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Children's Book Guild News



the
Children's
Book Guild
of Washington, D.C.
Since 1945

Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

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Thursday, December 22, 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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January 2017

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK GUILD'S HOLIDAY PARTY



All members of the Children's Book Guild are cordially invited to attend the annual holiday party, on 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!



NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 16

The January 19 meeting of the Children's Book Guild has been canceled. The next luncheon meeting will take place on February 16, 2017, at Busboys and Poets, Fifth and K Streets NW, Washington, D.C. Kyle Zimmer of First Book and Brenda Randolph of Africa Access will explain how their respective nonprofit organizations are promoting, celebrating and finding new audiences for diverse content. More information about this meeting will appear in the February issue of this online newsletter.

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**THE GUILD'S NONFICTION AWARD LUNCHEON:
SAVE THE DATE!**

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 29, when the Guild will be having its 40th Nonfiction Award luncheon, honoring Ann Bausum.

One More Page Books, of Arlington, Va., will handle the book sale this year (our book sellers take turns), and we still need two volunteers to be greeters.

For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Jennifer O'Connell

(j@jenniferoconnellart.com), Emily Griffin (emily@childrenslit.com) or Karen Deans (karen@karendeans.com).

We hope to see you there!

LESLEY LUNDGREN: PICTURE BOOK ART IN EXHIBITION

by J. H. Diehl

How best to make use of the space inside Strathmore Mansion to exhibit art by picture book illustrators and create a show that appeals to diverse audiences of all ages—that was the question Strathmore exhibition manager Leslie Lundgren set out to answer as she and curator Harriet Lesser prepared “Turning the Page: Children’s Book Illustrations,” which ran from June 11 to July 31, 2016, and featured the work of a number of Guild members.

In her insightful talk at the Guild’s December meeting, Lundgren shared how she prepared for the Strathmore show by presenting a detailed analysis of four other museum exhibitions on children’s books. Using slides, she demonstrated the relationship between exhibit design and the mission statement of each institution. Her thoughtful examinations took into account everything from the choice of paint colors for walls to the height and type of display cases and degree of interactivity offered by each space. The four shows she reviewed included “The ABC of It: Why Children’s Books Matter,” a 2013 exhibition at the New York Public Library; “The Little Prince: A New York Story,” a 2014 show at the Morgan Library; “Wonderland,” a permanent exhibition at the Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia; and the collection of artwork for children

at the Mazza Museum of Findlay University in Ohio.

The New York Public Library exhibition explored the impact of children's literature through the centuries and offered extraordinary interactive moments for children, including a replica of the "green room" from Margaret Wise Brown's classic, *Goodnight Moon*; a car from *The Phantom Tollbooth* big enough for two kids to sit in; and a representation of Lewis Carroll's Alice, large as life, with a neck that lengthened. Lundgren explained that these elements used visual information to explore the purpose books serve while fulfilling the library's mission to appeal to diverse and multi-generational audiences.

By contrast, the exhibition at the Morgan, a private library with an academic focus, was intended to examine the creative decisions made by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry at a time when he felt expatriated from France and wrote *The Little Prince*. Lundgren explained that the exhibit's physical design, as well as the material on display, reflected the Morgan's mission to serve as a research institution for adults.

The "Wonderland" installation operates on the idea that "play is a child's work," Lundgren said. This exhibition was designed with interactive elements to give kids the opportunity to experience being characters in the *Alice in Wonderland* story. The book and its history are less important, she said, and the author's and illustrator's intentions are not explored. Rather, "Wonderland" offers an environment and atmosphere rich with stimuli that allow kids to make their own discoveries.

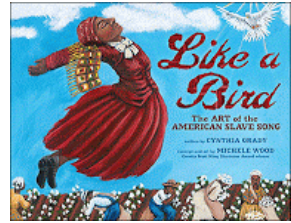
The Mazza Museum is dedicated to artwork by children's book illustrators and holds more than 10,000 items in its collection. In some rooms, materials are displayed on three levels, with the highest for framed illustrations and a ledge below for picture books. Under them are binders containing background information on the work. The tiered layout offers young readers easy access to the books in which the art appears. That is one way the exhibition design shows that the space is intended to be used by both kids and adults who study children's literature, Lundgren explained. There are also items on display, such as an author's desk and window, that kids can touch.

The Strathmore show featured works on loan from the Mazza Museum as well pieces by local artists, including several Guild members. Works by Lulu Delacre, Richard Foa, Sallie Lowenstein, Jennifer O'Connell, Jessica Rose, Susan Stockdale and Janet Morgan Stoeke were included.

Lundgren explained how she and Lesser worked around Strathmore Mansion's fireplaces, chandeliers and other historical elements as they designed their show. Certain modifications were made. For example, doors came off cabinets so that picture books could be placed on the shelves for easy access.

"Turning the Page: Children's Book Illustrations" fulfilled Strathmore's mission to draw in diverse audiences of all ages, Lundgren said. Artists provided work that could be touched and gave demonstrations. A number of Guild members asked when Strathmore will do its next exhibition of picture book art, and Lundgren said she expects this might happen in about five years.

MEMBER NEWS



CYNTHIA GRADY will receive the 2017-2018 Land of Enchantment Award, New Mexico's state book award, for *Like a Bird: The Art of the American Slave Song*.

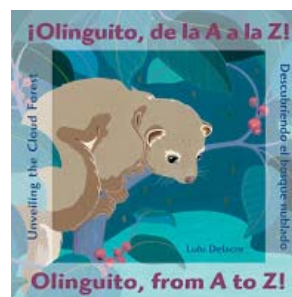
Like a Bird is also on the New York Public Library's 2016 list of 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing, along with books by three other Guild members:



The Door by the Staircase, by **KATHERINE MARSH**...



I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark, by **DEBBIE LEVY**...



and *Olinguito, de la A a la Z!*, by **LULU DELACRE**.



BRENDA SEABROOKE is thrilled that her story "Snow Devils" is included in the just-published anthology *Windward: Best New England Crime Stories* (2016).



TAMMAR STEIN is happy to announce that *The Six-Day Hero*, her middle-grade historical novel about the Six Day War, will be published in January. It is a Junior Library Guild selection and will be a PJ Our Way selection in April.

MARY AMATO will be teaching a series of advanced writing workshops on four Wednesdays in January, from noon to 1 p.m., at Robert Harper Books in Riverdale Park, Md. (near College Park). Each workshop will involve a brief lecture-discussion on a particular theme and an in-class writing exercise. Class size is limited; registration is required. A discount is given for registering for all four. For more information, contact Mary at info@maryamato.com.



JACQUELINE JULES is pleased to share the news that she has a poem, "Waiting," in the latest issue of *Balloons Lit Journal*: http://www.balloons-lit-journal.com/uploads/3/9/7/4/39744140/blj_issue_4.pdf#page=23. *Balloons Lit* is beautifully illustrated and contains a wide variety of material for young

readers. Jacqueline encourages Guild members to check it out and submit too. Visit the journal at <http://www.balloons-lit-journal.com/issue-4.html>.



The National Science Teachers Association and the Children's Book Council have named *Florence Nightingale: The Courageous Life of the Legendary Nurse*, by CATHERINE REEF, an Outstanding Science Trade Book.

LOWER PRICES FOR PUBLICITY ON THE GUILD WEBSITE

If you don't already have a Speakers Bureau page or a member page on the Children's Book Guild website, you may want to take advantage of new, lower prices. The Speakers Bureau fee has been reduced to \$25 a year (see examples at <http://childrensbookguild.org/about-our-members/speakers-bureau>). The member-page fee has been reduced to a \$75 set-up fee and \$25 for yearly maintenance (see examples at <http://childrensbookguild.org/about-our-members/member-pages>).

If you would like to sign up for a member page or a Speakers Bureau page, you can pay the fees online at <http://childrensbookguild.org/payments/608-dues-and-fees-payments> or contact Jacqueline Jules (jjules@jacquelinejules.com) about sending a check.

After you have paid, please inform Jacqueline Jules. She will then let you know how to submit your information for the website.

REMEMBERING BRENT ASHABRANNER



Brent Ashabrunner as a Navy Seabee

Brent K. Ashabrunner, a longtime Guild member who received the Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award in 1990, died December 1 in Williamsburg, Va., where he lived. He was 95.

Twenty-five years ago, in an autobiographical essay he contributed to Something About the Author, Brent wrote, "I have lived three lives in my seventy years, and I will not be in the least astonished if there should be a fourth." However one parcels it, his was an eventful life.

Born in Shawnee, Okla., in 1921, Brent served in the U.S. Navy as a Seabee

during World War II. He went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in English from the University of Oklahoma and taught there for several years. Beginning in 1955, Brent, his wife, Martha, and their two daughters spent 30 years overseas while he worked with the Peace Corps, the Ford Foundation and other organizations in places such as Ethiopia, Libya, India and the Philippines.

Upon retiring in 1985, Brent began writing nonfiction for young readers. He wrote more than 40 books, some with his daughter Melissa, and earned numerous awards and honors. His subjects reflected his strong interests in the world's people, the U.S. military and American history. He wrote, for example, about national monuments and memorials, American Indians, migrant farm workers, recent immigrants and Arlington National Cemetery, where he will be laid to rest.

Brenda Seabrooke wrote this remembrance:

Brent Ashabrunner slipped away in the early hours of December 1. We became friends when he rode with me from Virginia to Maryland, to meetings of our writers group in the D.C. area. We called ourselves the Soup Group because Caroline Levine tried out soup recipes and homemade bread on us. Eventually we scattered: Brent to Williamsburg, me to Florida, Claudia Mills to Colorado and Pat Markun to California. My last communication with Brent was a note and card on his November 4 birthday, when he was 95. I never could convince him to try email. He wrote all his books on a manual typewriter. One of my memories of him was after a hurricane, when he and Martha were without power for two weeks and cooking on a charcoal grill. Not too different from some of their years in Africa, India and the Philippines! This Oklahoman was ever resourceful.

I was privileged to preside over the November Children's Book Guild luncheon the year Brent received the award given then in conjunction with the *Washington Post*. That year we had the highest attendance in the elegant ballroom of the Mayflower Hotel. I think the number was around 600, and some had to sit in the balconies, but the ceremony was the most memorable because Brent was one of our own, the author of luminous books promoting peace. He was the best of America, a man who saw the job and got it done without fanfare or self-aggrandizement. He will long be missed.


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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