

Children's Book Guild News



CHILDREN'S
BOOK GUILD
OF WASHINGTON, DC

Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

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Wednesday, February 1, 2023

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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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February 2023

SPEAKER SERIES: FEBRUARY



Angela Joy & Janelle Washington

Thursday, February 16th
1pm ET via ZOOM

This month our Children's Book Guild Speaker Series Program will feature Angela Joy and Janelle Washington in conversation with Guild member Deborah Taylor. Angela and Janelle are the author and illustrator of *Choosing Brave*, winner of the 2023 Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children's Literature in the Younger Readers Category. Their book is also a Jane

Addams Book Award Winner, and an Orbits Picture Honor Book.

Angela Joy is from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Before graduating from the University of Minnesota, Angela attended NYU and Spelman College. Angela then traveled as a background vocalist, also working in television and movie soundtracks. She lives in southern California with her family. In addition to *Choosing Brave*, she has also published the picture book *Black Is a Rainbow Color*.

Janelle Washington is a self-taught papercut artist from Virginia. She has permanent silhouettes housed at the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, DC, and Downing-Gross Community Arts Center in Newport News, Virginia. She is also a member of the Guild of American Papercutters. *Choosing Brave* is her first picture book.

Please join us as we discuss Angela and Janelle's award winning book that *Publisher's Weekly*, in a starred review, describes as "an extraordinary

volume [in which] Joy's cadenced prose and Washington's dimensional cut-paper artwork portray Mamie Till-Mobley's (1921–2003) life."

Register Now!

**NEW GUILD MEMBER:
DESARAY MNYANDU**



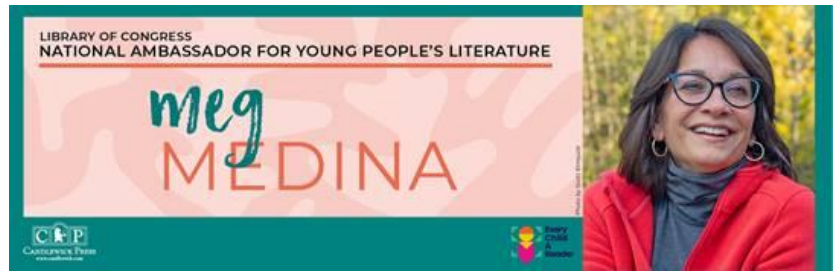
Desaray Mnyandu has joined the Guild as a Children's Literature Specialist. Her work focuses on introducing children to the languages and cultures of Southern Africa. Desaray's first book, *Imbila's Tale*, an adaptation of a Zulu folktale, is an innovative flip book with both English and Zulu versions on each side of the same book. It was a 2022 CABA notable book winner. Her current projects include *99 Zulu Proverbs* and *Sindi: A Zulu Cinderella*, both of which will be released this summer.

"As an African-American woman who grew up in Turkey, while my parents were stationed for their service in the Air force, I am accustomed to learning with a global perspective," says Desaray. "As a homeschool mom of four children, I am always looking for ways they can build a connection to their lessons and not just memorize facts. For my children, that connection came through their Zulu heritage. Thanks to our social media, it wasn't long before my husband and I realized that other parents were also looking for connection and exposure for their kids. With my husband I co-founded Zulunomics and have quickly become the leading US producer of Zulu language and cultural materials for adults and children!

"Children's stories in all cultures are amazing tools used to pass on knowledge, lessons and history. The books and other materials I write are helping to expose children to these stories, languages and cultures of Southern Africa, which is quite important in an increasingly diverse and globalized world. I teach Zulu classes, create workbooks, lesson plans and activities--many of which I offer for free. More recently I created an online database that will give anyone in the world access to just about anything to do with the Zulu language and culture. This work will serve as a template to expand to other languages. Children (and adults) around the world will have access to in-depth lessons, cultural materials and books!

"I hope membership in the DC Children's Book Guild will help me to grow as an author and a Southern Africa specialist. I also hope that my unique perspective and experiences will prove to be useful." Undoubtedly they will! Welcome, Desaray!

**MEG MEDINA: NATIONAL AMBASSADOR
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE**



Congratulations to Guild member Meg Medina, who was selected by the Library of Congress and Every Child a Reader as the eighth National Ambassador for Young People's Literature for 2023-2024!

"Medina will engage readers across the country through her new platform ¡Cuéntame!: Let's talk books," according to the [Library of Congress' press release](#). "Inspired by the Spanish phrase that friends and families use when catching up with one another, ¡Cuéntame! encourages connection among families, classrooms, libraries and communities by talking about books—both books that reflect the readers' lived experiences and those that expose readers to new perspectives."

The inauguration by Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden took place on January 24th and is viewable on the [Library's YouTube page](#).

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Author-illustrator Jessie Sima (they/them/their) joined us online in January for a chat with Guild member and fellow author-illustrator Zara Gonzalez Hoang.

Sima has had an interesting career. Their first book, *Not Quite Narwal*, made the *New York Times* bestsellers list...five years after it was published! This story about a male unicorn named Kelp that is raised by a family of narwals (the so-called unicorns of the sea) was published to good reviews and steady sales. With the support of librarians and independent bookstores the book continued to sell. The jet fuel for the book sales, however, came when Sima published *Perfectly Pegasus*, a companion book to *Not Quite Narwal*. Barnes and Noble gave the two books a special combo pricing, and *Not Quite Narwal* landed on the bestsellers list.

In addition, Sima told the tale of how *Narwal* was optioned by Dreamworks for an animated television show that will begin in 2023. Although Sima was cautioned all along the way to not get too excited, the process of bringing the book to the screen went "very smoothly," they said. Dreamworks was good at keeping Sima "in the loop" during the development process, and meetings assured them that everyone was "on the same page" about the heart of the book. Still, Sima explained that the show will have a different look from the book. Sima has a second book that has been optioned for a possible film adaptation, but they did not reveal which of their other eight books it was.

Sima's books may connect with readers because of the care and details they put into the characters. "Little details that reflect real life," they said. In one book, *Jules vs. the Ocean*, Sima drew a family that had big noses, after which they received an email from a young reader who appreciated the inclusion of this underrepresented group.

What does the future hold for this talented writer-illustrator? Sima admitted to not being a great planner. They will probably go back to their "inspiration stew" of TV, movies, video games (with strong narratives) and graphic novels to come up with the next book to charm and delight young readers.

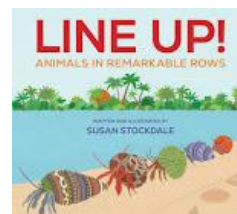
MEMBER NEWS

Looking for a tantalizing winter night's read? Brenda Seabrooke's story "From the Memoirs of Robert Franklin Bear, Jr." is available gratis on the website of [Mystery Tribune Magazine](#).



Fred Bowen is happy to announce the upcoming publication of his newest title (the 25th) in his Fred Bowen Sports Story series with Peachtree Publishers: *Off the Bench*. As with all the books in the series, this basketball book combines sports fiction and sports history. It will be out March 14th!

Susan Stockdale is excited to present and sign *Line Up! Animals in Remarkable Rows*, called "eye-catching and engaging" and "a perfect STEM read-aloud" by *Booklist*, at two venues: the [National Museum of Natural History](#) in Washington, DC, on Saturday, February 11th from 10:30am to 12:30pm; and at [Scrawl Books](#) in Reston, Virginia, on Saturday, February 18th from 11am to 12pm.



BEST OF KOREA chose Ginger Park's book *The Hundred Choices Department Store* as one of the **BEST BOOKS of 2022** by a Korean American author. "It's been a tough year," Ginger writes, "so I'm savoring this moment as I would a kimchi pancake!"

Deborah Bodin Cohen is thrilled to announce the publication of her new picture book *An invitation to Passover* on February 14th, published by Kalaniot Publishing. Summary: When Hannah's extended family isn't able to join her for their traditional Passover seder, she invites her diverse friends to experience the holiday with her. From Ha-joon's Korean kimche, to Monique's hymn lyrics, each friend brings a bit of their own culture to the celebration. And with each guest the themes of freedom, hope, and thanks become more meaningful. An endnote tells the Passover story and a glossary defines vocabulary.



Courtney Pippin-Mathur's newest book as author-illustrator, *Fairies Don't Fight: A Sprightly Sibling Story*, will be released on May 2nd from Skypony Press.

Pamela Ehrenberg is so happy to share that *Detour Ahead*, the novel she co-authored with Tracy López, has been named a National Jewish Book Award finalist for MG literature! Set along the H4 Metrobus route (and on the bus itself) in DC, the novel in alternating perspectives focuses on a neurodiverse Jewish girl who loves breakdancing, a Salvadoran-American boy who is a poet, and how they navigate



the detours of their families, their friendship, and their lives. The National Jewish Book Awards were established by the Jewish Book Council in 1950 (just five years after the Children's Book Guild!) to recognize outstanding works of Jewish literature; this recognition was a first for Pam and Tracy as well as for the book's publisher, PJ Publishing.

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