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Children's Book Guild News



of Washington, D.C.
Since 1945

Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

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Monday, November 21, 2016

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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 <http://www.childrensbookguild.org/>

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December 2016

LESLEY LUNDGREN TO DISCUSS BRINGING CHILDREN'S BOOK ILLUSTRATION TO LIFE THROUGH EXHIBITIONS



How do curators and exhibition designers plan picture book exhibitions? At the Guild's luncheon on Thursday, December 8, Lesley Lundgren, a former librarian who is now Strathmore's exhibition manager, will talk about the process of creating exhibitions that work for both children and adults.

Lundgren comes to the Strathmore position with a background in public programming that she gained through working in public libraries, galleries and a mix of cultural organizations. She earned her master of library science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

While there she began her career at the Cooperative Children's Book Center. After graduation, she worked as a children's librarian at the District of Columbia Public Library system and the Allen County Public Library system in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In Fort Wayne she taught children's literature as an adjunct instructor at the University of St. Francis before shifting careers and working as the exhibition coordinator for the libraries' community art gallery. She eventually moved back to Washington, D.C., where she studied arts management at American University, earning a master of arts in 2013. She was the first AU student to take part in an arts business exchange program with Sotheby's Institute of Art in London.

In her Guild program, Lundgren will discuss the various elements that curators must consider in planning picture book exhibitions, such as the composition of their audience and the mission of their institution. Exhibitions in museums, galleries, libraries and universities aim to promote high-quality children's literature and support literacy initiatives, but at the same time try to spotlight visual artistry, social justice, history or culture. The resulting exhibitions may feature the characters children love but content only adults comprehend. Creating an exhibition both children and

adults will enjoy requires a fine and tender balance. Too much spectacle—think large-scale characters with concentrated lighting—and the nuanced line or language is in jeopardy of being lost. Too much artifact (hand-written letters from the editor, for example, or invoices from a first printing), and children cannot contextualize. The most joyful experience in staging an exhibition featuring children's book illustration for adults and children lies in exploring art and language for both.

Lundgren will provide examples of various picture book exhibitions, beginning with the New York Public Library's 2014 exhibition, "The ABC of it: Why Children's Books Matter," which was a feast for children and learners of all ages. From there she plans to highlight exhibitions presented by the academic community, specifically the Rosenbach Museum and the Morgan Library, both of which have used children's literature to discuss adult themes of war, isolation and subjugation. Last she will discuss the Findlay University Collection and the Mazza Museum, along with the work of the museum staff and their effect on Strathmore in planning "Turning the Page: Children's Book Illustration" in the Strathmore Mansion in June 2016.

Date: Thursday, December 8

Time: 11:30 a.m. "social hour"; noon luncheon

Place: [Busboys and Poets](#)

1025 Fifth Street NW (at K Street)

Menu: All choices \$25 (\$26 when paid online via PayPal)

:: CHOICE OF SANDWICH (all sandwiches served with a salad of baby greens and house-made kettle chips) ::

- **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, Dijonnaise, lettuce, tomato and onion on wheat bread**
- **Grilled-chicken panini with chipotle mayo, caramelized onions, pepper jack, lettuce and tomato on ciabatta**
- **Avocado panini with roasted red peppers and melted cheese on multi-grain bread**

[RSVP Now!](#)

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Guild members,

A big welcome to two new members who have joined our Guild this fall: author Lenore Appelhans and graphic novelist Alexis Frederick-Frost. We look forward to seeing both at our monthly meetings at Busboys and Poets.



And many thanks to the Books for Kids committee for selecting three DC public schools--Anne Beers, Garfield and Langdon Elementary Schools--to receive book donations from the Guild. Dara LaPorte and Heidi Powell from An Open Book Foundation, Jason King from Turning the Page and Wendy Lukehart from DC Public Libraries selected the schools. Each school will be given a gift certificate from First Book to purchase books for its library. Thanks too to Alison Morris at First Book for facilitating this effort. [First Book](#) is a Washington-based nonprofit that provides new books to youth in need. Donations to additional schools will be made in the spring. If you would like to suggest a public

school to participate in this program please let me know.

Still looking ahead: It's not too early to mark your calendar for the 2017 Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award Luncheon on Saturday, April 29. More information is forthcoming. Please sign up to volunteer!

Sending best wishes for the season to all Guild members! Please do come to the holiday party. Edie Ching will host the event on January 8, 2017. Location, time and details are provided below and will also follow by email.

Peace and joy now and in the year to come,

Kem Knapp Sawyer

TAKOMA PARK MARYLAND LIBRARY'S MOCK CALDECOTT EVENT

Karen MacPherson writes: "Fans of children's picture books: Come join us at the Takoma Park Maryland Library (101 Philadelphia Ave., Takoma Park, Md.) on Saturday, December 10, from 1 to 4 p.m., for our third annual Mock Caldecott for Adults! We'll be focusing on a list of 20 'finalists'--books that we think are good possibilities for the 2017 Caldecott Medal. We'll read each book together (via our ELMO document camera, which projects each page on our big screen) and then discuss them using the official Caldecott Medal criteria. (For longer books, we'll be reading just a section because of time limits.) There will be snacks and drinks, courtesy of the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, and we promise to finish by 4 p.m. (We've met that goal each time in the last two years!) The library has two copies of each 'finalist,' one in the circulating library collection and one in a box of 'reference' copies that we will keep at our main desk so that we always have all the finalists available to read. But if you don't have time to read the books ahead, don't worry--we'll be reading them together anyway! One note: children are most welcome as onlookers, but our event is specifically for adults. Registration is encouraged, so we make sure to have enough snacks and drinks, but it is not required. Feel free to come for some or all of the program. Hope you can join us!"

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE GUILD'S HOLIDAY PARTY!



Sunday, January 8, from 6 to 9 p.m.,

at the home of

Edie and Wally Ching

in Silver Spring, Md.
(address will be sent via email)

RSVP to Edie
at edie.ching@verizon.net

with the number attending, and specify what you will bring:

an appetizer, main dish, salad or dessert.

Libations will be provided.

Spouses and significant others are very welcome!

TIM DITLOW ON PRINT VS. E-BOOKS: IT'S NOT EITHER/OR BUT "AND"

by J. H. Diehl

At the November meeting of the Children's Book Guild, Tim Ditlow, a renowned veteran of children's audio, print and e-book publishing, returned for his second appearance as a Guild speaker. Ditlow is currently vice president of content for the highly successful children's e-book subscription service Epic! His depth of experience in producing literature for children in an array of formats made it fascinating to hear Ditlow's observations about the relationship of media to content, the qualities of printed picture books that he believes e-books cannot replicate and the unique role the latter can play as a resource for young readers.

Ditlow came to e-books following various roles at Amazon and many years with Listening Library, the audiobook imprint founded by his parents and later sold to Random House. His talk included wonderful historical notes about the early days of Listening Library and how its adult list expanded to include children's literature. Ditlow credited this idea to Bill Morris of the company then known as Harper & Row. In the early 1980s, Listening Library sold thousands of book and cassette sets of the I Can Read series. Under Ditlow's leadership, the company subsequently produced Grammy Award-winning recordings of many of the most famous children's books published in recent decades, including the Harry Potter series, *The Book Thief*, and the His Dark Materials trilogy.

Ditlow spoke enthusiastically about all the book formats he's worked with. Story is what matters most, he said, and is what all three—audio, print and digital—share. To illustrate this point, he passed around one of the original Kindle readers, first sold by Amazon in 2007, when he joined the company. At first, he said, he was bothered by the machine when it made a flicking sound every time he switched pages. After a while, he got used to the sound and stopped hearing it. "Over time I was unaware I was holding a device in my hand, and I just got caught up in the author's words."

But Ditlow thinks e-books should not try to imitate printed books. Features like the sound of pages turning, he said, are essentially "forcing the print format into the digital world." Rather, he believes e-books should use technology to their advantage. Where that will lead, he seemed to say, is still evolving. In his opinion, e-book formats do not, so far, do justice to picture books. "It's difficult to make them look good in e-books," he said. "Picture books are a tough format to replicate on phones." He is optimistic that technology will meet this challenge in the future.

He cited four elements that add value to picture books and cannot be replicated by e-books: gorgeous end papers, "undies" (the designs on cases of hardcover books beneath their jackets), flap design and copy, and die-cuts made in pages. "I do not believe and have never believed in the death of printed books," asserted Ditlow, quoting Ursula Le Guin.

Although sales of e-books have dipped recently, Ditlow believes the downward trend will not continue over the long term. He cited pricing as a chief current obstacle to the popularity of e-books, especially prices charged to public libraries. Also, many classic children's books remain unavailable in e-book form. Ditlow, hopeful that will change, pointed out that e-books can give a second life to older and out-of-print books.

In the last two years, he said, Epic! has put 40 million e-books in the hands of kids. The company's library of more than 20,000 titles is distributed free to schools, and more than 300,000 copies of Epic! books are read each day. The subscription service has reached 70 percent of U.S. schools, he said, and is expanding rapidly to China and other Asian markets. E-books, he pointed out, are a way to spread children's literature to under-served communities. Among the advantages of digital books he cited is the fact that kids may appreciate the opportunity for privacy when reading on a tablet in a classroom setting if, for example, they want to read about a social issue such as bullying.

To underscore where he thinks e-books are going, Ditlow closed his talk with a quote from a short story by prescient sci-fi writer Ray Bradbury. A man walks into his house and a voice says, "Welcome home. Would you like to hear your favorite poem by Sara Teasdale?" Ditlow suggested that, with the proliferation of home voice assistants, including Amazon's Alexa, the integration of digital literature into home audio and video systems may be the next e-book frontier.

SIGN UP TO HELP OUT AT THE NONFICTION AWARD EVENT

Excitement is building for this year's Nonfiction Award luncheon, on April

29, 2017, honoring Ann Bausum. Sign up to volunteer at the December meeting, or send an email to Jennifer O'Connell if you'd like to help out: j@jenniferoconnellart.com. Thank you!

MEMBER NEWS



The National Council of Teachers of English has chosen *I Dissent*, by DEBBIE LEVY, and *Olinguito*, by LULU DELACRE, as Orbis Pictus honor books.



Lulu shares more exciting news: *Olinguito* has been selected for *Kirkus Reviews'* Best Books of 2016!

Lulu also is thrilled to be offering a family program titled *¡Olinguito, de la A a la Z! Descubriendo el bosque nublado; Olinguito, from A to Z! Unveiling the Cloud Forest*, at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History on December 3, at 1 p.m., especially because budding scientists will be able to meet the real zoologist hidden in the illustrations of her book. Dr. Kristofer Helgen, the scientist who led the team that discovered the olinguito will be in attendance to answer questions and add his signature to the discovery page in the book. Lulu reminds holiday shoppers, "A book signed by both author/illustrator and scientist--and the olinguito stuffed toy available at the mammal store--would make for a pretty nice gift!"



SHOUT MOUSE PRESS has received an East of the River grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities to expand and innovate the Ballou Story Project through a collaboration with Young Playwrights' Theater. All

involved will be taking their powerful stories to the stage in Spring 2017.

Founder and executive director KATHY CRUTCHER adds that on November 18 Shout Mouse released four new, original children's books authored by the teen tutors of Reach Incorporated. These books by DC teens of color work to actively engage young readers with relatable, inclusive stories, and to expand empathy and understanding for the next generation of readers.

Also, in response to the current political climate, Shout Mouse is working to combat hate by passing the mic to targeted communities. Priorities for 2017 include new partnerships with organizations serving immigrants, refugees and/or Muslim-Americans. Please reach out to kathy@shoutmousepress.org if you would like to be involved, especially if you are a member of one of these groups. Learn more about Shout Mouse Press at <http://www.shoutmousepress.org/>.



Join Guild members MARTY RHODES FIGLEY, JACQUELINE JULES and LAURA MURRAY on Saturday, December 3, at 3 p.m., at One More Page Books in Arlington, Va., as they share books with December holiday themes: *Santa's Underwear*, *The Gingerbread Man Loose at Christmas*, *Freddie Ramos Rules New York* and *Sofia Martinez: Singing Superstar*. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1308062639203821/>

AN OPEN BOOK FOUNDATION is proud to be part of the 2016-2017 *Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington* as "One of the Best" community-based nonprofits in the region. Potential supporters and donors can be confident that An Open Book has met the catalogue's high standards because it has undergone a program review, financial assessment and site visit. This year, reviewers chose 74 charities to join the catalogue's network, bringing the total to more than 375 vetted charities in all. The nonprofits are locally based and operate with budgets below \$3 million; they work in the arts, education, environment and human-service sectors throughout greater Washington. An Open Book's online profile can be viewed here: <http://cfp-dc.org/nonprofits/1620/An-Open-Book-Foundation>.



SUSAN ROTH writes: "This is a picture of three of my Danish writer/illustrator/publisher friends (left to right Sally Altschuler, Tove Krebs

Lange and Merete Flensted Laustsen), all part of my present Danish 'bookguildish-contacts' given to me by dear Ernie Bond a few years ago. On October 31 I took the train from Nyborg, Denmark (where my husband and I were staying, attending his scientific meeting), into Copenhagen to 'hold court' in Tranquebar, the lovely bookstore/good coffee/good lunch place where we all frequently would meet when I was still going to Copenhagen a few times a year. Friends--two of them have become my collaborators and one is Karen Leggett's publisher--came and went throughout the day until I had to leave to get back to Nyborg, all of us remembering Ernie with sadness, with respect, with appreciation and with love.

"The following day I went to Odense, to the home of Hans Christian Andersen as well as to his special museum. I was there years ago when it was smaller and simpler. It's big and fabulous now, including an amazing, huge library of his books in about 50 billion languages and editions. I loved it all, as is. But the person at the desk told me that any minute they are going to rip it all down again, supposedly making it even better. Maybe they will, although I can't imagine it. The second photograph is from the house where Andersen was born, the kitchen/dining room. Worth the detour."



REMEMBERING PEGGY THOMSON



Longtime Guild member Peggy Thomson died on October 20 in Holyoke, Mass., at age 93. She had moved to Massachusetts in 2010, to be near her son David and daughter-in-law Ann McEwen. According to the obituary published in the Washington Post, Peggy was born in St. Louis in 1922. She attended Swarthmore College and married her husband, John, who had been born to missionary parents in China, in 1945. After living

in New York City and Madison, Wisc., Peggy and John settled in Washington, D.C., with their three children in 1957. Peggy, who had begun her writing career with Life magazine, wrote for local periodicals, including Washingtonian. She published 10 nonfiction books for young adults, among them Auks, Rocks, and the Odd Dinosaur: Inside Stories from the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, for which she received the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award in 1986. Friends and loved ones remember her political activism and her warm, welcoming home.

Several Guild members have shared their recollections.

It's hard to think of Peggy without imagining myself walking up the steps to her front door, being met by a golden retriever and warmly ushered into her living room--chairs and sofa by the fireplace, a game table and four chairs under a low hanging lamp, and stacks of books on the coffee table and floor. I was one of the members of the little critique group that met on Monday nights for 26 years. Membership changed from decade to decade, but all of us were Guild members who happened to live in the general area of Bethesda/Chevy Chase/DC. We started out meeting in one another's homes, but eventually, as Peggy disliked driving at night, we met regularly at her house. We would spend the first fifteen minutes or so just sharing anything personal we had to get off our chests, and then more or less divide up our three hours among those who had something to read or illustrations for a picture book. At some point we'd break for tea and cookies, either something we brought or a special treat that Peggy had purchased at the Bethesda Farm Women's Market. Often we'd hear footsteps on the stairs and a college student, possibly from overseas, would say hello and go out for the evening. Peggy collected friends like she collected books. She was happiest when someone else was living there with her, and her name and address must have been passed from one university to the next.

She was passionate about so many things. I especially remember two of her projects that never made it into print: one a book about service dogs, with photos, detailing a day in the life of a handicapped boy and how a devoted service dog enabled him to become more independent; the other about saving orphaned orangutans. Her dining-room table was always covered with some project she was working on. I can hear her soft "Oh...oh...oh..." as she searched for a page she had misplaced or a knife to cut a cake. It's hard to imagine that big house without her, but she loved life, and lived it well, touching everyone she happened to meet. *Phyllis Naylor*

Peggy was engaged in many "writers' groups" throughout her life. I was in her last one, I believe, along with Phyllis Naylor and Laura Melmed. We met at her charming, chaotic house in Chevy Chase.

I was sometimes greeted at the door by Peggy holding a toy horse on a stick, which whinnied a loud and unexpected welcome. Unidentified people—usually young—sat in the kitchen having dinner. Our writers' group assembled in the dining room at break time, enjoying the treats Peggy would have bought at her weekly visit to the Bethesda Farmers Market. In the living room, where we met to critique one another's work, the coffee table was stacked with books, newspapers and magazines. The mantel held a display of miscellany, including a cartoon explaining the spelling of the Thomson family name. ("The "p" is silent, as in ocean.") Once I admired a vase that was sitting precariously on the floor in the corner of the room. "Beautiful," I said. "Oh yes," Peggy responded. "Some people think it belongs in the Smithsonian. It's from the Ming Dynasty."

Peggy wasn't writing much back then, but somehow we absorbed a great deal by just being around her. She told of being a fact checker for Time Life when she graduated from Swarthmore. We heard tales of Peggy's daughter, who visited from New England, bringing her family's goat. One year the goat was accompanied by a one-eyed chicken that had been rejected by its flock because of its blindness. The two were

inseparable. Another year the goat wandered from Peggy's yard to the traffic circle at Chevy Chase, where it caused quite a stir. Someone captured it and turned it into the local police station. Some neighbors knew where it belonged, and Peggy's household got a phone call asking them to come fetch it. It was no wonder the neighbors knew who it belonged to. Everyone knew that Peggy always welcomed people—and animals—needing a friendly place to stay. How lucky we were to have her as a Guild member. *Betsy Harvey Kraft*

Peggy was my sponsor when I joined the Children's Book Guild of Washington, D.C., over 20 years ago now. She would come say hello at the Bethesda, Maryland, library where I was a children's librarian, to ask me how my writing was coming along and to encourage me. She was a lovely, kind and generous woman, and I've missed seeing her at the Guild meetings. *Annette Curtis Klause*

What a joy it was to have been her friend! We had such good times together. And after my family and I moved from Takoma Park to Norfolk, she kept writing to me because she knew I was homesick. When we moved to Vermont, she made sure a mutual friend contacted me right away, and so she became responsible for another close friendship. John and I shared China, and Peggy and I shared our love for writing for children and much, much more. I'm so grateful to have known them both. *Katherine Paterson*

NOTE ABOUT THE *CHILDREN'S BOOK GUILD NEWS*: Would you rather print your newsletter than read it online? Current and past issues are now available for printing on the Guild's website at <http://www.childrensbookguild.org/guild-newsletters>. Look for the "Newsletter" tab on the left side of the Guild website. There is also a "Printer Friendly Version" link on the top left-hand side of this blog.

LITERARY EVENTS SPONSORED BY POLITICS AND PROSE: The literary calendar at Politics and Prose lists many upcoming programs that may be of interest to Children's Book Guild members: <http://www.politics-prose.com/events>.

And remember, Politics & Prose is now the bookstore at the 5th and K Streets location of Busboys & Poets. Politics & Prose plans to have copies of our featured speakers' books available for purchase at this location on meeting dates whenever possible.

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