

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

Kekla Magoon, National Book Award Finalist for *Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to the People*



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/>

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At 1pm on Thursday Feb. 17th, award-winning author Kekla Magoon will meet with the Guild and its guests via Zoom to share her young adult fiction title, *Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to the People*, which was a National Book Award Finalist. *Revolution in Our Time* puts the Panthers in the proper context of Black American history, from the first arrival of enslaved people to the Black Lives Matter movement of

today. This comprehensive, inspiring, and all-too-relevant book introduces readers to the Panthers' community activism, grounded in the concept of self-defense, which taught Black Americans how to protect and support themselves in a country that treated them like second-class citizens. For too long the Panthers' story has been treated as a footnote to the Civil Rights Movement rather than what it was: a revolutionary socialist movement that drew thousands of followers and became the target of one of the most sustained repression efforts ever made by the U.S. government against its own citizens. Kekla Magoon's eye-opening work invites a new generation of readers grappling with injustice in the United States to learn from the Panthers' history and

courage, inspiring them to take their own place in the ongoing fight for justice.

Revolution in Our Time has garnered six starred reviews, including this review from Booklist: “Exceedingly well researched, illustrated, and sourced.... This rounded accounting of a pivotal but often-overlooked time in U.S. history should be widely read.” In her presentation Ms. Magoon will discuss what drew her to the topic, the ten years it took to research, write, and finally publish the book, and why it is so vitally important to have books about all facets of history available for young adults to read.



Kekla Magoon’s 2009 young adult novel *The Rock and the River*, which won the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award, was the first mainstream novel for young people to feature the Black Panther Party. She is the Margaret A. Edwards Award-winning author of more than a dozen books for young readers, including *Fire in the Streets* and *How It Went Down*. She is also the coauthor, with Ilyasah Shabazz, of *X: A Novel*, which was long-listed for the National Book Award and received an NAACP Image Award and a Coretta Scott King Honor. Kekla Magoon grew up in Indiana and now lives in Vermont, where she serves on the faculty at Vermont College of Fine Arts. You can find out more about *Revolution in Our Time* at revolutioninourtime.com/, and follow her on Twitter @KeklaMagoon and Facebook @AuthorKeklaMagoon.

Contributions this month can be made to We Need Diverse Books.

[Register Now!](#)

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From Guild President Erica Perl

Hello Guild members,

I’m glad so many of you could join us for Monica Valentine’s excellent conversation with Brendan Kiely at our last Zoom Guild meeting (and I am extra glad that Brendan allowed us to record it so that Guild members who missed it were able to tune in later).

I want to extend hearty congratulations to all of the ALA Award winners, with a special shout-out to our Guild members who were honored: Hena Khan on her Asian/Pacific American Award for *Amina's Song* and Susan Kusel on her Sydney Taylor Gold Medal for *The Passover Guest*. I also noticed that our Guild member Meg Medina just won the Charlotte Zolotow Award for *Evelyn Del Ray is Moving Away*. And our Guild member Laura Gehl's *Odd Beasts* was named an ALA Notable. I would bet that other Guild members received honors of



all kinds this season, so if I missed anyone, please accept my apologies and please ping me to let me know (and tag @bookguilddc on Twitter, or our Facebook or IG accounts so we can share your happy news!). I also saw that many of our Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award winners from past years were among the award recipients, including Carole Boston Weatherford who, along with the dearly departed Floyd Cooper, was honored many times over – including a Caldecott Honor and Coretta Scott King awards for author and illustrator – for *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*. Congratulations all around!

And speaking of awards, our speaker this month will be Kekla Magoon, whose *Revolution in Our Time* is multiple-sticker-studded. National Book Award Finalist, Printz Honor Book, Coretta Scott King Author Award Honor Book, Walter Dean Myers Honor Book, YALSA Nonfiction Award... by the time she comes to visit us via Zoom, there will probably be more! Regardless, please look for the registration link above and mark your calendar: Thursday Feb. 17th at 1 pm.

Erica

Nominate a School to Get Free Books!

The Children's Book Guild awards grants to schools to purchase books for their media centers or libraries. We're grateful to the non-profit [First Book](#) for helping facilitate this. Between 2015 and 2020, we provided grants to 21 schools, as well as the TraRon Center. In 2021, due to the pandemic, we donated books directly to children with few books at home, from 7 schools. We also participated in the Look at My Books campaign to provide children with books donated by Guild members.

This year, once again we would like to offer grants to schools to purchase books. We are looking for schools in underserved areas where there is the greatest need. We count on you, Guild members, to identify schools in the DMV area. You may also propose centers or institutions that could put children's books to good use. All ideas welcome! Please send suggestions to kemsawyer@gmail.com. Thank you for being part of this initiative!

In Case You Missed Our January Program...

A Conversation with Brendan Kiely

by Fred Bowen

Young Adult (YA) novelist Brendan Kiely is best known for his collaboration with Jason Reynolds, *All American Boys*. The award-winning novel examined a violent incident involving a teenager and a police officer. The story is told from two different perspectives, one Black (Reynolds) and one White (Kiely).



Kiely is still examining the issue of race in our country. On January 20th, he appeared online before the Children's Book Guild and gave an energetic talk about his latest book, *The Other Talk: Reckoning with Our White Privilege*.

Kiely recognizes that many Black parents have to sit down and have "the talk" with their children. That is the talk that outlines how the child must act when he or she is stopped by the police. Say "yes sir" and "no sir." No backtalk or challenging body language. Keep your hands visible at all times. The talk is an ugly truth in our society.

Kiely also recognizes that White people in the United States typically don't have to have this kind of conversation with their children. Kiely saw this more clearly when he was traveling the country with Reynolds promoting their first novels. During the tour, George Zimmerman was acquitted of the killing of a Black teenager, Trayvon Martin.

Reynolds' mother called him on the road to say she was afraid for the safety of her son. Mrs. Reynolds was afraid the Zimmerman acquittal would mean an "open season" on shooting young Black men.

Kiely noticed his mother (who, he assured the Guild, loved him) did not call. Kiely realized his mother did not have that fear because he was White.

Kiely, with *The Other Talk*, encourages White people to have an honest discussion about how White people, despite being a minority in the world, have outsized power in politics, economics and education.

He encourages Whites to talk about White privilege and its history.

Kiely points to the fact that his grandfather (an Irish immigrant) was able to take advantage of the GI Bill in a way most returning Black veterans could not (few colleges accepted Blacks in the 1940s and 50s). In addition, Whites were directed to more lucrative employment and more valuable real estate.

This history of prejudice has an effect on what is happening today. For example, the median wealth of a White family in America is eight times

the median wealth of a Black family. **That gap** has stayed steady for the past thirty years.

In the book, Kiely tells stories about his travels with Reynolds, his teaching career, and even reaches back to his growing up years in middle school, high school and college and sees how all these stories and experiences were shaped by his White privilege.

Although he blamed drinking green tea for his forceful presentation, it is clear Kiely is passionate about his subject. He noted that his future books, whatever they are, will have characters who grapple with these important issues.

He convinced me. After listening to Kiely's talk, I went to Politics and Prose and purchased *The Other Talk*.

New Member Application

Barbara Roberts is the author of the middle grade novel *Nikki on the Line* (Little Brown, March 2019) and the upcoming picture book *A Rose Named Peace* (Candlewick, May 2022). She attended Guild events as a guest of Terry Jennings before Covid and is interested in becoming a member of the Guild.

Barbara writes: "I can't say I always wanted to be a writer – I was a can't-sit-still child who preferred running around outside to curling up with a book. But by the time I finished college, I knew I wanted to write. Unfortunately, it's a little difficult to support yourself submitting short stories to magazines, so I spent many years writing marketing and public relations materials for high-tech companies, as well as for organizations like the Red Cross and NASA. It was a good way to actually earn a living as a writer and it taught me a lot about meeting deadlines, but when I had children and began reading their books, I realized this was the kind of writing I wanted to do. Though it often deals with difficult subjects, children's literature, it seems to me, is hopeful and positive. It engages young people in questions about who they will become and how they will choose to live their lives. It encourages children's curiosity in the world around them. And sometimes, it's wonderfully silly. I wanted to try to write these kinds of books. When I joined SCBWI, I found a welcoming community of people who enjoy helping one another toward success. I'd like to join the Children's Book Guild in order to make more friends in our local children's book community."



Member News

On January 4th Sue Fliess's new Valentine's Day book in her Magical Creatures and Crafts series, *How to Help a Cupid*, was published by Sky Pony Press. Illustrated by Simona San Filippo, the story follows four children who find Cupid stuck in a tree, his arrows broken. They help



him get down, then help him repair his arrows so he can continue to send his messages of love.

Sue's upcoming book *Rumble and Roar: Sound Around the World*, which publishes this March, received a wonderful Kirkus Review: "A lyrical soundscape that leaves room for observation and makes space for scientific discussion."



Laura Gehl's newest picture book, *Apple and Magnolia*, illustrated by Patricia Metola, comes out February 8th from Walker Books UK/Flyaway Books US. This fictional story about a little girl who believes the trees in her yard are best friends was inspired by the real science of tree communication and has received two starred reviews.

Jean Gralley is happy to report she's received a grant from the Cultural Alliance of York County, PA for a graphic novel she's currently writing and illustrating. The graphic novel, her first, centers on a Visigoth girl and grandfather living in England near the end of the Roman Empire. Jean's also happy to report she's now represented by the Erin Murphy Literary Agency.



Joy Jones will be leading a workshop for SCBWI MD/DE/WV at their Spring Conference. The workshop is March 11-13, 2022 at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, MD. The topic is "Stage Fright Is Your Friend - And Other Things You Need to Know About Public Speaking."

As the Newbery Award celebrates 100 years, it's an honor to reflect on the Guild's own Newbery winners: Kwame Alexander (*The Crossover* 2015); Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (*Shiloh* 1991); Meg Medina (*Merci Suárez Changes Gears* 2018); Katherine Paterson (*Bridge to Terebithia* 1978, *Great Gilly Hopkins* 1979, *Jacob Have I Loved* 1981).



School Library Journal features this [anniversary interview](#) with Katherine.



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