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Children's Book Guild News



CHILDREN'S
BOOK GUILD
of WASHINGTON, DC

Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

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Monday, February 24, 2020

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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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March 2020

BOOKS THAT CONSIDER HISTORY AND JUSTICE: DEBBIE LEVY TO SPEAK ABOUT HER WORK



On Thursday evening, March 19, Guild member and award-winning author Debbie Levy will speak at the Cleveland Park Library, following the Children's Book Guild's annual business meeting. Debbie has written more than 25 books of nonfiction, fiction and poetry for young people, including the *New York Times* best-selling *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark*, winner of the Sydney Taylor Book Award and the National Jewish Book Award. Her book *The Key from Spain: Flory Jagoda and Her Music* was named a 2020 Sydney Taylor Honor Book. Among

Debbie's other books are *Becoming RBG: Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Journey to Justice* (a graphic novel-style biography); *We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song*, a Jane Addams Award Honor Book and Bank Street College Best Book; and *The Year of Goodbyes*, a Sydney Taylor Notable Book and *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book.

A former lawyer and newspaper editor, Debbie lives in Maryland with her husband. They have two grown sons. Visit Debbie online at www.debbielevybooks.com. Several of Debbie's books will be available for purchase on the evening of her program.

Date: Thursday evening, March 19, 2020

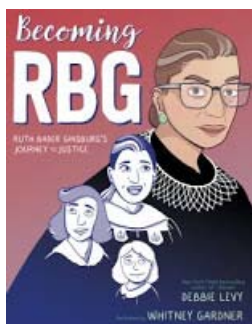
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

6:30 - 7:30: Business Meeting (members only)

7:30 - 8:30: Program with Debbie Levy (all are welcome)

Place: Cleveland Park Library, 3310 Connecticut Ave. NW (lower-level meeting room)

Parking/Metro: Street parking is available in the neighborhood. The Cleveland Park Public Library is within easy walking distance of the Red Line's Cleveland Park Metro stop



Food: Members, please bring your own beverage and brown-bag meal to eat during the business meeting. Some boxed water will be available.

There is no cost to attend, but please RSVP if you plan to be there.

RSVP Now!

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NOMINATION OF SPECIALIST IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE MONICA VALENTINE

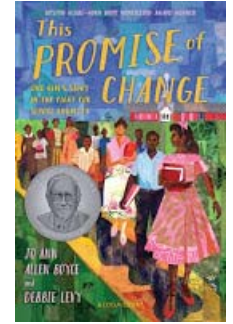
Karen Jaffe is pleased to nominate her former colleague Monica Valentine for Guild membership. Amy Hansen seconds the nomination.

Monica has attended several meetings of the Guild the last two years while working at the Young Readers Center at the Library of Congress. Monica explains that she has worked at the library for 25 years. Since 2012, she has worked in the Young Readers Center and is currently co-lead program specialist. Her work there focuses on the daily operation of the center, program planning and administration, the recruitment and management of volunteers and outreach to the educational community in the Washington metropolitan area. She also works collaboratively with internal and external partners to build, refine and manage the Young Readers Center's online collection, and she works with authors for the National Book Festival.

"I admire the work of the Guild," she says. "I'm eager to share my expertise and enthusiasm for children's literature through a formal membership in the Children's Book Guild of Washington, D.C."

LITTLE WOMEN AND THE CHILDREN'S BOOK GUILD

by *Laura Krauss Melmed*



On Christmas afternoon, the lobby of the ArcLight theater in North Bethesda was crammed with moviegoers eager to watch the latest cinematic version of *Little Women*. I was in the throng along with my husband, daughter, son and daughter-in-law, her mother and one of my friends. As the most ardent *Little Women* fan in our group, I could hardly wait to see it.

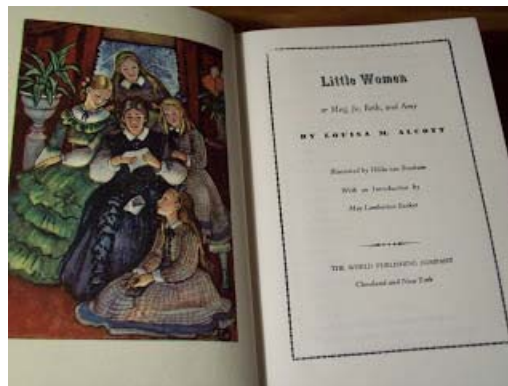
The movie, directed by Greta Gerwig, tells Louisa May Alcott's beloved story of the March family with beauty and grace, reweaving its strands into a new tapestry for our time. I had been a *Little Women* enthusiast since reading it at age nine beguiled me into diving into all its sequels. I was delighted to learn recently that Politics and Prose was offering a class on the book to coincide with the release of the new movie. Two other Guild members, Karen Leggett and Betsy Kraft, enrolled with me. In one of the assigned books, I came across a link between *Little Women* and the Children's Book Guild.

Since *Little Women* was first published in two volumes, in 1868 and 1869, many illustrators have portrayed its major scenes in various editions that went on to sell an estimated 10 million copies to date around the world. Annie Boyd Rioux, author of *Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy: The Story of Little Women and Why it Still Matters*, calls an edition released by the World Publishing Company in 1946 "one of the most remarkable editions." Rioux elaborates:

The illustrations by Hilda van Stockum consist of striking silhouettes, more conventional woodcuts, and a few color plates produced with vibrant acrylics. Van Stockum interspersed her domestic groupings (in color) with dynamic images of the girls that convey their bustling energy better than any other illustrations I've seen. It is interesting how the most abstract style (the silhouette) yields the liveliest images, allowing the reader to imagine the scene not as a picture but as a living thing.

Hilda van Stockum, Dutch by birth, lived in Washington from the 1930s until 1974 and was a member of the Children's Book Guild. She died in 2006, at age 98 (<https://www.nysun.com/obituaries/hilda-van-stockum-98-prolific-childrens-author/42825/>), but many of her books are in print today. *A Day on Skates* was a Newbery Honor Book. Her best-known book, *The Winged Watchman*, is a story of family life and heroism set in wartime Holland during the German occupation. It is based on letters van Stockum received from her relatives in the Netherlands. It was an ALA Notable book.

I've just ordered a secondhand copy of Hilda van Stockum's *Little Women*. I can hardly wait to see it!



27th Annual CABA Children's Africana Book Awards

Dinner & Ceremony

Friday, March 27, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Interdisciplinary Research Building
Howard University
2201 Georgia Ave NW, Washington, DC

CABA awards are presented annually to the authors and illustrators of the best children's and young adult books on Africa published or republished in the U.S. to encourage the publication and use of accurate, balanced children's materials about Africa.

RSVP Required on Eventbrite:
caba27.eventbrite.com

CABABOOKS.ORG
Contact: (202) 250-7315

CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES
HOWARD UNIVERSITY

27th Annual CABA Children's Africana Book Awards

FESTIVAL

Saturday, March 28, 2020
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Smithsonian
National Museum of African Art
950 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560

Bring the family
meet the authors
and illustrators, art activities,
storytelling, face painting
and light refreshments!

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**

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The Smithsonian National Museum of African Art will host the 20th Annual Children's Africana Book Awards (CABA) Festival, established by Africa Access and the Outreach Council of the African Studies Association (ASA). The awards honor authors and illustrators who have produced exceptional books on Africa for young people.

Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

Africa Access

CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES
HOWARD UNIVERSITY

EXPANDING THE BLACK PANTHER'S WORLD THROUGH NOVELS

by *Abby Nolan*

At February's lecture, the Children's Book Guild heard a great discussion about the expanding world of Black Panther. Jabari Sellars, a humanities teacher at the Siena School, interviewed authors Jesse J. Holland and Ronald L. Smith about their Black Panther novels, which were published by Marvel Press just before the release of the blockbuster 2018 film.

A self-proclaimed "proud nerd," Sellars first gave an overview of T'Challa, the Black Panther, the superhero who was introduced in 1966, in issue #52 of Marvel Comics' Fantastic Four series. The first comic-book hero of African descent, Black Panther has inspired such well-known figures as Reginald Hudlin, Ta-Nehisi Coates and Roxane Gay to write Black Panther comic-book storylines. The movie, which earned more than \$1 billion at the box office, brought the fictional nation of Wakanda to an even wider world.

Before Jesse Holland started writing novels for young readers, he

worked for the Associated Press for 25 years and covered the White House, the Supreme Court and Congress. He had also written two nonfiction books for adults, *Black Men Built the Capitol* and *The Invisibles*. He told the Guild audience that when he finished *The Invisibles*, he promised his wife he wouldn't write another book for two years. But when he got a phone call a few months later from LucasFilms asking him to write a Star Wars book—*Finn's Story*—his wife agreed with LucasFilms that he should do it. *Star Wars*, after all, had been the first movie he had seen in a theater. When the offer to write *Who Is the Black Panther?* came in next, Holland couldn't turn that down either. A longtime comics fan, he told his editors they didn't need to send him background material; he had everything, including Reginald Hudlin's series, already.

Ronald L. Smith had written several middle-grade novels, including *Hoodoo* and *The Mesmerist*, before he received the call from his agent to write *Black Panther: The Young Prince*. He said he got his introduction to comic books and Black Panther by snooping on his cool older brother. Asked about the impact of the movie, Smith said he felt lucky and proud to be a part of the phenomenon since it has done so much to raise the profile of both black superheroes and African-American culture in general.

In writing about the early years of T'Challa, both authors took him out of his kingdom and gave him challenges he wouldn't otherwise have faced. Unlike the way LucasFilms handles its spin-off books, Marvel gave the authors freedom to create episodes that weren't already in T'Challa's backstory. Smith put the young prince on the South Side of Chicago, took away his many privileges and figured out alongside his hero what would happen. In the opening pages of *Who Is the Black Panther?*, Holland placed T'Challa on the National Mall in present-day Washington, D.C.

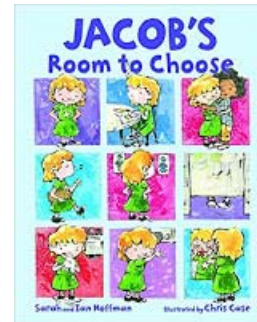
In their interactions with teachers, librarians and young readers, both authors have seen firsthand how much representation matters. And they have felt it themselves. "We didn't have that growing up," said Holland. "Now there are movies with main characters who look like me and my son and my daughter." He also said he is looking forward to an African-American female hero becoming the next big pop-culture phenomenon.

Smith quoted Neil Gaiman's description of fiction as "an empathy machine" and said, "Every child can see themselves in books now." As an avid reader of the *Lord of the Rings* and Narnia books, he said he had had to rid himself of the idea that fantasy fiction involved only blond guys with swords.

As for current and future projects, Smith's *Gloom Town* was published this month, and his next book, *Where the Black Flowers Bloom*, will come out next year. Holland is working on his third nonfiction book for adults: the story of Freedmen's Village, which was located where Arlington Cemetery stands today. And they have not left superheroes behind. Holland is working on a junior graphic novel about the Green

Lantern, John Stewart, and he is putting together a Black Panther anthology featuring essays by African-American writers. Smith contributed to Ellen Oh's recent anthology, *The Hero Next Door*. As that book suggests and these writers prove, not all heroes wear capes.

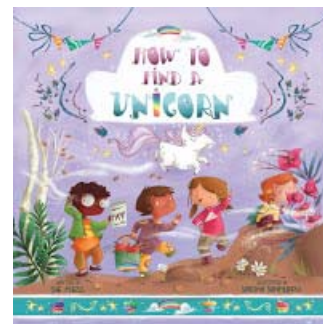
MEMBER NEWS



Jacob's Room to Choose, written by Sarah Hoffman and Ian Hoffman, illustrated by Chris Chase and published by MAGINATION PRESS, has been selected as a 2020 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People by the Children's Book Council and the National Council for the Social Studies.

Two works of fiction by BARBARA ANN PORTE, "Shanghai Affair" and *Modern Ise Stories, A Collection of Amorous Tales, with Commentary* (episodes 16-18, excerpted from a work in progress) appear in the current issue of *PRAXIS* (vol. 27, no.1/2, fall/winter 2019).

SUE FLIESS has two picture books launching in March:



How to Find a Unicorn (Sky Pony Press; illustrated by Simona Sanfilippo). Legend has it that the only way to discover a unicorn is to craft a beautiful gift that shows her you are a friend. If you're lucky, she may even take you for a ride. <https://www.suefliess.com/how-to-find-a-unicorn>



***Flash and Glean: Light in Our World* (Millbrook Press/Lerner; illustrated by Khoa Le). *Kirkus* calls this book “A ray of light, both illuminating and beautiful.” Rhyming text and luminous illustrations follow four children as they experience many different forms of light, from the soft glow of a candle to the blink of a firefly. <https://www.suefliess.com/flash-and-gleam-light-in-our-world>**



In December, global megastar Katy Perry selected Sue’s book *Mrs. Claus Takes the Reins* to read at a charity event for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Los Angeles. You can watch her here on Access Hollywood: <https://www.accessonline.com/videos/katy-perry-surprises-kids-with-day-of-sledding-heartwarming-christmas-stories>

JANE HARRINGTON has been awarded the 2019 Brighthorse Prize in the Novel for her manuscript *In Circling Flight*. Winners receive a cash award and publication by Brighthorse Books.



“Vantage Point: Paintings by SALLY DAVIES,” a solo exhibition at Maryland Hall in Annapolis, will be on display from February 20 through May 23. It can be viewed Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and when the Maryland Ballet, the Maryland Opera and others perform: www.marylandhall.org/exhibits/current-exhibits. An artist’s opening reception for “Vantage Point” will be held on Thursday, March 19, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Maryland Hall. It is free and open to the public.

This is a large exhibition of 50 paintings, and many feature the ballet. Inspired by Degas, Sally sat in on rehearsals of the Ballet Theatre to sketch the dancers onstage and behind the scenes. Her goal was to explore how shapes, pattern and color influence the perception of movement and time.



 Become a "Writers in Schools" Author with PEN/Faulkner
PEN/Faulkner's Writers in Schools program works with DC school students in grades 3-12 and is currently accepting applications from authors interested in joining its list. The organization is especially interested in

books for elementary grades and in books by or about Latinx/Hispanic writers and bilingual books/books in Spanish. Writers receive a modest honorarium for visits. More information on the program and how to submit a book for consideration can be found [on the website](#).

Volunteer with PEN/Faulkner

Read Up is PEN/Faulkner's volunteer program. Volunteers provide integral support to multiple facets of the organization, all of which are connected to books, writing and meaningful conversation. Volunteers help in many ways: serving as an author ambassador on school visits throughout the city; mentoring local public school students in writing, one on one or in small groups; or supporting the success of PEN/Faulkner's public reading series, Literary Conversations. More about specific opportunities is available [on the website](#).

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>.

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