March 2023

SPEAKER SERIES LIVE: MARCH

On March 16th, the Guild will be back in person at Busboys & Poets on K Street. The first part of the March gathering will be our annual business meeting for members only. After business, our speaker will be the Guild’s own Terry Catasús Jennings!

Terry is a Cuban-American writer who immigrated to the United States after her father was jailed in Cuba by Fidel Castro’s government. Her most recent book is The Little House of Hope, a Junior Library Guild Selection illustrated by Pura Belpré medalist Raúl Colón. The book is semi-autobiographical, portraying Terry’s own immigrant experience, and showing how a helping hand in a new land can make a life-saving difference for a family. Terry’s Definitely Dominguita series was named SLJ, Kirkus, and Parents Latina Best Books of 2021. Her biography in verse, Pauli Murray, The Life of a Pioneering Feminist and Civil Rights Activist was published in February of last year.

Terry labels herself a “late bloomer” in her writing career—but in her remarks to us on March 16th, she’ll be encouraging us not to pigeon-hole those we write about! Her talk is titled “Throwing Away the Labels and Understanding Our Characters’ Histories.”

Time: 12 noon (11:30 am “social hour”)
Place: Busboys & Poets, 450 K Street, NW

Menu:

- Falafel sandwich (vegetarian/vegan) with house-made hummus, cucumbers, lettuce, tomato and onion on whole-wheat pita, served with tahini sauce (vegan without tahini sauce)
- Honey-roasted turkey sandwich with Havarti cheese, chipotle mayo, lettuce, tomato and onion on white bread
- Grilled-chicken panini with chipotle mayo, caramelized onions, pepper jack, lettuce and tomato on ciabatta
- Avocado panini with roasted red peppers and vegan mozzarella on multigrain bread

All served with a salad of baby greens and house-made kettle chips.

All choices $26, payments online via PayPal (no day-of-event or mail-in payments).

RSVP BY MARCH 13

Register Here

KNOW A SCHOOL THAT NEEDS MONEY FOR BOOKS? THE GUILD'S GOT IT!

The Guild is awarding $500 grants this year to schools to purchase books for their libraries, media centers, or classrooms. Non-profit organizations that serve children are also eligible. Please help us identify recipients for the 2023 awards! Think about schools you've visited or where you've worked. Ask your friends and neighbors. We're looking for schools or communities in need—and staff members (librarians, media specialists, teachers, or principals) who could help facilitate the book selection. Send us the name of the school and the name of a contact there. All ideas and nominations welcome!

Please send your nominations to Guild member Kem Sawyer at kemsawyer@gmail.com

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

The Pursuit of Equity: Two creators tell Mamie Till-Mobley's story

by Sue Filess

Our February Children's Book Guild Speaker Series Program featured author Angela Joy (Black is a Rainbow Color) and paper cut artist Janelle Washington in conversation with Guild member Deborah Taylor. Angela and Janelle are the author and illustrator of Choosing Brave, the story of how Mamie Till-Mobley channeled her grief over her son Emmett Till's death into a call for action for the civil rights movement.

Angela explained that watching a podcast about Mamie Till-Mobley opened her eyes to the moments before and after Emmett's death, and that's when she decided to write Mamie's story. She and Janelle's editor, Connie Hsu at Roaring Brook, thought Janelle's paper cut and silhouette art would be a perfect fit for telling Mamie's story. Janelle's art could share the truth of what happened gently, without frightening readers. She hoped to strike a balance between somber and hopeful. Both author and illustrator did vast amounts of research to get the story right. Angela prepared by reading Mamie's biography, Death of Innocence, and picking out moments that were relevant and safe for the picture book audience. Her goal was to humanize Mamie and Emmett, so they became not just symbols but real people who lived and breathed.

The thing that surprised Angela most in her research was learning that
Mamie had already overcome so much adversity in her life, before facing her son’s tragedy. Angela’s challenge was deciding what to include and what to leave out.

Janelle made the choice to use the color red throughout the book to emphasize bravery, love, and passion. The color follows Mamie and underscores her pain and determination. Both creators wanted the reader to understand that Mamie never took the easy way out; a line that anchors the book is that Mamie did “the harder thing.” Mamie found love amidst all of the pain, and both author and illustrator wanted to show readers those tender relationships in the book.

As for what’s next, Janelle has some gallery shows coming up at major DC museums, and Angela has a book coming out in the fall, illustrated by Jacqueline Alcantara, about the legendary and iconic musician Prince, called *Ordinary Days: The Seeds, Sound, and City That Grew Prince Rogers Nelson*.

**MEMBER NEWS**

Lulu Delacre is thrilled to announce the upcoming release of *Cool Green: Amazing, Remarkable Trees* and *Verde fresco: Árboles asombrosos y extraordinarios*. Proud to have written both versions, Lulu hopes that *Verde fresco* reaches as many people as *Cool Green*. This ode to trees seen through the eyes of a Latino landscaper will be out on March 28th. To celebrate the release Lulu is offering a chance to win a free virtual school visit! Upcoming launch events include a Bilingual Storytime at The Carle on April 1st. In addition Lulu is honored to have two of her works displayed as part of The Carle’s Recent Acquisitions Exhibit. Lulu also wants to share that last summer she relocated from Maryland to DC, where she is delighted to be living less than a block away from Politics & Prose on Connecticut Avenue.
Deborah Bodin Cohen has accepted a new position as an acquiring editor at Behrman House/Apples and Honey Press. After years of writing books as an author and selling books as a bookstore owner, Debbie looks forward to immersing herself in the editorial side of the book industry. Debbie will primarily work from her Rockville home but will travel twice each month to Behrman House’s New Jersey office. She has begun the process of selling the Story House bookstore to new owners and looks forward to sharing more details when the sale is finalized.

Katherine Marsh’s latest middle grade book, *The Lost Year*, inspired by her Ukrainian family history, came out in January. *The New York Times Book Review* featured it in a rave review and it’s a Junior Library Guild April selection, was starred by *Booklist*, and *Kirkus* called it “a moving presentation of a long suppressed piece of history.” Some further news Katherine wishes to share with the CBG community: “Now through the end of April I will Zoom for free into bookclubs for readers of all ages for 15 minutes of Q&A (subject to schedule). Also, for local DC-metro area schools only, I am halving my fees this spring and next fall with a minimum book buy of 50 copies of *The Lost Year*. My presentation introduces kids to Ukrainian and Soviet history—specifically the book’s subject: the Holodomor or Ukrainian famine of 1932-33 that killed millions. I also discuss current events and media literacy/disinformation.”
Jacqueline Jules is excited to announce that Zapato Power #13: Freddie Ramos and the Beach Monster will be released in April by Albert Whitman. In his thirteenth adventure, Freddie takes his first trip to the beach, where his superpowered shoes make him bounce on the sand. While Freddie’s mom hangs out with her boyfriend, David, and gets to know his family, Freddie investigates the giant monster tracks that mysteriously appear on the beach. When David’s sister and baby niece disappear, can Freddie find them before the monster does?
Michelle Y. Green is pleased to announce that, by unanimous vote, her story "Dog Tags" was chosen as the winner of the 2022 competition at The Writer magazine. She says of the story that it's "based on memories of my Dad, a Tuskegee Airman who fought in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. But, it also recounts his softer side—his love of family, tradition, and high expectations. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that Guild member, and esteemed writer, Katherine Paterson, was a judge for the final round!" It will be published in the April issue with an interview and several photos.

Kalli Dakos is excited to share the news of her picture book Happy Birthday, Belly Button. It is the story of an exuberant child who realizes that every part of the body, right down to the belly button, is now one year older and bigger on this amazing birthday. The active illustrations and warm art
by Luciana Navarro Powell make this a great picture book to read with toddlers and preschoolers who love to celebrate their birthdays.
Trailer: https://vimeo.com/794716282

My tummy is older
and so is my nose.
There’s a lot more ME
from my head to my toes!

Lezlie Evans’ latest book, *Vroom, Vroom, Beep-Beep!* *A Crash Course in Kindness*, hits store and library shelves on March 21st. It will be released in hard copy in the US and softcover in the UK and Australia. In this lively, rhyming romp a thoughtless little Jeep learns that the road is less rocky and the ride is much more fun when you’re kind and considerate of others!

Fred Bowen will be appearing at Politics and Prose at 10:30am on Thursday March 23rd to celebrate the publication of his new book, *Off the Bench* (Peachtree Publishers).
Susan Stockdale will present her new book, *Line Up! Animals in Remarkable Rows*, at *Hooray for Books* in Alexandria, VA on Sunday, March 3rd at 1:30 pm.

Laura Gehl’s new picture book, *Grandpa’s Window*, releases on March 14th. *Kirkus* called it a “touching window into a child’s mourning process” and said that this “powerful picture book shows children that they can feel both heartbreak and ongoing love simultaneously.”
Guild member, environmentalist, and author Caroline Brewer, whose new picture book, *Say Their Names*, was recently showcased in *The Washington Post*, will give a keynote address on Thursday March 9th at 7pm at the Fifth Taking Nature Black Conference, hosted by Nature Forward (formerly the Audubon Naturalist Society). Caroline’s talk will be delivered virtually and is titled “The Environment: A Love Story and A Reason to Say Their Names.” It will unfold as a tapestry of poetry, song, children’s book excerpts, and a call to action that has the power to heal, uplift, and save more of God’s beautiful creatures. Guild members are invited to attend. Click here for the conference schedule and registration information.