

More

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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Tuesday, November 8, 2022

November 2022

Upcoming November Program

A Zoom Conversation with Jeanne Walker Harvey

Thursday, November 17, 1 p.m. EST



Our November Guild Speaker Series program will be a virtual conversation with children's book author Jeanne Walker Harvey. Jeanne studied literature and psychology at Stanford University and has worn many job hats, ranging from being a roller coaster ride operator to a software licensing attorney, a middle school language arts teacher and a long-time docent for school groups at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

She is the author of several books for young readers, including the picture book biographies *Dressing up the Stars: The Story of Movie Costume*

Designer Edith Head, *Ablaze with Color: A Story of Painter Alma Thomas*, *Maya Lin: Artist-Architect of Light and Lines* and *My Hands Sing the Blues-Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey*. She's currently working on another picture book biography about a female painter who painted under extraordinary conditions for Abrams/Cameron Books which will be announced soon!

Jeanne lives in Sonoma in Northern California. She regularly reviews other authors' new picture book biographies on [her website](#).

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October Program Recap

Leah Henderson Speaks to Guild Members

By Betsy Kraft

Last month members enjoyed a conversation between Guild member Debbie Levy and much-praised children's book author, Leah Henderson. Henderson is the author of *The Magic of Changing your Stars* (an SCBWI Golden Kite Award finalist), *A Day for Rememberin'* (Junior Library Guild selection and starred *Kirkus* review), *One Shadow on the Wall* (Children's Africana Book Award notable and a Bank Street Best Book), *Together We March, Daddy Speaks Love* and other titles. Henderson spoke about her path to writing, what inspires her and how she encourages younger writers.

Growing up in Andover, Massachusetts, Henderson traveled with her siblings and parents who wanted their children "to see people who looked like us." Their far-ranging adventures took them to places including Mali, Singapore, Senegal, Morocco, Kenya and Italy. At the time of her presentation she had visited more than sixty countries and forty-nine states. Her family was also a "family of storytellers," and the kids were encouraged to observe and explore, talk to people, and look for new adventures. Henderson became an All-New England soccer player and a National Champion rower and considered sports as a career. But she was ultimately drawn to writing and pursued an MFA.

When in graduate school, a professor encouraged her to return to Senegal where she had previously taken a photo of a young boy sitting on a wall. She had not spoken to him but she was haunted by his look of "I'm important." Though she never found the same boy, she immersed herself in Senegalese culture, listening to how people talked and laughed. Back home she cooked Senegalese food, used incense, listened to music and wore the clothes of the country to recreate the atmosphere of her setting. She didn't want her readers to feel they were "outsiders." The result was *One Shadow on the Wall*.

When asked by Levy how she approaches writing about history she said she looks "outside the frame," intuitively seeking other stories not represented in textbooks. In her recent picture book *A Day for Rememberin'* she turned to fiction to tell the dramatic story of the first Memorial Day in the spring of 1865. It tells of a march of more than 10,000 African Americans and whites to honor the Union soldiers who had been incarcerated in a Charleston, South Carolina prison. It is written from the perspective of a young formerly enslaved boy who attends school and gains the freedom education allows him. History, Henderson says, is not created by one person.

In school visits and working with young writers Henderson finds that kids are, like many adults, doubtful of their abilities and worried about what others might think of their work. Outside that doubt, beautiful things can happen, she says. Proceed with determination, she advises. Kids – and Guild members – take note.

A Newsletter Metamorphosis?

We Want to Hear From You!

by Jane Harrington

Kitson Jazynka and I (with a year of newsletters under our belts) have recently proposed to Guild leadership that we do some updating to the

current newsletter model, and now we'd like to share our ideas with the wider membership to get any feedback you might have.

Basically, we think that changing the publication from a monthly to a quarterly format would be a good thing at this point in the newsletter's life. Our reasoning:

- Analytics over the past couple of years show that not many people click into the newsletter link. Often, the number is under 20 in the month of publication. There are usually some visitors after the month ends, but still the numbers are low, considering the newsletter goes to more than 150 people.
- The announcement of the upcoming speaker is the most time-sensitive piece of the newsletter and that notice is also sent via email. We assume that the bulk of registrations come from the latter, given the paltry numbers cited above. So, our thought is that the email is a better place for the photo and full article, and that the newsletter announcement wouldn't be much missed.
- Social media dispersal of member news (a wonderful thing!) also renders our monthly newsletter at least somewhat redundant.

We envision a shift to a quarterly digital "magazine" (Sept-Dec-Mar-June) that contains articles by or about our members and the super fun and beneficial work they do out in the children's lit-o-sphere. Kitson and I think that if we're not always chasing a monthly deadline, we can be planning some interesting features.

We've been talking about creating a Googledoc template for this and distributing directly via email rather than having members click into a separate link. The current interface is not editor-friendly, so we want to move away from that. If anyone has experience with other options (MailChimp, Substack...) we're all ears as we explore the best way to do this. Perhaps a "magazine" page on our current website could be considered?

Lastly, we want to transition slowly and methodically so all affected Guild gears are moving in sync. At present, we're thinking that we'll stick with the monthly newsletter as is until March or June. In the meantime, we'll be testing out new interfaces and (hopefully) creating something spiffy! And we'll keep membership apprised of the timeline and changes as best we can.

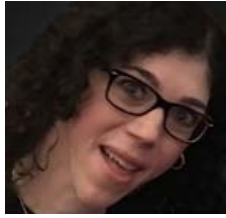
So, send any thoughts, concerns, ideas, need-to-knows to janeharrington@gmail.com.

Thank you!

New Member Applications

Karen M. Greenwald

Karen's debut, *A Vote for Susanna, The First Woman Mayor* (Albert Whitman, October '21—hereinafter, *Vote*), was named a 2022 Kansas Notable Book. The state's Center for the Book chose it as their Great Read from Great Places—sending *Vote* to represent Kansas at the Library of Congress National Book Festival. A Mighty Girl listed *Vote* among its 2021 Books of the Year.



This fall, Ms. Greenwald's second non-fiction picture book, *Mud Angels* (Albert Whitman), was announced for autumn, 2023 (although inaccurately reported as a 2024 release). It is the true story of when the normally calm Arno River nearly drowned parts of Florence, putting much of the city's fragile, historic art and literature on the verge of destruction, until a different kind of wave washed over the city. Jordi Solano will illustrate.

Greenwald is highly dedicated to the kidlit community and those it serves. She is a member of SCBWI, 12x12, and co-founded/runs the online NF/Info Fic contest #SunWriteFun. This annual summer writing event raises money for need-based kidlit charities and promotes independent, women owned bookstores. She says: "Raising money and awareness for literacy-based charities is also incredibly important to me. This voluntary aspect of #SunWriteFun allows those interested to help children and school libraries in underserved communities celebrate books."

Nancy Johnson James



Nancy is a poet, educator, activist, children's book author and daydreamer. Her picture books *Brown: The Many Shades of Love* and *Black: The Many Wonders of My World* were released by Cameron and Company. Her next title, *Blue: The Many Blues I Feel*, is scheduled for release in August 2023.

Nancy has been an elementary educator for more than 15 years. Prior to becoming an educator, Nancy worked in the fields of community economic development and arts and social justice. Her children's stories encourage young readers to explore and celebrate their identities in a way that is both fun and accessible. As a teacher she is a regular consumer of children's literature and has the opportunity to see how kids respond to books they encounter.

Nancy has a BA in Liberal Arts from Sarah Lawrence College and an MFA from Saint Mary's College of California as well as multiple teaching credentials and a certificate in nonprofit management. Nancy is also a student of the history and dance forms from Africa and the African Diaspora. Her poems and lesson plans have been published in several print and online publications.

Dionna L. Mann



Dionna is a kidlit author of fiction and nonfiction. Her work has appeared in *Ladybug*, *Cricket*, and *Spider*. As a work-for-hire author, she's written for Little, Brown, Scholastic, Lerner, Capstone, and other educational publishers. Dionna loves discovering lesser-known individuals who shine within the margins of African-American history, and sharing their stories with young readers.

An SCBWI member since 2005, she served as the content editor of the newsletter serving the Mid-Atlantic region of SCBWI for five years. As such, she often checked the Guild's website to see what her region's members were up to so she could champion their work. "It seems only natural to be a

part of that," Dionna says. Represented by Jacqui Lipton and Kelly Dyksterhouse of Tobias Literary, Dionna blogs all things kidlit at dionnalmann.com.

An Invitation for Guild Members

The Day You Begin: This world premiere commissioned musical is based on one of Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence Jacqueline Woodson's most popular picture books. Guild members are invited to join and celebrate with a limited number of complimentary tickets to one of the performances on these dates:

Saturday, November 19 at 4 pm
 Sunday, November 20 at 4 pm
 Wednesday, November 23 at 1:30 pm
 Friday, November 25 at 1:30 pm

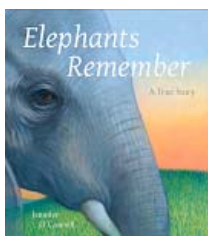
Reserve free tickets [here](#) before 5 pm on Wednesday, November 16.

There is also a 50% discount available to purchase additional tickets to any other performance. [Click here](#) to order tickets to these shows at a 50% discount (or use the code 490617 over the phone).

Member News



Mary Amato announces the release of the second book in her Star Striker trilogy: *Touch and Go* (Holiday House). Albert and his Zeenod teammates are back for the second round of the high-stakes interplanetary johka (think soccer) tournament. When their beloved coach is wrongly arrested by an aggressor planet's police force, Albert and the Zeenods must work to clear their coach's name and stay in the tournament. Can Albert stay alive and learn to manage his fears and come through to help his team? Action-packed, yet filled with humor and heart, *Touch and Go* combines a sports friendship story with an exploration of social justice and the importance of compassion for others. Best for ages 9-12.



Jennifer O'Connell's new picture book, *Elephants Remember*, will be out mid-November with Tilbury House Publishers. It tells the story of how South African conservationist Lawrence Anthony saved a traumatized herd of elephants at his reserve by earning the trust of the matriarch, whom he named Nana. This true story shows how intelligent, sensitive, and complex elephants are, and how one man risked everything to save the small, misunderstood herd. Jennifer is interviewed about *Elephants Remember* and her work in the Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency's [Fall Newsletter](#).



Laura Gehl's early reader *Dog Can Hide* (out January 2023), illustrated by Fred Blunt, was chosen as a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection.

After two years of pandemic delays, Amy S. Hansen is happy to announce her new books. *Curious About Sharks*, *Curious About Sloths*, and *Curious About Pandas* (Amicus Ink) are all part of an early elementary question-and-answer series. Why are sloths so slow? Why are pandas black and white? Why do sharks have so many teeth? All these questions and more are answered. *Hunt for the Tomato Killer* (Bedazzled Press) is an early chapter-book mystery and Amy's first fiction book. The story follows Julie almost-in-the-fifth-grade Johnson as she discovers her (hopefully) prize-winning tomatoes have been thrown all over the yard.



Ginger Park is delighted to announce the official book cover reveal for her picture book *Grandpa's Scroll* on November 10.

Mary Quattlebaum is delighted to announce publication of her early reader *Hedgehogs* (National Geographic Kids). Favorite fact: a hedgehog's spikes are made of the same material as human hair and fingernails.



Brenda Seabrooke is thrilled her 15th Sherlock Holmes story, "The Open Window," is included in *Sherlock Holmes & Doctor Watson: Medical Mysteries*, published by Belanger Books.



Shout Mouse Press is excited to celebrate the launch of the **Mini Mirrors Series**, books for toddlers that celebrate diverse families and experiences. The four 2022 titles were authored by student parents enrolled in Generation Hope's Scholar Program with the guidance of early childhood education experts from Inspired Child. They will initially be offered as large format hardcovers, with a board book edition coming in early 2023. Shout

Mouse Press welcomes members of the public to join the authors in a celebration of the new series at 10:30am on December 3rd, 2022 in Washington, DC. For more information, [please RSVP here](#).

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