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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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Wednesday, March 23, 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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April 2016

TONYA BOLDEN, WINNER OF THE GUILD'S 2016 NONFICTION AWARD



The Children's Book Guild will present its annual Nonfiction Award to Tonya Bolden on Saturday April 9. The award recognizes a body of work that has "contributed significantly to the quality of nonfiction for children."

Bolden has created works of nonfiction that appeal to children and young adults both in her subjects and in her accessible writing style. Bolden has written 27 books,

many of which present the African American experience. Her subjects include the Emancipation Proclamation, Muhammad Ali and W. E. B. DuBois, as well as little-known African-Americans of note, as in *Searching for Sarah Rector* and *Maritcha: A Nineteenth-Century American Girl*. "What serendipity that her latest book is set in our own backyard," said committee chair Joan Kindig about *Capital Days: Michael Shiner's Journal and the Growth of Our Nation's Capital*. "It was meant to be!"

Date: Saturday, April 9, 2016

Time: noon to 3 p.m.

Place: Clyde's Restaurant of Gallery Place, 707 Seventh St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Tickets: \$35 (\$36 when paid online)

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**YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE APRIL 9 EVENT, PLEASE
CONSIDER PURCHASING A TICKET FOR A TEACHER,
LIBRARIAN OR FRIEND.**

IN THIS ISSUE:

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**GUILD MEMBERS: PLEASE BRING YOUR BOOKS TO
THE APRIL 25 NONFICTION AWARD LUNCHEON!**

There will be a table at the Nonfiction Award luncheon where Guild members' books will be displayed. Please bring your books (no more than two per member, please) the day of the luncheon and place them on the table when you arrive. (Remember to take them home when you leave.) This is a wonderful opportunity to publicize your work!

MEMBER NOMINATION: DEBORAH BODIN COHEN

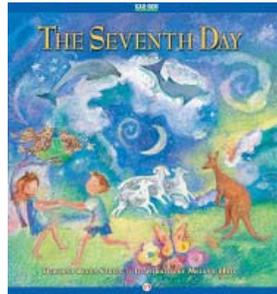
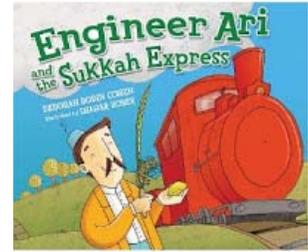


Catherine Reef nominates author Deborah Bodin Cohen for membership in the Children's Book Guild. Susan Kusel seconds the nomination.

Deborah Bodin Cohen grew up in Columbia, Md., and attended the University of Michigan, graduating from the Honors English program in 1990. After working in Washington, D.C., for various public-interest groups, Debbie studied at Hebrew Union College and was ordained as a rabbi in 1997. She has served congregations in North Carolina, New Jersey and Maryland as both a pulpit rabbi and an educator.

Debbie is the author of seven children's books and a teen novel, with an eighth picture book in production. Her books include the four-book *Engineer Ari* series, about the first train line between Jaffa and Jerusalem, in 1892. Published by Kar-Ben/Lerner, the *Engineer Ari* series has received Sydney Taylor Honor Book designations and was selected for the Grinspoon Foundation's PJ Library. Debbie is the author as well of

Nachshon, Who Was Afraid to Swim, a finalist for a National Jewish Book Award, a Sydney Taylor Honor Book and a PJ library selection. *Nachshon* has been translated into Spanish and Russian. Her children's books also include *Papa Jethro* and the *Seventh Day*.

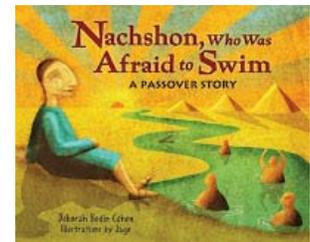


Debbie's teen novel, *Lilith's Ark*, explores the lives of 10 women in Genesis as adolescent girls. Published by the Jewish Publications Society, it received a National Jewish Book Award for Family Literature.

Debbie is director of congregational learning at Congregation Har Shalom in Potomac. But after this school year, she will be leaving this position. She and a friend are planning to open a bookstore for children and teens called the Story House

and an affiliated nonprofit literary center called the Writer's Den.

The Story House and Writer's Den will be located in Montgomery County, Md., in Rockville or one of the surrounding towns. In addition to a great selection of books, the Story House and Writer's Den will offer creative writing classes, camps, author visits, tot story programs and birthday parties. Currently, Debbie and her friend are focusing on creating this hybrid legal entity and raising the funds to make it a reality.



Debbie and her husband, David, are joyfully raising three children: Arianna, Jesse and Ezra.

LUNCHEON SPEAKERS' BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT BUSBOYS & POETS

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.

COMMUNITY-WIDE BOOK FAIR TO BENEFIT CHILDREN IN NEED

Everybody Wins! DC, a literacy and mentoring organization in the Washington metropolitan area, invites area authors to read and sell their books at a local Barnes & Noble on Saturday, May 14. In partnership with Barnes & Noble and the Redskins Charitable Foundation, the

community-wide book fair will host Redskin celebrities as well as children's book authors at various Barnes & Noble stores in the D.C. metro area. A percentage of all purchases on the day of the event will go toward providing books to children in need. Guests will be encouraged to purchase a book for themselves as well as one for a student in need. If you are interested in participating, please email Anne Owl at aowl@everybodywinsdc.org for details.

CECE BELL MINED HER CHILDHOOD TO FORGE SOMETHING TRUE

by Catherine Reef

At the March 17 meeting of the Children's Book Guild, Cece Bell began discussing her award-winning 2014 book *El Deafo* by promising to reveal how, in its pages, she made her childhood more interesting than it was. This was a light, humorous way of saying that she was about to offer insight into the creation of her graphic memoir.

Bell's career as an author and illustrator for children was launched in 2003, with the release of *Sock Monkey Goes to Hollywood*. As other books followed, Bell approached—indirectly—a significant occurrence in her childhood: the loss of more than 90 percent of her hearing from meningitis at age four. *Bee-Wigged* (2008) was the first book, she said, that touched on how she felt as a child. Its main character is a giant bee who feels uncomfortably different, as she did in childhood, until he finds a wig that he believes makes him look like a human boy. *Rabbit and Robot* (2012) was “unconsciously autobiographical,” Bell said. The out-of-control rabbit in this story gets help from his technological friend just as young Cece benefited from technology in the form of a hearing aid.

An encounter with an insensitive supermarket clerk in adulthood turned out to be a defining moment for Bell, impelling her to acknowledge her deafness publicly for the first time. She started a blog about “the likes and dislikes of a deaf person,” she said. Among the blog's readers was Guild member Madelyn Rosenberg. Rosenberg saw potential in Bell's posts and encouraged her to shape the material into a book. So Bell shut down the blog and wrote an outline and sample chapter, which were enough to persuade Abrams to buy the book. “Madelyn is why I am here today,” Bell said.

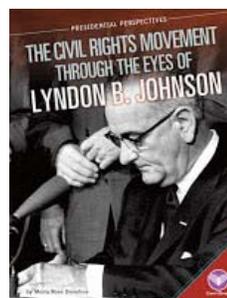
The result was *El Deafo*, which recounts the ups and downs of Bell's years as the lone deaf child in her elementary school. Being the only child who needed to wear a Phonic Ear®, a big, awkward hearing aid strapped to the front of her body, made the naturally timid Cece uncomfortably self-conscious. Her teacher wore a microphone that transmitted her voice directly into Cece's ear, and Cece soon discovered that the microphone went with the teacher everywhere in the school. With that realization a secret superhero was born. Just as Bruce Wayne donned a suit and transformed into Batman, Bell put on her Phonic Ear and became *El Deafo*, the girl who could hear her teacher in the bathroom.

The comic-book style that Bell chose for her story allowed her to show graphically what the young Cece experienced. Words in the speech balloons grow paler as Cece's hearing fades, for example. When the balloons are blank, readers see that Cece hears nothing of what is being said. Cece's need to observe everything around her in order to understand what is going on—so well conveyed in illustrations—might have been lost to readers of descriptive prose, Bell believed.

Bell drew her characters as rabbits for reasons symbolic and practical. “Rabbit” Cece has large, beautiful ears that look like everyone else’s, but hers don’t work. And placing her ears above her head enabled Bell to show Cece’s hearing aids in place.

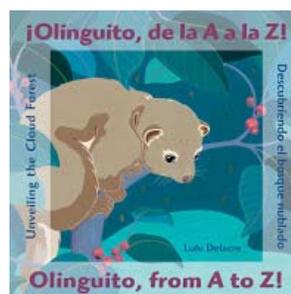
Memoir writing, Bell said, amounts to “smooshing around the real stuff into something interesting.” To create a compelling narrative she altered the actual timeline of events and invented composite characters. She left out parts of her story, such as going to speech therapy and lying to classmates when they asked about the bulge caused by the Phonic Ear hidden beneath her clothes. (“I’m pregnant” seemed like a plausible explanation at age eight.) Bell counseled anyone writing a memoir not to worry about capturing every detail. “You’re looking for the truth with a capital T,” she said.

MEMBER NEWS



MOIRA ROSE DONOHUE announces the spring release of her latest book, *The Civil Rights Movement through the Eyes of Lyndon B. Johnson*. The book is one in a series called *Presidential Perspectives* from ABDO Publishing.

BARBARA BROOKS WALLACE’s memoir, *Small Footsteps in the Land of the Dragon: Growing Up in China* (which may be the only one of its kind ever written through the eyes of an American kid who grew up in China) is soon coming from a lovely (says Bobbie) new publisher with a smashing and amazing new cover. When it’s finally out, Bobbie says, she will be sharing the cover with us to see if we don’t agree with her!



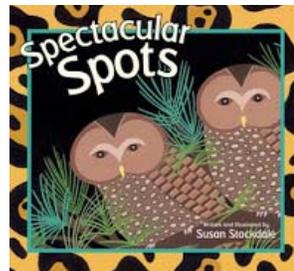
LULU DELACRE’s *Olinguito* continues to receive a warm reception, with a glowing review from *School Library Journal* by Elizabeth Bird. Lulu will be introducing *Olinguito* at three events this spring: **Politics & Prose at Busboys & Poets (March 23, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.)**, **Politics & Prose**

at **Takoma Park Library** (April 24, 3 to 5 p.m.) and **Politics & Prose Bookstore** (May 10, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.). She invites all Guild members to attend.

Lulu is also thrilled by how the window display she designed for Politics and Prose Bookstore turned out. Says Lulu, "It was a dream of mine to one day create a window display—maybe influenced by Sendak's beginnings at FAO Schwarz? Of course it features the olinguito habitat."



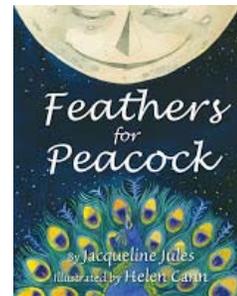
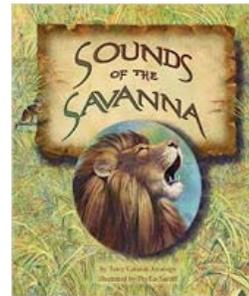
TERRY JENNINGS will be presenting a workshop on using creative nonfiction in the classroom at the National Science Teachers Association National Conference in Nashville on March 31. Terry will be at the Annapolis Book Festival on April 16, and she will speak at the Fauquier County Title I Literacy Night on April 25.



SUSAN STOCKDALE reports that *Spectacular Spots* was named a 2015 Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader Award Honor Book in the Beginning Nonfiction category. She looks forward to presenting programs at the Annapolis Book Festival in Annapolis, Md., on April 16; the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum in Winchester, Va., on April 21; and Gala Artisans Jewelry and Gifts in conjunction with the Kensington Day of the Book Festival in Kensington, Md., on April 24.



***Sofia Martinez: My Family Adventure*, by JACQUELINE JULES, and *Sounds of the Savannah*, by TERRY CATASUS JENNINGS, were named to the 2016 Bank Street College Best Books of the Year list.**



JACQUELINE JULES is excited to announce the publication of *Feathers for Peacock* by Wisdom Tales Press. How did Peacock end up with such a beautiful array of tail feathers? Was it magic or a community effort? *Feathers for Peacock* is an original just-so story blending bird myths from around the world. *Kirkus Reviews* called it "a charming tale of generosity." To see the book trailer created by Jacqueline's talented husband, Alan, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOcWPxXIFB8>.

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>. April's speakers include Kwame Alexander, Henry Cole and Lulu Delacre.

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