

# 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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Wednesday, May 4, 2022

## May 2022

April showers bring...

### The Guild's Annual Nonfiction Award Event!

Thursday, May 19th, Noon, at Busboys & Poets



## Let's All Celebrate GAIL JARROW

The Children's Book Guild of Washington, D.C. has selected Gail Jarrow as the 2022 Nonfiction Award winner. The award, given annually since 1977, honors authors and author/illustrators whose body of work has contributed significantly to the quality of nonfiction for children.

Over the course of more than a dozen books for young readers, Gail Jarrow has explained some challenging topics—including contagious diseases, medical fiascoes, and damaging hoaxes—with narrative verve, well-researched facts, and fascinating details. Although her books have focused on historical events—including *The Poison Eaters: Fighting Danger and Fraud in Our Food and Drugs*, *Spooked!: How a Radio Broadcast and The War of the Worlds Sparked the 1938 Invasion of America*, and *Blood and Germs: The Civil War Battle Against Wounds and Disease*—they nevertheless hold great relevance and wisdom for today's young readers. Her nonfiction books, the last ten of which have been published by Calkins Creek, are also wonderfully produced, with appealing designs and great archival images.

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## President's Letter

Hello Guild members,

I was sorry to miss our most recent Zoom meeting, which featured author/illustrator/cartoonist Terri Libenson. By all accounts, it was an excellent conversation, facilitated by our own Debbie Cohen. I was happy, though, about the reason I was unavailable: I spent the week in Michigan doing in-person author visits. I am now thoroughly exhausted, but also totally exhilarated by all those readers! As necessary as it has been to stay away for so long (and as unfortunate as it is that we're not 100% out of the woods, Covid-wise), it feels sooooo good to get back. And speaking of getting back, I am so looking forward to seeing many Guild members at our two upcoming in-person events.



It will be wonderful to present Gail Jarrow with the Guild Nonfiction Award in person, and I hope many of you are planning to attend at noon on May 19th at Busboys & Poets (450 K St. NW, DC). Please know that if you're not ready to unmask and eat indoors, you can still attend. Just register, wear your mask, and take your lunch home to enjoy afterward. Guests are also welcome, though they must also register in advance as usual.

And please also join us at the rescheduled "holiday party" which will be held at Denizen's Brewing Company (1115 East-West Highway in Silver Spring, MD) on Sunday, June 12th from 5-7 pm. Here's the evite, which may have gone to your spam folder (it always does for me!): <http://evite.me/khBKxYp4QW>. We've reserved an indoor-outdoor space that is accessible, and there's free parking, too. Some nibbles will be provided by the Guild, but members and guests will be responsible for their own drinks and any additional food. It will be so nice to see each other, catch up, and raise a glass together.

Erica

## The Tale of Terri Libenson

April program recap by Fred Bowen

Most writers have a story about how they got to where they are now. The tale *New York Times* bestselling author Terri Libenson (pronounced LEE-ben-son) told to the online April Children's Book Guild meeting is better than most.

Libenson described herself as a “shy, quiet and artistic” kid who loved to read and create. Especially comics. She shared some of her early comics with the group and the drawings were remarkably good. So Libenson did the usual things artistic kids do. She created comics for her high school and college publications and majored in illustration.

Libenson wanted to be a syndicated cartoonist but her first paying art job after college was to create a series of cartoon murals for a local pizza parlor. The job did not pay very well so she decided she needed a “real” job. What ensued was a twenty-two-year detour to the American Greetings Corporation in Cleveland Ohio, where she lives with her husband and two daughters. She worked as a writer and sometimes illustrator for the company, which is the world's second biggest greeting card producer behind Hallmark. Libenson said the greeting card experience helped her hone her writing and editing skills.

Libenson, however, still cultivated the dream of becoming a syndicated cartoonist. She clearly took the well-worn advice of “write what you know” when she started *The Pajama Diaries*, a comic strip about a frazzled working mom with growing kids. She shared some of the adult-oriented Pajama Diaries humor with the members, such as a refrigerator that dispensed water...ice...and vodka. The strip won awards and a loyal following during its fourteen-year run (2006-2020). She thought she had found the perfect job. But in 2014 her career took another turn.

A friend told Libenson publishers were looking for female authors and characters. So Libenson thought she would “try her hand” at writing a “Wimpy Kid style” middle grade story. What she created by remembering her feelings as an awkward thirteen-year-old was *Invisible Emmie*. Emmie was the first of what has grown into a seven book, best-selling series called Emmie and Friends. The titles include: *Positively Izzy*, *Just Jaime*, *Becoming Brianna*, *Truly Tyler*, and an interactive activity book called *You-niquely You*.

The latest series book is *Remarkably Ruby*, which came out the day after Libenson spoke to the Guild. As with the other books, the story alternates and interweaves chapters between two characters. This requires her to create two story outlines and two distinct characters. And, of course, do all the artwork.

The series has become so successful and keeps her so busy with a yearly book deadline, she has discontinued writing and drawing *The Pajama Diaries*. It seems Libenson has found an even more perfect job for her than being a syndicated cartoonist.

## Outstanding New Website Lets You Browse the Best Books on the Planet (and Makes Them Easy to Find Too)

by Roz Schanzer

I recently got a very lucky break when my YA book *Witches! The Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem* was featured in an excellent new website called [Shepherd.com](https://shepherd.com). Here's the link to a dramatic, fast-paced video that I made for the book:

<https://shepherd.com/best-books/hair-raising-page-turners-and-magnificent-artwork>

For many reasons, I think that our Guild members will love this site. The first cool perk is that it selects only the very best books written by famous authors and allows them to add a short description of their own work. The second cool perk is that each author also gets to present his or her own clever reviews of five more outstanding books within their same general category. And as an added stroke of genius, there are two spaces at the top of each page that let you browse the works of any author or any unusual topic of your choice. (In a flash, you can also click on an author's website or interview etc.) And if you so desire, you can even order a book with a single click. So no matter what genre you're into, you will surely find it by playing around in this unique new site.

Check it out at [Shepherd.com](https://shepherd.com)

## Stories of Hope for Ukraine

On March 22nd, from multiple continents, [28 award-winning and otherwise notable authors of books for young people](#) each told a short story of hope as part of an unprecedented virtual benefit for young people of Ukraine.

Total raised for Save the Children: nearly \$15,000.

You can now watch the show [here](#). It's full of emotion, twists, and surprise guests.

And you can still [donate](#).

мир для України.

All the best,  
Marc Tyler Nobleman

## Tagging the Guild's Social Media Channels

If you have a new book coming out and you're promoting it on social media, please tag the Guild in your posts so we can retweet or post it! The Guild is on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). Many thanks from Deborah Kalb!

## Member News

Caroline Brewer attended her first Virginia Association of School Librarians (VAASL) conference in early November 2021, thanks to a wonderful collaboration between the Guild and SCBWI members from the region, masterfully organized by Terry Jennings. Authors offered free library visits through a drawing, and Caroline's first virtual visit (featuring the verse MG novel *Darius Daniels: Game On!*) was with 250 Newsome Park students, grades 3-5, in Newport News. The reading specialist there said she thought the author visit was the first the school had ever had. Caroline's second free author visit was with 83 students at Lake Ridge Middle School in Woodbridge. Caroline found the visits exhilarating. She invited friends to donate books to students and libraries at both schools, and the Lake Ridge librarian reported, "I think this is an experience they will remember forever!"

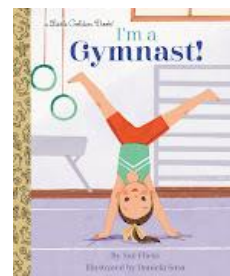


Terry Jennings' new book, *The Little House of Hope*, and its translation, *La casita de esperanza*, will be on the shelves on May 17th. These are Neal Porter books illustrated by the award-winning Raúl Colón, and Terry couldn't be more excited. The books are semi autobiographical, reflecting Terry's family's experience when they first came to the United States and her uncle's family took them in to ease their way into their new country. They were all poor, three families shared the home, with one family living in the garage--12 people living together (14 on weekends). Still. It

was the only way that their family could have survived. Terry's father had been jailed by the Castro regime, and they were able to leave once he was freed. That little house gave them what they so urgently needed, safety, shelter and hope.

Sue Fliess has a new Little Golden Book coming out on May 10th from Random House Children's Books: *I'm a Gymnast*, illustrated by Daniela Sosa. It's a rhyming introduction to the excitement of taking gymnastics

lessons and being in the gym doing headstands, cartwheels, rhythmic gymnastics, and more!



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