offered on a first come first serve basis, 1-2 tickets per Guild member. There is also a 50 percent discount to purchase additional tickets for Guild members. This means that if you want to bring multiple guests, or the free tickets are claimed before you get a chance to reserve, you'll still get a great deal. Click [here](#) to order tickets to these shows at a 50 percent discount (or use the code 440687 on the phone).

Kwame will be at the Kennedy Center to host post-show conversations with audience members after all three of these performances. Also, the Kennedy Center's COVID policies can be found [here](#).

Save the Date! (Actually the Month!)

The Guild is excited to launch a pilot project: New Member Month. We're currently eyeing January as our first one. Please think ahead about children's book authors who would make awesome new Guild members! More information to follow.

Free Event With Illustrator Matt Tavares

The Children's Literature Centre will host its first Veterans Day event this month in conjunction with American Legion Farrady Post #24. The event will take place at 7 pm on November 11, 2021 at City Place in Frostburg, Maryland. Illustrator Matt Tavares will be the main speaker. He will present *21 Steps*, a book he illustrated. It's about the soldier who guards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. Tickets are free, but required. Click [here](#) to reserve yours. On Saturday, December 4, the Centre will feature its 17th annual Storybook Holiday during which Frostburg is transformed into a winter wonderland to present a festive, community celebration through children's literature. More details [here](#).

Member News

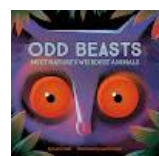
The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities has awarded 2022 Fellowships to Guild members Pamela Ehrenberg, Kate Marsh and Erica Perl. The Arts and Humanities Fellowship Program (AHFP) annually offers fellowships to individual artists whose artistic excellence significantly contributes to the District of Columbia as a world class cultural capital. AHFP recognizes the impact of individual artists within the District of Columbia and supports the vitality that those artists bring to the local community.

Laura Murray, author of *The Gingerbread Man Loose in the School* series, and illustrator Mike Lowery will be the keynote speakers for this year's VAASL Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia on Thursday, November 4th during the VAASL Awards and Scholarship luncheon. Laura and Mike will share their processes and thoughts about how their work impacts children's literacy and love of reading. Laura will also do a concurrent session on what makes a great read-aloud book and activities using fairy tales and fractured fairy tales in a diverse classroom.

Sally Davies' time-lapse film "Pandemic Romance" was a finalist in the Vancouver Independent Film Festival, and also an award winner in the Toronto Independent Film Festival, and it is a nominee for Best Micro Short at the San Francisco Indie Shorts Festival. Her time-lapse "Labyrinth of Life" was a finalist in the National Short Film Festival and will be screened at the Film Festival in March 2022. Three of Sally's time-lapse films, "Crossroads," "Labyrinth of Life," and "Dazzling: Geneva at 90," were selected for the [Utopia Film Festival](#) in Greenbelt, Maryland and will be up on the big screen on November 21-22, 2021.



Laura Gehl's new board book *Odd Beasts*, illustrated by Gareth Lucas, is out from Abrams on November 2. Gareth's art is absolutely stunning, and was chosen to be displayed as part of the Society of Illustrators Original Art Show. The back matter includes more detailed information about each of the weird creatures introduced in the book, to complement the simple, rhyming text.



Gareth Hinds' new graphic novel, *Graceling*, adapted from the novel by Kristin Cashore, will be published this month from Harper/HMH/Etch. Gareth will do online events that week at East City Books 11/16, Oblong Books 11/19 and Books of Wonder 11/20. The book just received a starred review from SLJ. There is an extensive preview on [Amazon](#), which includes the last few pages with some spoilers.

Terry Jennings' new book, *Sherlock Dom*, the fourth in the *Definitely Dominguita* series, comes out November 16. She took part in a *Definitely Dominguita* costume party at Scrawl books in Reston just before Halloween.

Katherine Paterson's new novel, *Birdie's Bargain*, came out in late October.



Erica Perl's nonfiction early reader series *Truth or Lie* (Random House) purr-oudly presents *Truth or Lie: Cats*, which comes out this month. Budding cat fanciers will love hunting down the truth about their favorite animals in this innovative early reader. In the *Truth or Lie* books' unique Q&A format, proficient readers are quizzed about cats to see if they can separate facts from "lies." The series mascot, the Truth Sleuth, guides readers through this funny and fact-packed book, which features photos and Michael Slack's fabulous illustrations of a wide variety of felines.

After 6 novels, Tammar Stein's first picture book is out this month. *My Hanukkah Book of Opposites* is illustrated by Juliana Perdomo and published by PJ Publishing. Not counting the title, it has 12 words and yet took almost 10 months of edits!



Posted by Monthly News at [6:07 AM](#) 0 comments

[Home](#)

[Older Posts](#)

Subscribe to: [Posts \(Atom\)](#)

Followers

Followers (12)



Follow

Powered by [Blogger](#).

