

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/>

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Saturday, August 28, 2021

September 2021

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UPCOMING SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER DANIEL NAYERI: A CONVERSATION ABOUT *EVERYTHING SAD IS UNTRUE*



In the first program of the Children's Book Guild's 2021-2022 speaker series, author Daniel Nayeri will discuss his path as a publisher and author. Nayeri's Michael L. Printz award-winning book *Everything Sad Is Untrue* was described in the *New York Times* as "a love letter to storytelling"

by reviewer Arvin Ahmadi. At 1 p.m. on Thursday, September 23, Nayeri will converse with Guild member Monica Valentine via Zoom.

Daniel Nayeri was born in Iran and spent a couple of years as a refugee before immigrating at 8 years old to Edmond, Oklahoma with his family. He is also the former publisher of Odd Dot, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, which made him one of the youngest publishers in the industry. Kidlit.com called him "a publishing renegade." His innovative team was called a "publishing incubator," by the *Wall Street Journal*. That team was an in-house creative development model that allowed him to create multi-million dollar brands. Daniel has edited and published many award-winning and bestselling titles from picture books to adult fiction, cookbooks, and

educational products.

Daniel is the author of several books for young readers, including *Straw House*, *Wood House*, *Brick House Blow: Four Novellas* (Candlewick Press), and *Everything Sad Is Untrue (a true story)* (Levine Querido)—winner of the 2021 Michael L. Printz Medal and named one of the best books of the year by NPR, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* among others.

[Click here to REGISTER](#)

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello, Guild members! I wish I could be writing to you from a post-pandemic position, but no such luck. I am keeping my vaccinated fingers crossed (and my mask on) in the hopes that in early 2022, we'll be able to return to in-person luncheons. Until then, we have a wonderful schedule of virtual meetings, starting with our upcoming visit from Daniel Nayeri on Thursday, September 23. Trust me, you don't want to miss this! [Here's a sneak peek](#) of Khosrou (a.k.a. Daniel) speaking about his 2021 Printz Award winning book, *Everything Sad is Untrue*.



Going into this year, I want to share a few thoughts. First – I love the Guild, and I'm honored to serve as this year's president (with an awesome leadership team, including my longtime friend, Jason Wells, as my VP). Second – I'm excited to hear from you about what you love about the Guild and what you'd like to see the Guild do better. And third – I'd like to see as many of you as possible get actively involved in the Guild this year. There's plenty to do, and participating in Guild activities is a terrific way to connect, learn and grow professionally, and have a great time as well.

Keep an eye out for an invitation to register for our September virtual meeting (or use [THIS](#) handy link), and have a glorious start to the fall!
Erica

JUNE PROGRAM RECAP

A DISCUSSION OF THE IMPACT OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S *LITTLE WOMEN* WITH AUTHORS ANNE BOYD RIOUX AND HENA KHAN

by Valerie O. Patterson

June's Speaker Series program featured a conversation about the continuing influence of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* with authors Anne Boyd Rioux and Hena Khan, who also is a Guild member. Guild member Kathie Meizner facilitated. Anne Boyd Rioux is a professor of English at the University of New Orleans whose passion focuses on recovering women's voices. Among other books, she is the author of

Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy: The Story of Little Women and Why It Still Matters. Hena Khan is a critically acclaimed multi-published author of picture books and middle grade novels, including *Amina's Song* and *Under My Hijab*. Her *More to the Story*, a nod to *Little Women*, features four sisters in a contemporary Pakistani-American Muslim family living in Georgia.

Karen Deans welcomed everyone and gave her thanks for the past year as Guild president. She then introduced the speakers. Meizner began by asking both authors how *Little Women* has informed their life and work. Rioux did not read *Little Women* as a child, but at age 21, during graduate school. She has always been passionate about books and women who become writers, however, and wanted to better understand when women in America felt they could declare themselves artists. In the Ph.D. dissertation that became her first book, *Writing for Immortality*, Rioux included Louisa May Alcott. The ending of *Little Women* meant most for Rioux: as all are gathered for Marmee's birthday, Jo looks back on her desire to be a famous author and assesses that she would be a better author for her life experiences. Khan, in contrast, loved *Little Women* from childhood. She said she felt connected to Jo and her 1860s life because it reminded her of her own situation growing up feeling slightly antiquated and not in step with contemporary American life in everything from dating norms to the importance of one's reputation.

The discussion turned to Marmee and her complex character. Rioux stated that Marmee is based on Alcott's mother, Abigail. Abigail Alcott suffered and persevered, a trait that Louisa admired. *Little Women* is one of the rare 19th-century novels in which women are shown to possess anger. In the scene with Jo, after Amy falls in ice and Jo says she fears her temper, Marmee comforts her daughter and says she understands because she feels "angry every day of her life." Screen adaptations did not touch on this aspect of the story until the BBC Masterpiece series of 2017.

Meizner asked Khan about families as first villages and how those friendships within family inform main character Jameela Mirza's ability to address wrongs or fulfill her aspirations. Khan said the closeness of the family in *Little Women* drew her to Alcott's novel and inspired her. The family faces the world together, and Jo is fiercely protective of her sisters. Khan wanted to capture that feeling with Jameela. Khan relied on her memory of the book in her writing rather than reread it, and she included Marmee's anger, though she confessed she could not include the burning of Jo's writing because it was too painful.

Asked about the role of social justice and faith in *Little Women*, Khan said that Jo pushes back on what society said was appropriate, and so does Jameela. Jameela wants to be a journalist for the school newspaper but must decide how far she'll go for the story. She writes about microaggressions, and just defining that word was empowering for Jameela—and Khan. Rioux noted that Alcott was ahead of her time in terms of the role of women, and that she challenged more than that. She also pushed against gender stereotypes in characters Jo and Laurie. Laurie wants to pursue music, not business, but he is straightjacketed by society just as Jo is. Called "Dora," Laurie is bullied and not seen as manly enough. Rioux notes that LGBTQ readers have said the book spoke to them. Rioux also noted that Alcott was concerned about slavery and racism, though those concerns do not come through in *Little Women*.

In response to Meizner's question on *Little Women* and the craft of writing, Khan said she drew on her school newspaper days for the book, and Jameela faces issues related to a piece being published that should not have been, as well as discomfort with social media. Rioux sees writing at the center of *Little Women* and Jo's journey. After Beth dies, Jo finally begins to write from her heart, producing writing she can be proud of, not merely salacious tales for money. Jo's evolution as a writer, sometimes overlooked, is important to Rioux.

In closing, Meizner asked which film adaptation of *Little Women* the authors liked best. Both Khan and Rioux prefer the Greta Gerwig adaptation from 2019. Rioux noted that Greta Gerwig pulled things from the book that most others missed, such as Marmee's anger and Jo's ambition.

Incoming Guild president Erica Perl thanked the presenters and wished Guild members a happy summer. The Speaker Series will resume 23 September with publisher and award-winning author Daniel Nayeri.

UPDATES

INTRODUCING ANNA JORDAN, WHO HAS APPLIED FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHILDREN'S BOOK GUILD



Anna Jordan writes: "I spent most of my adult life in Maine, where I cofounded the Maine Illustrators Collective and was an active SCBWI volunteer. I spearheaded and led the "Many Voices" conference in 2009, and was a regional advisor from 2009 to 2011. During that period I was loving and learning my craft at Vermont College of Fine Arts. I graduated in 2011 with my MFA and a Picture Book Certificate. Some of you probably know

me as Anna J. Boll.

In the early years of this (now 20-year-old) journey, I'd send off my work with my SASE and check the mailbox at the end of our long dirt drive for responses, keeping a folder of rejections. *Babybug*, *Ladybug*, and *Highlights High Five* all published my poetry.

My young adult novel manuscript, *Control. Crush.*— a forbidden love story about a high school rower and her coach—won the 2013 PEN New England, Susan P. Bloom Discovery Award. That novel was never published, but it helped me meet my second agent. Now I'm on my third (and hopefully forever) agent.

My illustrations have appeared in the online *New York Times* and in the picture book *Fufu and Fresh Strawberries* (The Telling Room, Portland, ME). You can find my freelance writing work in *Coxing Magazine*, *INTO*, *Art New England*, and *Maine Women Magazine*. The work-for-hire picture book *This Pup Steps Up!* (Rockridge Press) released this year.

In 2019 I was thrilled to be published beside many poets I admire in *The Proper Way to Meet a Hedgehog* (Candlewick). My current work-in-

progress is untitled and under contract, scheduled for a 2023 release. I can't wait to announce more!

My day jobs have included middle school teacher, nonprofit events and programming, school & library author visits agent (Creative Bookings), events coordination at a publishing house (Islandport), bookstore events (Books of Wonder) and now bookseller and subscription coordinator (Politics & Prose).

I was born and raised in Northwest DC and am a proud graduate of DC public schools. When I graduated from Wilson in 1988, I didn't think I'd live here again, but 2020 took my job in NYC and my dad. Now living in Takoma Park, MD, I am so glad to be home and close to family. I'm eager to be an active member of the children's book community here in the DMV.

NONFICTION AWARD

Much news this month related to our prestigious annual Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award:

(1) *Our 2022 nonfiction award winner will be announced this month. Be sure to attend the September Guild meeting to be among the first to hear about the 2022 recipient. Save the date for the annual award luncheon, scheduled Thursday, May 17, 2022. We hope to celebrate our winner in person!*

(2) *Calling for 2023 Nonfiction Award nominations. Do you have a nonfiction author or author-illustrator that you have long admired? Want to see them feted for their work? The Nonfiction Award committee is looking for nominations for our 2023 award. It celebrates an entire body of work that has contributed significantly to the quality of nonfiction for children. Please email nominations to Tammar at: [tammarstein@gmail.com](mailto:tanmarstein@gmail.com) by 9/30/2021.*

(3) Results of the Nonfiction-Award-Event Poll

This summer, sixty-seven Guild members responded to a poll about the celebration that we hold for the annual Nonfiction Award. Thank you all for taking the time to participate. The majority of members support both the tradition of giving the award and the tradition of hosting an award event. The enthusiasm for the award was higher than the enthusiasm for the award event. Among those who responded, 46 percent deemed it very important to continue giving the award and 39 percent deemed it very important to continue hosting an award event. The results of the poll are available to anyone who would like to review it. See key summary points below.

Mary Amato presented the results at the summer board meeting and then met with a committee to finalize the changes for this coming year. We are folding the event into our speaker series, which means that the award celebration will occur during one of our monthly luncheon meetings at Busboys. This year the event will be in May, and you'll find more information coming as the year progresses.

Key questions/ results

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE GUILD TO KEEP GIVING THE AWARD?

46% Very important

36% Somewhat important

18% Not important + no opinion.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE GUILD TO KEEP HAVING AN AWARD EVENT?

39% Very important

36% Somewhat important

25 % Not important + no opinion.

WHICH OPTION: KEEP SATURDAY TRADITION, MOVE THE EVENT TO THURSDAY LUNCH, OR HOST ONLINE?

12% Keep Saturday luncheon traditions

54% Move to Thurs luncheon

9% Online

(Remainder divided among write-in options)

SPEAKING OPPORTUNITY

The Northern Virginia Catholic Library Association (NVCLA) is a professional organization among librarians from the Catholic Diocese of Arlington elementary/middle and secondary schools. The NVCLA's purpose is to support librarians as library professionals in their communities and beyond. The NVCLA librarians host regular meetings to discuss library curriculum, books of interest, book fair work, and their roles as information specialists at their schools.

The NVCLA is seeking a children's author who has written books that would appeal to a wide age-range (elementary to secondary) to speak at their quarterly meeting on December 9, 2021. The meeting will be held at one of the Diocese of Arlington Catholic schools. The group is seeking an author free of charge.. Current and past speakers include Russell Gines (author of the *Samantha Spinner* series) and L. M. Elliott (author of *Hamilton and Peggy*). If you are interested, please contact Elizabeth Rayhel at rayhele.sfas@gmail.com. Please note our Diocese follows the latest CDC guidelines pertaining to COVID-19.

MEMBER NEWS



Mary Amato is celebrating the September release of *Game On!* The first book in her new Star Striker trilogy with Holiday House. Albert Kinney, a 13-year-old soccer player, assumes the worst when he is abducted by aliens from planet Zeeno. So, he's shocked when the Zeenods recruit him to play their solar system's version of soccer, called johka, and ask him to compete in a high-stakes interplanetary tournament. Yet just as he is introduced to the high-tech gear and the dangerous eruptions of strange liquid that occur during play on the johka field, he faces a series of direct threats to his life. Does someone have a mysterious vendetta against Albert? Or does their first opponent, the ruthless team from Planet Tev, want to guarantee that they win? It's even worse. As Albert grows to love the Zeenods, he learns that the aggressive Tevs want to wipe out the entire Zeeno culture and gain complete control over the remarkable planet. Star Striker is the first in a series exploring the transforming and luminous power that occurs when individuals from vastly different worlds learn how to unite.

Mary's weekly online class for writers continues this fall. It's a combination of timed writing, exercises, and explorations. Recharge your writing, stretch your muscles, connect with other creatives. It's a fabulous group. Contact her at amato_ink@yahoo.com for more information.

Fred Bowen had a new book, *Soccer Trophy Mystery*, published on September 1st by Peachtree Publishers. The book is the 24th title in his Fred Bowen Sports Story series. The books combine sports fiction and sports history. In addition, Peachtree is updating the other books and reissuing them with new covers to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the publication of Fred's first book.



Lulu Delacre is delighted to participate once again in the Latinx KidLit Book Festival in December. She and author/poet/educator Guadalupe Garcia McCall will guide students in grades 6 to 8 on a short story workshop in Spanish, *El cuento corto*. This is a free craft workshop. Any students who [submit questions](#) to the Festival get a chance to win a classroom set of books. Please share with any educators you know.

Moira Rose Donohue is pleased to report the July release of her seventh book with *National Geographic: Little Kids First Big Book of Rocks, Minerals, and Shells*.



Laura Gehl has four upcoming book releases: *Goat Wants to Eat* came out in July from S&S, *Bat Wings! Cat Wings?* came out in August from The Creative Co., and *Brilliant Baby Explores Science* and *Brilliant Baby Fights Germs* come out in September from little bee.

Joy Jones' middle grade novel, *Jayla Jumps In*, comes out in paperback September 2021.

Erica S. Perl announces the September 28 publication of her new picture book, *When Carrot Met Cookie* (Penguin Workshop), illustrated by Geisel Honor winning illustrator, Jonathan Fenske. Carrot and Cookie have always been inseparable, until the disparaging comments of their peers make them question whether vegetables and desserts should actually be friends at all. A great choice for promoting inclusivity in friendships (and food groups).



The Nature Generation (NatGen) and Salisbury University' Seidel School of Education will sponsor the EnviroKids Literacy Festival, a virtual event to be held October 7-9. The three-day festival will include a virtual, evening reception and award ceremony for NatGen's esteemed Green Earth Book Award (GEBA) 2021 winning authors; a day-long celebration of GEBA works with teachers and K-12 school children; and a professional development workshop for educators, librarians, and citizen scientists. The EnviroKids Literacy Festival seeks to inspire multiple audiences how to foster environmental justice, literacy, and stewardship in classrooms and communities. Registration is free and open to students, educators, authors, anyone interested. For more information or to register for one, two, or three days, visit [EnviroKids Literacy Festival | Salisbury University](#).



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