

Children's Book Guild News



CHILDREN'S
BOOK GUILD
of WASHINGTON, DC

Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

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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](#)

Monday, February 28, 2022

March 2022

Upcoming March Program

Our Own Madelyn Rosenberg & Wendy Shang!

The Guild's March meeting will be on Zoom at 7pm (not 1pm!) on Thursday, March 24th. Our speakers will be Madelyn Rosenberg and Wendy Shang, who have collaborated on novels including *This is Just a Test*, a Sydney Taylor Honor winner, and *Not Your All-American Girl*, a Junior Library Guild selection. They will discuss the inspiration for their books and what makes for a successful artistic collaboration.



Madelyn is the author of more than a dozen books for kids of all ages; recent work includes *Cyclops of Central Park*, an Ezra Jack Keats Award honoree, and *One Small Hop*. Wendy's books include *The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*, an Asian/Pacific American Library Award for Literature recipient, and the 2022 American Girl of the Year books, *Corinne* and *Corinne to the Rescue*.

THIS IS OUR ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, SO IT IS MEMBERS-ONLY. Please register for this meeting as usual, and if you have not received the Zoom link by the morning of 3/24, email Ann McCallum Staats at annheather11@yahoo.com. (She's our new registrar and is trying to fix any and all bugs in our registration system--thanks, Ann!)

Register Now

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President's Letter

Hello Guild members,

I'm not sure what the weather will be doing on the day this newsletter lands in your inbox, but on the day I am writing this, spring is in the air. It's one of the things I've always loved about DC – the crocuses start to surface in February, and they give me a little boost just when I need it most. Maybe it's just early spring fever talking, but I am feeling cautiously optimistic. Case numbers are down, rapid tests are widely available (I got my free supply at the DC public library, and by mail from the US Post Office), and yesterday I did my first in-person author visit in two years. Clad in a N-95 mask, mind you, but still!



I'm glad so many of you could join us for Edie Ching's excellent conversation with Kekla Magoon at our last Zoom Guild meeting. And I am hoping you will all join us by Zoom for our March meeting, which is not only important because it's our annual business meeting but also because we'll have Madelyn Rosenberg and Wendy Chang as our speakers. Like many of you, I looking forward to our eventual return to in-person gatherings, including our postponed "holiday gathering." Hopefully, soon! Until then, Zoom Guild meetings are the next best thing.

Erica

February Program Recap

We Are All Revolutionaries!

By Sue Fliess

On February 17th, Kekla Magoon, award-winning author of both fiction and nonfiction, presented to the Children's Book Guild for the luncheon speaker series, and Edie Ching moderated a Q&A with her at the end. Magoon discussed her new book, *Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to the People* (November 2021), which was a National Book Award Finalist and received six starred reviews.

She set the scene with what life was like in Oakland, California in 1967, spotlighting groups of young people having lively discussions about history and politics who began the important work of community organizing. They wanted to make their Black community safer--for



children, vulnerable seniors, and all underserved people in their neighborhoods. They were the first Black Panthers.

Magoon discussed how most people have an image in their minds of the Black Panthers as gun-toting Black men wearing leather jackets and that one of the goals of her work was to dispel the myth that the Black Panthers were violent. She wanted to paint a more full picture, most importantly that they believed in non-violence. In addition, they had many female members in positions of power.

The Black Panther Party was founded in 1966 with the purpose of empowering the Black community through freedom, employment, economic justice, safe housing, and education. They promoted an end to police brutality, release from prison until there could be fair trials, and no military service. But at some point, Magoon explained, after decades of training to be nonviolent, the patience with passive resistance ran out. Young people began engaging in uprisings because, as she asked us, *How long could you sit still in the face of violence? How long could you take it?*

The Black Panthers' efforts in Oakland spread nationwide: they opened free health clinics, ran candidates for office, and founded liberation schools. They were teaching Black history, which is American history. Magoon pointed out that we can have pride in our history without the erasure of the things we are not proud of. Her hope is that everyone comes away from her book with a better understanding of what the Black Panthers stood for and who they were.

When asked if she felt that authors need to be activists given the current climate of our society, she said she believes art is political no matter what it is. That whether we intend to or not, we are engaged in an activity that will reveal our politics one way or another. She thinks it's important for artists to be proactive in ways that are most comfortable for them, and she left us with a question, or rather a challenge: What small thing can you do to bring about the changes you seek? For we are *all* revolutionaries.

Guild List of Books Set in the Mid-Atlantic

Got Updates? Ideas?

Pamela Ehrenberg and Laura Melmed are updating the section on the Guild website that was originally created by Laura to highlight Guild members' [Books Set in the Mid-Atlantic Region](#) (DC, MD, VA, as well as Delaware, NY, NJ, & Pennsylvania). Do you have a book to add? Or do you have ideas for how this list can be shared more widely and/or formatted in a way that will be most useful to librarians and others as a resource? We'd love to hear from you! Please submit updates and suggestions via [this form](#) and submit a high-resolution JPG of the cover image to PamelaEhrenbergAuthor@gmail.com--ideally within the next two weeks for this first round of updates. And of course feel free to reach out to Pam and/or Laura (LauraMelmed@gmail.com) with additional thoughts.

SAVE THE DATE:

2022 Guild Nonfiction Award!

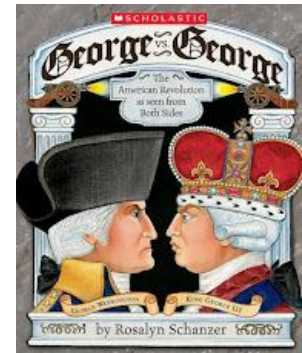
Mark your calendars to attend the 2022 Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award event to celebrate the work of Gail Jarrow on Thursday, May 19th at our usual lecture-series time. Details and registration info will be posted soon.

Schools Hide History by Banning Our Books

by Rosalyn Schanzer

Most of you have surely heard by now that Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel, *Maus*, has been banned in public schools in Tennessee. Focusing upon the aftermath of Hitler's Holocaust, the frustrated cartoonist tries to interview his Polish/Jewish father, who survived the atrocities of Auschwitz only to lose his wife to suicide. Spiegelman originally pulled me in with his mixture of angst and humor, and with artwork that displays the Germans as cats, the Jews as mice, the Poles as pigs, the Americans as dogs, and the French as frogs. Here's an excellent televised interview that Walter Isaacson recently made with Spiegelman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuzubQmHZr4>

Meanwhile I am proud to be included in such extraordinary company: at the same time, Tennessee schools also banned my own award-winning best seller, *George vs. George: The American Revolution as Seen from Both Sides*. Since everything in the book was carefully vetted for accuracy by National Geographic and a cadre of experts, I imagine that telling another country's side of this story is unacceptable. What a shame that some schools prefer to delete uncomfortable facts about history.



Military Teen Book Club

by L. M. Elliott

I wanted to share an opportunity--a wonderful new program designed for military teens by Blue Star Families--a virtual book club discussing novels in which military teens can see themselves and their unique strengths. Participants are provided free e-books and meet four times for each book discussed, finding community and a safe place for their own creative expression spawned by the readings. Teens may [register](#) to join at any time.

Military kids need one another. Need to be in communion with one another. Through their travels, they know a larger world than most of their peers. Because of their active-duty parents, they know far larger fears. What better way for them to bond, to better understand their lives, to express their thoughts, hopes, and worries than a book club discussing topics and characters that reflect their experiences?

I am honored that my YA novel, *Walls*--a Kirkus Best YA Historical Fiction 2021 and NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book--is the kick-off read. *Walls* depicts the harsh tragedy of the Berlin Wall and the courage of those who stood post against it through an American Army teen stationed in West Berlin in the tense year of 1960-61 and the wary friendship he builds with his East German cousin living in the Soviet sector. The question of what it would take for that East Berlin youth--inculcated in communist dogma and Anti-American propaganda--to trust a Westerner and vice versa--felt a poignant and powerful question to explore. Especially in this time of deep political polarization.

That approach also allowed me to truly celebrate military kids' stunning, matter-of-fact resiliency, their sense of purpose and fierce camaraderie, their willingness to constantly pick up and move, sometimes to dangerous postings, in support of their active duty parent. A type of character who isn't written much, especially in YA literature. My hope is this book will not only increase awareness among American teens about the Berlin Wall, the Cold War, and NATO's roots, but also increase their respect/empathy for military students who are newcomers to their schools. And, of course, help military kids feel applauded!



Join the BSF Teen Book Club
February - April

BLUE STAR FAMILIES
L.M. Elliott

In the months of rising tensions before the surprise overnight raising of the Berlin Wall, teenage cousins Drew, an American army brat in West Berlin, and Matthias, a young communist in East Berlin, become wary friends on opposite sides of the Cold War.

What we're reading:
WALLS by L.M. Elliott

What we'll be doing:
Meeting the author. Talking about *WALLS*, history and military life. Connecting with teens across the country. Offering opportunities to share your creative expressions.

Who's the club for:
Readers ages 12 and up

When we'll be virtually meeting:
8 p.m. - 9 p.m. ET

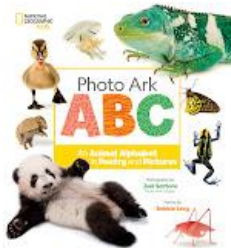
February 10: Informational meeting
March 10: Discuss the book and meet author L.M. Elliott
March 24: Creative expression design preparation for interested participants
April 18: Book presentation and celebration

Register here: <https://bsfteenbookclub.eventbrite.com/>

You can learn more about *Walls* on my [website](#) and more about the book club in the attached flyer, which I hope you share with your military-connected families and colleagues.

Thank you for spreading the word and for all you do for young people.

Member News



Join Debbie Levy on World Wildlife Day for a virtual event with Politics & Prose to celebrate the diversity of the animal world through playful poetry with *Photo Ark ABC: An Animal Alphabet in Poetry and Pictures*. From armadillo to zebra, mouse to tarantula, this picture book pairs spirited poems that celebrate animals both familiar and unknown with the stunning photography. Each animal is showcased with

one of Debbie's poems. Hop on board the Photo Ark on March 3rd at 10am! Children and classrooms very much invited. Register for this free event [here](#).

Another Guild member event at Politics & Prose: Terry Catasús Jennings and Rosita Stevens-Holsey will discuss their book *Pauli*

Murray: *The Life of a Pioneering Feminist and Civil Rights Activist* in conversation with professor and *The TakeAway* host, Melissa-Harris Perry, on Wednesday, March 2nd, 6:30-7:30pm. Register for this free event [here](#).



Karen Leggett will be in conversation with Palestinian-American and Young People's Poet Laureate Naomi Shihab Nye on March 22nd, 6:30-8pm, during a virtual writing workshop through Politics & Prose. Naomi will lead this intergenerational workshop based on her new middle grade novel, *The Turtle of Michigan*, a sequel to her popular *The Turtle of Oman*. More information and RSVP [here](#). Karen invites you to sign up with your kids or grandkids! In

April, Karen will co-teach her second Politics & Prose virtual class on Voices of Arab American Authors: Discovery and Beyond, with lead teacher Egyptian American Heba El Shazli. See the book list and join the class [here](#).

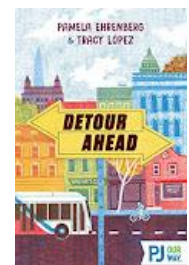
From The Children's Literature Center: **Spring Festival of Children's Literature** is being held IN-PERSON at Frostburg State University on April 22nd and April 23rd!

Cynthia Grady's poem *Run, River* placed as a finalist in the 2021 Astra International Picture Book Writing Contest. She was one of a handful of U.S. finalists selected from nearly 1,700 entries from writers in 68 countries. She's looking forward to sharing it with a wider audience in the future.



Gareth Hinds will have a show of his work at Catholic University from Feb 14th - May 20th, in the May Gallery of the Mullen Library. This is a small exhibit examining his career and his approach to adapting the classics. The opening is likely to be virtual--email gareth@garethhinds.com if you'd like to be notified when more information on the opening is available.

Pamela Ehrenberg is excited to share that *Detour Ahead*, co-authored with Tracy López, will be available April 1st from PJ Publishing, after being listed as a PJ Our Way selection in March. In alternating chapters of prose and verse, this dual-POV contemporary middle-grade novel depicts the friendship between Gilah, a neurodiverse Jewish girl preparing for her bat mitzvah, and Guillermo, a Salvadoran-American boy who is new to Washington, D.C. Riding the bus together every day, Gilah and Guillermo learn to navigate life's detours. Pam adds, "There is even a scene at Busboys & Poets--though, alas, the 14th Street location rather than the 5th Street site of our Guild luncheons. Hoping to see everyone before long!"



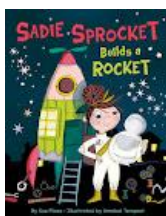
Jacqueline Jules would like to share that she is happily settled in her new home in Port Washington, New York, living a five-minute drive from



her grandchildren! She has been busy with writing projects and virtual author visits. This April, Jacqueline looks forward to the publication of *Zapato Power #12: Freddie Ramos Powers Up*. In Freddie's newest adventure, Freddie finds a pair of small gloves in Mr. Vaslov's toolshed that fit his fingers perfectly. Wearing them, Freddie feels stronger and is able to lift heavy things he never knew he could. Could the gloves be a new invention, giving him super

strength?

Laura Gehl's *Who Is a Scientist?* was a CCBC Choices selection for 2022. Laura also celebrated the release of a new picture book in February, *The Hiking Viking*, illustrated by Tim Banks, as well as two board books, *You're My Little Unicorn* and *You're My Little Dragon*, illustrated by Summer Macon.



Sue Fliess's *How to Help a Cupid* has been picked up by Scholastic Book Clubs; her *Sadie Sprocket Builds a Rocket* was named a Golden Duck Notable book for 2021 by the ALA Core Committee for excellence in science fiction; and her upcoming book, *Rumble and Roar: Sound Around the World*, set to publish on March 1st, continues to garner rave reviews and will become a narrated book with sounds in the

background to match the sounds in the book. Sue has some upcoming book events (online and in-person) and would love for you to join her. Check out here calendar [here](#).

Mary Amato would like to offer any and all Guild members *two months of free attendance* in her Writer's Studio class, as a goodbye gift (leaving the DC area but not the Guild) and as a token of gratitude for the local community that that Guild has provided over the years. Mary says that the Guild has given her a place to connect with kindred spirits on so many Thursday afternoons, a place to feel the energy and curiosity of fellow professionals.

Mary's Writer's Studio meets every Friday from 1:00-1:30 EST. In 2022, the sessions focus on overcoming negative self-talk/inhibitions and embracing joy to generate ideas. Writers, illustrators, journal-keepers, bloggers--all welcome. If you'd like to sign up for your two free months, please fill out the form and say that you are a Guild member in the comment box. If you cannot attend but you'd love to pass on this gift to someone close to you, that's welcome, too. Just explain details in the comment box. [Writer's Studio - Mary Amato](#).



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