

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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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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Monday, December 26, 2011

January 2012 News

UNEARTHING HISTORY'S SECRETS THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



At the Guild's January meeting, *New York Times* best-selling author Ruta Sepetys will explain why she chose fiction as the platform for *Between Shades of Gray*, her gripping novel about a Lithuanian family deported to Siberia in 1941. Sepetys will speak as well about her research, the writing and sales processes, and her current work with teachers and librarians throughout the world to build curriculum around the crimes of communism.

The daughter of a Lithuanian refugee, Sepetys has given voice through her work to the hundreds of thousands of people who lost their lives under Stalin's terror. Lithuania, along with Latvia and Estonia, disappeared from maps in 1941 and did not reappear until 1990.

Between Shades of Gray has been published in 29 countries and in 25 languages. Sepetys is a Carnegie Medal nominee, a William C. Morris Award finalist and the first American author to win the *RTL-Lire*, the prestigious French literary

prize awarded for the best novel for young people. Sepetys, who was born and raised in Michigan, lives with her family in Tennessee.

Date: Thursday, January 19

Time: 11:15–Social Hour; Noon–Luncheon

Place: [Pier 7 Restaurant at the Channel Inn](#)

650 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC

Menu: All choices \$25.00

Regular: Corvina with Shrimp and Scallops

Alternate: Chef's Salad (Greens, Turkey, Ham, Cheese, Egg, Tomato)

Vegetarian: Eggplant and Tomato Parmesan with Penne Pasta

Dessert: Chocolate Eclair

Special Order: Steamed or Grilled Veggies; Fresh Fruit Plate for Dessert

[RSVP NOW!](#)

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Member News

MEMBER NOMINATION: TRISH BROWN

Sheilah Egan has nominated Trish Brown for membership in the Children's Book Guild of Washington, D.C., and Mary Quattlebaum seconds the nomination. Trish has been a co-owner of Hooray for Books! children's bookstore in Alexandria, Va., for the past three years. She also worked at A Likely Story children's bookstore for 16 years, until it closed in 2007. During the past year, as a member of the American Booksellers Association, she has served on the E. B. White Read-Aloud Nominating Committee and the ABA/ABC New Voices Committee. As a member of the New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association, she was a member of the Children's Programming Committee, which brought speed dating with authors to the NAIBA Fall Conference this year.

Hooray for Books! has involved itself in the Alexandria community by working with local organizations, schools and businesses to promote literacy. Its most ambitious project has been the Alexandria Story Festival, which celebrated its second year in September 2011 with the attendance of several Guild members.

Trish has attended a number of Guild luncheons over the years and has found the programs and the company entertaining and informative. She writes: "Membership in the Guild would definitely help me to do my job and, I hope, would bring a new viewpoint to the Guild. Many of the projects that Hooray for Books! supports bring me into direct contact with a wide range of publishers and authors in a variety of settings. I would like to help promote and support the Guild in a wider arena and with the experience I have garnered in the children's book industry over the past 20 years."



PAUL O. ZELINSKY'S FASCINATING COMPULSION by Fred Bowen

On December 8, award-winning author and illustrator Paul O. Zelinsky tore back the curtain and gave the members of the Children's Book Guild a rare and fascinating glimpse into how his books are made.

Growing up in Illinois, Zelinsky drew compulsively and knew he would go on to do something in art. Sure enough, he went to Yale University to study painting. While

there, he thought he would follow the same path as most of his fellow art majors—get a master's degree, and maybe a Ph.D., and go into teaching.

But like the classical pianist who slips away from the conservatory to taste the forbidden treats of jazz and rock and roll, Zelinsky began to dabble in book illustration. He may have been inspired by one of his teachers at Yale—the great illustrator and children's author Maurice Sendak. In any event, a new career path was blazed.

Since 1978, Zelinsky has worked on lots of different books. He admitted to working slowly, because of what he described as an obsessive personality with more than a hint of perfectionism. His wife, Deborah Hallen, who accompanied him to the December luncheon, laughed knowingly.

To make the point about his personality, Zelinsky told stories of his experiments in various art techniques, including pop-up books, and recounted his hilarious quest for just the right wood-veneer background for the illustrations in the book *Swamp Angel*.

Zelinsky's insistence on the absolutely correct color or technique or detail has paid off. He won the 1998 Caldecott Medal for his retelling of the Rapunzel story. He has also earned three Caldecott Honors, for *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Swamp Angel*, as well as countless other awards. The *Wall Street Journal* named his latest book, *Toys Come Home* (written by Emily Jenkins), one of the best books of 2011.

But perhaps Guild member Joyce Schwartz gave the truest description of Zelinsky's work when she said that he makes books that are "fun to look at."

THE GUILD HONORS KAREN LEGGETT

by Catherine Reef

Godmothers—fairy and otherwise—appear so often in children's stories that it seems only right for the Children's Book Guild to have one. At the December 8 meeting, Laura Krauss Melmed and Mary Quattlebaum honored Karen Leggett with the Godmother of the Children's Book Guild Award, recognizing her "gracious help and many kindnesses." Indeed, Karen is always willing to take on tasks for the Guild without any thought of recognition, and incoming Guild presidents soon discover that she is quietly watching over them, ready to offer gentle guidance.

Susan Stockdale and Jennifer O'Connell then stepped forward to present Karen with a book they assembled from the many notes, drawings, paintings and e-mails submitted by her Guild colleagues. The book expressed the Guild's "deep love and appreciation," Susan said. Accepting the double tribute, Karen joked, "This is what happens when you retire or leave!"



Jennifer O'Connell and Susan Stockdale assembled the book of tributes.

With a background in journalism, Karen Leggett became part of the children's literature community by reviewing books and interviewing authors while hosting a local news magazine on WMAL radio in the 1980s and 1990s. An interview with *New*

York Times children's book editor Eden Ross Lipsen led to reviewing opportunities with the *Times* and later with the *Baltimore Sun*, the *RadioZone*, *Washington Parent* and Marilyn Courtot's Children's Literature website.

Karen joined the Guild in 1994, when Roxane Chadwick was president, and was immediately asked to chair the next November luncheon. Thinking this was just another monthly luncheon, Karen said yes. She quickly discovered, however, that the November luncheon was the big one, honoring the recipient of the Guild's Nonfiction Award. But, "there was no turning back," Karen said, and with help from Joan Carris, she organized one of the last award luncheons held at the Omni Shoreham. Karen served as Guild president in 2001-2002, and has since worked to publicize the Guild's activities through the website and social media. She has also initiated events such as children's writing workshops held jointly with the Smithsonian, family Sundays with Guild authors at the National Museum of Women in the Arts and a children's literature collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden.

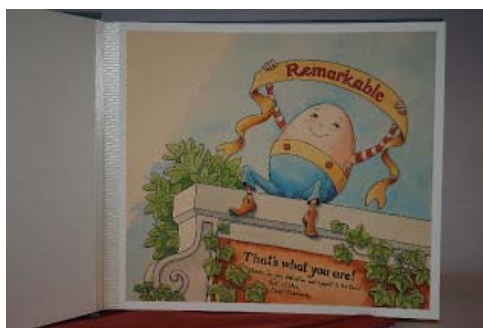
In 2012 Karen will join the ranks of published authors with the release of *Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt's Treasured Books*. This picture book, illustrated by Guild member Susan L. Roth, tells the inspiring true story of young Egyptians saving their beloved library from looting during the unrest of early 2011.

Reflecting on the past 17 years, Karen said, "The Guild is a rich and vital part of my life because of its important mission and the marvelous friendships I have made, but also because it has provided such deeply nurturing experiences for my daughter, Nadia, as she grew up." Nadia Abouraya attended the December meeting to see her mother honored.



Karen Leggett happily displays her award and tribute book.

The idea for this tribute was born at a Guild meeting, as so many good ideas are. Mary Quattlebaum and Laura Melmed were sitting together when Karen's name was mentioned in the announcements. "She had done yet another wonderful thing to help the Guild," Mary recalled. "Laura and I just looked at one another and said, 'Wouldn't it be great to publicly thank Karen in some way?'" Susan and Jennifer then offered to gather everyone's pieces and assemble the book that Susan called "a huge hug."



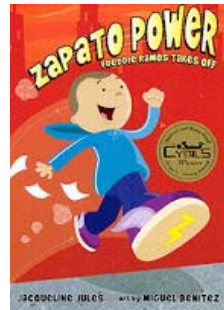
Carol Schwartz contributed this illustration to the tribute book.



Susan Roth created a collage to honor her friend and collaborator.

MEMBER NEWS

ALISON HART participated in the Kentucky Book Fair, which was held in Frankfort on November 11 and 12. The fair raises money through book sales in support of Kentucky schools and public libraries. A Children's Day, the fair's first, was a huge success, with thousands of kids attending talks and signings and more than 35 YA and children's authors taking part. Students arrived by the busload, which was a great way to give all children a chance to rub elbows with real authors. YA author Loretta Ellsworth, Alison's tablemate, had the promotional sense to submit a photo to PW Daily. Click here to see it: [PW In Brief](#).



JACQUELINE JULES is delighted to share that *Zapato Power: Freddie Ramos Takes Off* was named on the newly revised ALSC Great Elementary Reads list: [ALSC Great Reads](#).

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