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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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Wednesday, May 27, 2020

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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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June 2020

JUNE 18 DIGITAL MEETING ON ZOOM

The Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC, will hold its final meeting of the 2019-2020 year on Thursday, June 18, from 7 to 8:15 p.m. ET via Zoom.

We will use this community-building event to check in, share and learn from one another about how our work is going and what we think might change in the world of literature for young readers during the coming year. This meeting, like our April and May meetings, will be for Guild members only. We are exploring ways to open up future digital meeting programs to larger audiences.

Members will receive email notifications that include the Zoom meeting ID, password and information about featured speakers. No advance registration is necessary. Whether you live in the DC area or are an out-of-town member, we'd love to see you there!



("Zoom!" image is from clipart-library.com)

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**LETTER TO THE GUILD FROM INCOMING PRESIDENT
KAREN DEANS**

As the Children's Book Guild wraps up its 75th year in troubling and uncertain times, I want to thank you for helping to advance our mission to bring excellence and diversity to children's literature from our home in the nation's capital.

Despite the shock of the coronavirus pandemic, this has been a year of inspiration and growth, led by our friend and outgoing president, Jean Diehl. In tandem with the Guild committee leadership, Jean has skillfully navigated unexpected challenges while performing her duties as president and overseeing

special projects such as the fall workshop on race and equity training and the thoughtfully crafted mission statement that was approved at our May business meeting. In recent months, Jean and her team have adapted to the constraints of the pandemic to provide alternative programming in a way that has brought us to a new understanding of who we are, what we do and why we matter. As the Guild's incoming president, I'm both honored and excited to pick up the mantle from Jean.

I joined the Guild in 2015 and have come to value the professional connection and enrichment our organization provides, as well as the opportunity to support the work of other members. I especially appreciate the local nature of the Guild and its unique place in the national children's literary community. It's a special organization that does important work bringing literature to area children through book donations, author visits and other outreach to schools, libraries and community centers. And, by honoring writers of nonfiction whose bodies of work have made an impact in the vast world of children's literature, we both affirm and elevate the standards of excellence we aspire to attain and uphold.

I'm grateful to all of you who have signed on to be a part of the Guild leadership for the 2020-2021 year. You'll be hearing from me in the coming days, as we begin to plan for the year ahead. We know one thing for sure: it will be different from years past. The pandemic has required us to respond to limitations we'd never dreamed of before. It has asked us to think outside the box, even while Zoom screens visually box us in as we communicate from the isolation of our own homes. And yet, through these virtual meetings, we've been given the chance to connect with some of our Guild

members for the first time, an unexpected boon. I believe, if we work together and support one another, we'll come up with some new ways to make this organization and all we share even more meaningful and vital than ever.

Change makes us grow. It requires us to think creatively, and, if we're lucky, it also helps us see the world anew. I have always been inspired by the bigheartedness of the Guild membership, exemplified in the books we write and illustrate, and the organizations in which we work and invest our talents, time and skills. We all embrace and strive to serve the larger calling of caring for our children through stories and ideas and love. I look forward to seeing where all of that takes us this year.

Best wishes for a creatively rich summer,

Karen Deans

MEMBERS SHARE EXPERIENCES AND COPING STRATEGIES AS THE GUILD MEETS VIRTUALLY

by Abby Nolan and Rhoda Trooboff



On the evening of April 23, the Children's Book Guild held its first virtual meeting via Zoom. Approximately 75 members signed on, and eight members shared their experiences of working with children's books during the coronavirus pandemic.

Alison Morris, First Book's senior director for title selection, spoke about the challenges facing teachers and students due to closed schools and limited teacher-student contact. Stuck at home, many students lack school supplies or devices to connect to the Internet for distance learning. Because meals are no longer provided during the school day, nutritional needs are another pressing concern. First Book has launched a campaign to get eight million books to kids and has already sent almost two million books to distribution hubs such as emergency feeding sites and homeless shelters. First Book also facilitates free e-book access to kids in need and offers adult books to VA hospitals. See this recent *New York Times* article for more on First Book's work:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/neediest-cases/first-book-school-closed-coronavirus.html>.

Brenda Randolph, founder of Africa Access in 1989, spoke about her use of quarantine time to update and improve the online database and search features of *Africa Access Review* (<http://africaaccessreview.org>), which went online in 1995 and is designed for school librarians, teachers, parents and others interested in expanding American children's understanding of Africa through books. The database features reviews of books about Africa for K through 12 students, written by scholars who are attuned to errors, stereotypes and other inaccuracies. Brenda has been able to check about 2,000 citations and to work with teachers on resource lists for when schools are back in session.

Heidi Powell, a co-founder of An Open Book Foundation, said that its primary mission—providing visits by authors and illustrators and signed books to DC/MD/VA public schools—has been put on hold and retooled. Instead, Heidi and co-founder Dara La Porte are assembling resources for educators and students and taking books from their inventory into food and packet distribution centers for local students. Twelve thousand books have already been delivered. With approval from DC Public Schools principals, teachers and librarians, An Open Book Foundation's efforts focused on providing kids with books that are fun and diverting.

Kathie Meizner, currently the manager of Montgomery County Public Libraries' White Oak Library, said that even though the buildings are closed, staff members continue to provide programming during the pandemic. Children's staff offer live online story times, which get probably their largest audiences ever. The digital divide remains a major issue, but social distancing concerns and contagion mean that reopening physical libraries is not imminent. Meanwhile, she reported, there has been a big bump in use of online material, from Acorn TV and independent films to consumer research and language instruction. Kathie is seeking quick takes from local writers for the MCPL librarians' newsletter. Please contact [Kathie](#) and ask for your "not Proust questionnaire" to help her.

Cecilia Cackley, children's book buyer at East City Books, reported that she has added online purchasing to her job description to handle the shop's big surge in online orders from all over the country. The surge is a mixed blessing, because about a third of the usual staff is handling the workload, and supply-chain disruptions mean that books take longer than usual to channel from indie bookstores to customers. The bookstore's "stay-at-home packages," which include books as well as stationery, cards, stickers, games and other items, make quarantine more fun for customers and help with the store's bottom line, as non-book items are a more profitable source of revenue. Like other indie bookstores, East City is undertaking virtual events with authors and book clubs for younger readers and teens, who, she reports, are "just as opinionated as ever."

Debbie Levy was the first of three Guild authors to speak. She is not pressuring herself to use the pandemic as an opportunity to write. With a full house of hungry people, cooking dinner has become a major priority and distraction. Short form writing--poetry, especially limericks--has been ideal for her current "gnat-like" attention span, she said. With her son, a bookseller at Brooklyn's Greenlight Bookstore, she has done a video interview for middle graders for the store's "Authors Spill the Beans" series. She is also revamping her school-visit presentations, with the goal of inspiring joy and laughter in the hope of reaching the most distracted students during her online school visits as well as when live, in-person

events begin again.

Author **Mary Amato** addressed burnout when it was her turn to speak. When the lock down began, she was overwhelmed by requests for online resources related to her books and tried to meet every one. It has taken time to find her balance. Her two guiding principles are presence and meaning. While doing Zoom sessions with 15 schools in Michigan recently, she tried simply to be present in the moment. Unable to see children's faces during these Zoom meetings, she gets close to her computer, looks at the green light that is the computer's camera, and imagines making a connection with at least one person on the other end. She also suggests that we all choose projects that are personally meaningful and bring us joy. She has created the Poetry Post Challenge, inviting viewers to send in poems they've written; she reads one aloud each week. It helps her deal with missing the voices of kids. And giving herself permission to do creative work also helps rejuvenate her.

Author, Guild treasurer and Zoom guru **Terry Jennings** skillfully hosted the Zoom session and spoke about using this lock-down time as an opportunity to learn to make movies on her computer, incorporating slides, voice-over and videos. She said it took her a long while to do it but encouraged others to try to it. "Don't be afraid to edit, to make mistakes," she advised. She has made a movie about making a movie, which can be accessed on the Guild's website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rhd6jk2clo&feature=youtu.be>. Like Debbie, Terry has worked on revamping her school-visit presentations. She replaced a canceled in-person school visit with a virtual one and helped the teachers provide books and activities for students who lacked access to the Internet.

Karen Leggett encouraged members to send her updates that could be posted on Facebook and Twitter and to look for member resources on the Guild's website. Membership chair **Amy Hansen** welcomed our two newest members, **Joy Jones** and **Monica Valentine**, who were greeted with smiles and waves.

It was great to see so many Guild members, if only through screens. Please stay well!

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK GUILD ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, MAY 21, 2020

compiled by Rhoda Trooboff

On Thursday evening, May 21, 2020, the Guild held its annual business meeting digitally, via Zoom, because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Forty-three members participated, including several out-of-town members. The meeting was chaired by President Jean Heilprin Diehl.

Laura Melmed, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of officers for the 2020-2021 Executive Committee:

President: Karen Deans

Treasurer: Terry Jennings

Program Chairs: Barbara Gowan, Kathie Meizner, Maria Salvatore

Recording Secretaries: Caroline Hickey, Valerie Patterson

Membership Chairs: Winifred Conkling, Joyce Schwartz

Members-at-Large: Eileen Hanning, Rashin Kheiriyeh

Laura noted that efforts will continue to fill two Executive Committee positions (vice president/president elect and a third recording secretary), which are at present open.

The slate was approved by vote tally using the Zoom chat button.

Following discussion, three amendments to the bylaws were also passed by vote tallies using the Zoom chat button.

Amendment #1. To Revise and Post on the Guild's Website the Mission Statement of the Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC

To replace section two of the bylaws with the Mission Statement below, which would appear in the bylaws and in the Members Only section of the website, and would also be reprinted in the public area of the website.

"The mission of the Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC, is to:

- a) Provide opportunities for DC-Metro area professionals involved in a variety of disciplines in the field of children's literature—including authors, illustrators, librarians, literacy and literature specialists, publishers, editors, booksellers, scholars, non-profit organizations, and others—to gather throughout the year to share and exchange information, ideas, and experiences about the creative process, issues of publishing and promotion, writing trends, literacy, and to learn from visiting colleagues in the field.*
- b) Encourage and promote inclusivity, diversity, and equity in the field of children's literature.*
- c) Encourage and promote literacy for young readers in the DC Metro area, through member and organizational outreach, and through initiatives such as the CBG DC-Metro Youth Literacy Grants.*
- d) Encourage and promote high standards of literary quality in the field of children's literature.*
- e) Recognize quality children's literature on a national level by selecting and honoring a recipient for the Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award, given annually to a writer for the body of her, their, or his work, in the writing of nonfiction for young readers."*

Amendment #2. To Allow Application for Membership in the Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC, instead of Sponsorship of Prospective Members

Replace subsection A and the first sentence in subsection B in the current section of the bylaws regarding candidacy and sponsorship for membership with the following statement:

"A candidate interested in joining the Guild will fill out a form available through the website with her, his, or their qualifications."

Remove the words "by the sponsor" in subsection D in the current section of the bylaws regarding candidacy for membership.

The rest of the membership guidelines would remain unchanged at this time, and the Membership Committee would review each candidate's application before submitting it to the Executive Committee for a vote.

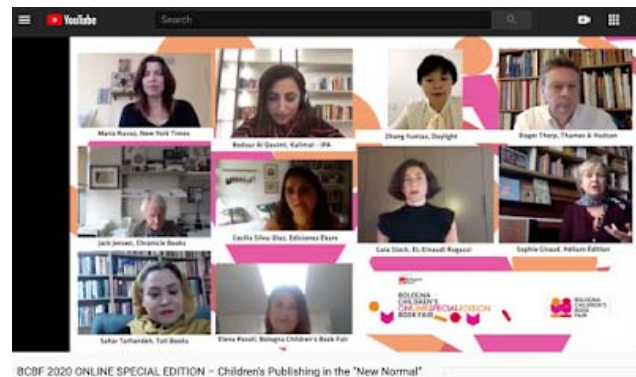
Amendment #3. To clarify language in the section of the bylaws regarding

meetings, to officially allow nonmembers to attend the program portion of the annual business meeting, and to account for digital meetings as follows:

“Guests are welcome at all in-person meetings except that portion of the annual business meeting devoted to the election of officers and other organizational matters. When the annual business meeting is held in-person at a public space, such as a public library, the program portion of the meeting shall be open to both guests and members of the public.”

BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR 2020: PUBLISHERS WORLDWIDE EXPRESS OPTIMISM

by Karen Leggett



In a typical year, 30,000 people—agents, publishers and a few select authors and illustrators—gather in Northern Italy for the Bologna Children’s Book Fair. This year, the fair took place online, and 60,000 attended virtually, three-quarters of them from outside Italy. There were portfolio reviews, awards, exhibitions and webinars, including an opening discussion of “Children’s Publishing in the ‘New Normal’—How Children’s Publishers are Adapting to a Post-Pandemic World.” This panel included publishers in the United States ([Chronicle](#)), France ([Hélium](#)), United Arab Emirates ([Kalimat](#)), United Kingdom ([Thames & Hudson](#)), Italy ([El-Einaudi Ragazzi](#)), Iran ([Tuti Books](#)), China ([Daylight](#)) and Spain ([Ediciones Ekare](#)). [Publishers Weekly](#) offered detailed articles and commentary, and many of the sessions are still available [online](#).

Every publisher talked about reductions in new titles, with greater selectivity but no less interest in actual printed books. Social media and online communication provide new spaces for book promotion but not a replacement for books themselves. In fact, Cecilia Silva-Diaz in Spain suggested the pandemic has brought “less noise and perhaps better conditions for reading.” Reading is the third most popular activity in Spain now, after talking on the phone and watching TV. Jack Jensen said Chronicle’s largest department is now customer service for online orders, with the “Amazon factor” (the belief that you can have everything tomorrow) complicating delivery constraints.

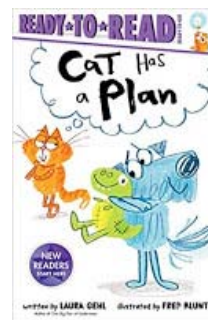
Bodour Al Qasimi, the founder of Kalimat Books in Sharjah, UAE, hopes this time of isolation gives authors an opportunity for self-reflection—and ultimately more creative stories. “Collaboration will be essential to curious and distinctive publishing,” suggested Jensen. “The pandemic will bring global children’s publishing closer together because kids have the same hopes and fears.” He expects to see books that help children deal with fear and hardship. “Every child needs to see beauty and goodness when the world is dark.” Roger Thorp at Thames & Hudson also expects books to be important in meeting children’s emotional needs. Sophia Geraud says Hélium asked the French government to consider books and bookstores essential services like food. Hélium expects to resume delivering its books to stores at the end of May; moving forward, Geraud will be looking for titles that “awaken children to the new world.”

“We are the custodians of children’s literature, and our values are changing,” added Al Qaisimi. “What’s important? Environment, friends, families...We need to help children understand what we need to look after and open more doors.”

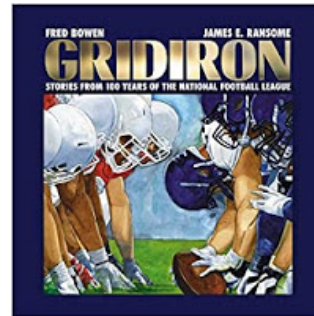
Sahar Tarhandeh in Iran also foresees “more books about humanity and values like freedom.” She noted that the US sanctions against Iran have added to Covid-19 challenges by causing shortages in printing supplies, as well as currency and banking problems. Postponement of the Tehran Book Fair is an economic catastrophe for the city, as it brings half a million visitors to the event over 10 days.

Despite the challenges, there was a general hopefulness about the future, emphasizing the possibilities for more thoughtful book selection and a desire to seek more “affirmative alternatives to the challenges” (Jack Jensen). As moderator Maria Russo, children’s book editor of the *New York Times*, noted, “amid tragedy there is new hope and sensibility.”

MEMBER NEWS



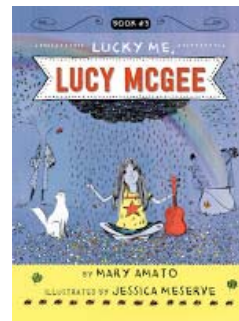
Four books by LAURA GEHL will be released this summer. *Cat Has a Plan* (Simon & Schuster) and *The Ninja Club Sleepover* (Page Street Kids) release July 21; *May Saves the Day* (Capstone) releases August 1; and *Judge Juliette* (Sterling) releases August 25.



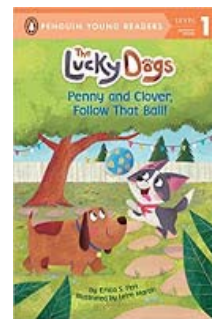
FRED BOWEN will have a new book published in July with Margaret McElderry Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. *Gridiron: Stories from 100 Years of the National Football League* is a history of the NFL for young readers, from the founding of the league in an automobile showroom in Akron, OH, through the current popularity of the sport and the annual Super Bowl, told in 20 chapters. Three-time Coretta Scott King honor recipient James Ransome is the illustrator. His more than 70 illustrations show readers how the game has changed in the last century. Fred comments, "This should be a fun book for anyone who enjoys football or sports history."



Sarah Bernhardt: The Divine and Dazzling Life of the World's First Superstar, by CATHERINE REEF, will be released on June 16. In a starred review, *Kirkus* called Catherine's newest young adult biography "a scintillating portrait of the stage legend."



Lucky Me, Lucy McGee, the third book in the Lucy McGee chapter-book series by MARY AMATO, is now out from Holiday House in hardcover, paperback and e-book; it received a starred review from *School Library Journal*. The series, about the emotional ups and downs of a fourth-grade songwriter, includes original songs. The fourth book is due out in the fall.

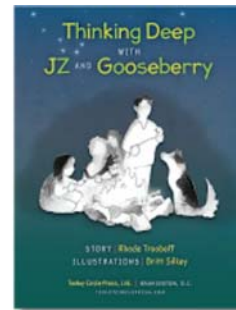


Three books by ERICA PERL will be out in June. Two are part of Erica's new early reader series, *The Lucky Dogs*, illustrated by Leire Martin. Penguin will release them on June 16. (This series is Level One, aimed at very early readers, so the word count is quite limited.) The books, titled *Penny and Clover, Up and Over!* and *Penny and Clover, Follow That Ball!*, are about two lovable rescue dogs, one old and dignified and the other young and exuberant. And, "yes," Erica writes, "they are based on my dogs, Penny and Clover."



The third new book is the seventh in Erica's chapter-book series, *Craftily Ever After* (written under the name Martha Maker and illustrated by Xindi Yan). It will be published by Simon & Schuster on June 2. Titled *Best Buds Forever*, it tells of four artsy friends who revitalize a community garden. *Best Buds Forever* is a PJ Library selection for the fall.

Erica adds: "Hope everyone is hanging in there, staying safe and channeling their creative energy in good ways."



Tenley Circle Press is happy to announce the publication in early May of *Thinking Deep with JZ and Gooseberry*, story by Guild member RHODA TROOBOFF and illustrations by Frostburg watercolor artist Britt Silkey. In this chapter book for middle-grade readers, a pair of sensitive, brainy pets observe every move, word and thought of two curious human cousins during a week of summer vacation on the shore of a beautiful lake. <https://www.tenleycirclepress.com/>.

Also in early May, inspired by ideas shared during the Guild's April 23 Zoom meeting by Alison Morris of First Book, An Open Book Foundation's Heidi Powell and Guild President Jean Diehl, Tenley Circle Press shipped a substantial number of new copies of its books to the [Garrett County \(MD\) Public Schools Food & Nutrition Service](#). In addition to providing healthy meals and snacks to hungry children and their families, the Food & Nutrition Team will give these books to young readers at food distribution sites around the county. Just as good food is essential to health and well-being, so too are books. Reading nourishes the mind and spirit!

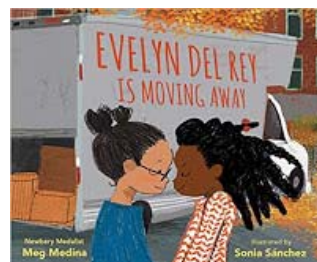
MAGINATION PRESS is releasing two free, downloadable PDF books designed to help children cope with the stress and anxiety brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic and offer practical strategies to help them manage their feelings and become resilient. Written by psychologists who work with children, both books include notes with more information to help kids and their parents.

A Kid's Guide to Coronavirus, by Rebecca Grove and Julia Martin Burch, is written for children ages 3 to 8. This book answers their questions about the coronavirus pandemic and all the changes in their lives. It explains what the virus is, how it spreads and what they can do to help in gentle and simple language that even the youngest kids can follow.

Download the book: www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/apa/kids_guide_coronavirus/

Unstuck! 10 Things to Do to Stay Safe and Sane During the Pandemic, by Bonnie Zucker, is a workbook for tweens and teens. This book helps them express feelings resulting from uncertainty and change and may alleviate some stress. It includes journal prompts and activities to help them manage stress and anxiety, express emotions and cultivate creativity and gratitude.

Download the book: https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/apa/unstuck_2020/



Candlewick Press will release MEG MEDINA's picture book *Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away* in September. The national early educational organization Jumpstart, in partnership with Candlewick, has chosen Meg's book for this year's Read for the Record Program. This worldwide initiative encourages adults to read aloud to children in their communities.

REAL-LIFE COLLAGE: A WHOLE STORY MADE OF TRUE SNIPPETS

by Marlis Kraft and Susan L. Roth



Susan: I am sitting at our kitchen table, staring at the woodcut print on the wall: a young girl holding a bouquet, standing in the flower market in Nice. The colors are pale greens, grays and yellows; the lines are deliberate but gentle. At the bottom is the artist's signature: Keller, 1997. Beside it, in the same light pencil, in the same fine European script, are the words "für Susan Roth, herzlich Sylvia und Heinz Keller."

The story behind the print began more than 30 years ago, when my husband, Jesse, and I were in a huge, paralyzing snowstorm in Venice. We

were about to go home, but it had snowed so hard that the planes were grounded. The only way to get to Zurich even for our postponed transatlantic flight was by train.

After a beautiful, snowy ride through the Alps, we arrived earlier than expected. "You know that Matisse on the wall above the washing machine?" asked Jesse, right after we had checked in. "The *what?*?" I responded, waiting for a joke. "No, really!" Jesse said, and he reminded me of an out-of-date calendar with a Matisse picture of three brilliant goldfish swimming in a bowl of bright blue water. It had been hanging in our basement for so long that I no longer noticed it. "That picture is near here!" Jesse said. "Let's take the train to Winterthur! We have time. I remember that it's in the Oskar Reinhart Collection there!"

And so we did. A taxi brought us to our goldfish and to a wealth of other treasures, all elegantly displayed.

Sometime after this, my mother and I scheduled a trip to Italy. I suggested flying in through Zurich so that she too could see the Oskar Reinhart Collection.

After our museum visit, we walked through the center of town. We saw a small frame shop, its windows full of exquisite woodcut prints. As an illustrator of books for children, I work exclusively in collage, but I used to be a printmaker. We inquired in the shop and learned that the prints were the work of Heinz Keller, a well-known artist from Winterthur. In fact, there was an exhibition of his work at a nearby gallery. It was closed when we got there, but I stood on a bench outside, peering into the high window. The prints were glorious.

Once home, I called the Swiss embassy, hoping to contact Keller directly. It was amazingly possible, back in the day. I exchanged letters (!) with his wife, Sylvia Keller, and on a subsequent trip my mother and I returned to Winterthur to meet the Kellers at their home and studio.

It was a beautiful visit. We saw a great many of Heinz's exquisite prints. We watched him work at his desk carving wood, with chips flying all over the place. Sylvia had made a delicious celebratory "jellyroll cake." Miraculously, it was similar to my mother's signature cake, which she had baked for family birthdays for as long as I could remember. All of us were charmed by this. My mother and I didn't speak German, but Sylvia's English was perfect. Even though Heinz spoke only German, through Sylvia's translations we enjoyed amazing communication.



Sylvia Keller sits in Heinz's studio, among his woodcuts. Note the carved woodblock on the floor, behind her.

The Kellers, my mother and I enjoyed a genuine sympathetic understanding. My father was a graphic designer, and my mother had represented him professionally. His studio was part of our house. My mother and I felt at home even with the interior design of the Keller home and studio. It was modern and simple, beautiful and functional (like the house in which I grew up), and it was clearly occupied by a husband-and-wife team who had lived and worked in harmony for years. After this unforgettable visit and magical bonding, we stayed in touch with letters and Christmas presents.

Totally unrelated, I received an email sometime in 2019, from an unknown woman, Marlis Kraft, asking if I ever conducted collage workshops.

Marlis: Last February I enrolled in a collage class offered at the Woodmere Museum in Philadelphia. I was excited! I loved the approach of painting our own papers to our own specifications, playing with our compositions till they were right and bringing my first piece to completion...

Looking to expand my horizon I scoured my children's books for collage illustrators and realized that two of my favorites were written and illustrated by the same artist: Susan L. Roth.

I looked her up on the Internet, and as it sounded like she might give workshops, I emailed her. A swift, friendly email followed: No, no workshops, just occasional school visits, but please send a picture of one of my collages! And she mentioned three artists I might look to for inspiration: Romare Bearden, Henri Matisse and Joseph Cornell.

Several emails followed. I heard about her upcoming book *Birds of a Feather*, which I pre-ordered...it is full of playful comparisons between Susan as a collage artist and the Australian bowerbird constructing its bower, both trying to impress their varied audiences...It seemed appropriate to pick up the email correspondence and express my delight.



A collage by Marlis Kraft.

Susan: Marlis attached photographs of her (very beautiful!) collages. She told me that she was a semi-retired musician and teacher. She was also, clearly, a talented collage artist. We discussed meeting when she next came to New York. She wanted to see my studio. It would have to be sometime in the fall, she said, because she was on her way to Switzerland for a vacation.

Late that night I was sitting alone, answering emails at the kitchen table. I looked up for a minute and saw the Keller woodcut facing me.

Marlis: I couldn't believe Susan's next email. A lovely picture that looked familiar and a long paragraph full of her adventures in Switzerland, in galleries and museums, culminating in meeting Heinz Keller and his wife and becoming good friends. Susan closed: "...if you are anywhere near Winterthur I hope you will check out Heinz Keller!!! bon voyage! (gute reise?) Have FUN!"

"I was born in Winterthur!" I wrote right back. "That's exactly where I am going! My family is still there! My father knew Heinz Keller! I have a print of his on my wall, too, here in Philadelphia! I think we need to TALK!" We talked that night.

The next day, Susan Fedexed books for me to bring as presents for the Kellers, both of us hoping and presuming that I would have the opportunity

to deliver them.

Susan: Two days later I received this email from Marlis in Winterthur:

I had such a warm welcome, lots of smiles and Heinz was at ease even though he is bedridden right now. He doesn't like being in the hospital bed much but they set it up in their living room and so he is surrounded by art and shelves of books and big windows though they were shaded and closed due to the afternoon sun and the hot weather.

I translated Birds of a Feather for Heinz--he just loved it! He spent his time looking at length at every page, noticing things. I left Birds of a Feather and Parrots over Puerto Rico with them and Sylvia showed me one of your early books--about a granddaughter organizing a parade for her grandfather! They both very well remembered Susan and her mother...Two very special hours I spent with them and felt that I made new friends...



The Kellers look at Susan's book
Birds of a Feather.

Marlis sent photos of the Kellers that she took that day. Even though Heinz was in bed, he looked quite the same as I remembered, as did Sylvia. What an amazing reconnection!

Marlis: As I tell this story again and again to friends on two continents, I am deeply touched. Friendships forged by a shared love for art, kindred spirits forming bonds across an ocean, languages and cultures. I could feel that something powerful happened there many years ago. I, a stranger, stood in its warmth, which was rekindled by the mere mention of names and memories. I know my visit brought the Kellers deep joy,

closing a circle through the most unlikely happenstances and connecting all our lives.

Susan: Meanwhile, in my kitchen, a young, pretty girl continues to look out at me from the flower market in Nice, in pale grays, greens and yellows.

WHEN YOU TWEET, KEEP THE GUILD IN MIND!

Deborah Kalb has been running the Guild's Twitter feed. She would appreciate it if members on Twitter would include the Guild's Twitter handle (@BOOKGUILDDC) in any book-related tweets they'd like the Guild to retweet. Thanks so much!

Virtual Programs at Politics and Prose

During the pandemic, Politics and Prose continues to host free book events for children and adults—virtually. These can be viewed in real time or after, as recordings. You can view P&P's events calendar and register for events

(advance registration required, to receive link) at <https://www.politics-prose.com/events>

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