

Local Authors & Illustrators Showcase

Saturday, September 26, 2015, 11 AM - 4 PM

in the 2nd Floor Community Room

at Middletown Thrall Library

Meet the Authors / Illustrators...

Wes and Barbara Gottlock

Wes and Barbara Gottlock are former educators who have devoted much of their retirement to researching, writing and lecturing about Hudson Valley and New York City history. They have published five books and are frequent speakers in the region. Additionally they are active volunteers on Bannerman Island, Wes is the head tour guide and the coordinator of tours, Barbara is also a docent and the coordinator of volunteers.



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Renee Pearce and Kaylin Ruffino



Kaylin & Jackson
2011

Renee Pearce (author) and Kaylin Ruffino (illustrator) are sisters who grew up in Monroe, New York. Renee currently resides in Highland Mills, NY, with her husband, son Lincoln, 3, and baby girl, Andie who was born in April. She is a teacher for Gifted and Talented in the Monroe-Woodbury School District. Kaylin lives in Pine Bush, NY, with her husband and daughter Rylee, 1. She teaches middle school art in Minisink Valley. Renee



Renee & Auggie
2011

and Kaylin wrote *Jackson and Auggie: Adventure in the Hudson Valley* to be used as a teaching tool in addition to entertainment. The story content and the illustrations can easily be used as a springboard for learning opportunities. Children can learn the history of the Hudson Valley as well as different artists and art movements. The sisters and teacher created a book that combines their individual talents, knowledge and love of teaching. They are both by loving and supportive parents and families, and the beautiful, historically filled region of the country where they've grown up and lived all their lives.

Marc Fried



Marc B. Fried is the author of five earlier books on Shawangunk region history and natural history. His small farm is 10 miles south of New Paltz, and the squatter's cabin he built high in the Shawangunk Mountain pine barrens is entering upon its 50th year. For the past 9 years, Fried has been a columnist for the *Shawangunk Journal*, a regional weekly print newspaper. His new work selects the best of these columns into a 339-page book that bears the column's title: *Notes from the Other Side*. Fried has

worked as a hired hand on a local dairy farm, and for 14 years during the 1960s and '70s earned his living as a professional musician. He has logged over 100,000 miles hitchhiking around the country, and his travels abroad have taken him from polar Greenland to Egypt, Turkey and the Greek island of Crete, among other places. His columns, and his new book, reflect these diverse experiences and human interactions. He writes not only with a sense of adventure, but with great humor and whimsy and a deep appreciation for the poignant, the ironic and the absurd.

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Marianne Sciucco

Marianne Sciucco is not a nurse who writes but a writer who happens to be a nurse. A lover of words and books, she dreamed of becoming an author when she grew up, but became a nurse to avoid poverty. She later brought her two passions together and writes about the intricate lives of people struggling with health and family issues. Her debut novel, *Blue Hydrangeas*, an Alzheimer's love story, is a Kindle bestseller, IndieReader Approved, a BookWorks featured book, a Library Journal SELF-e Selection, and winner of IndieReCon's Best Indie Novel Award, 2014. Her next novel, *Swim Season*, is about a girls' high school varsity swim team, to be published this year. A native Bostonian, she lives in Middletown, and when not writing works as a campus nurse at SUNY Orange. She loves, books, beaches, and craft beer, and especially enjoys the three of them together. Follow her Adventures in Publishing at MarianneSciucco.blogspot.com.



Jason Gehlert



Jason Gehlert is a strong voice in the horror independent market, mentoring authors in their quest to gain solid footing in the business. His work has spanned over a decade to feature a dozen novels, and various anthologies. Among his well-known is the cult zombie classic *Contagion* and *Jeremiah Black*. His recent shark novel *Red Triangle* has sold extremely well and garnered critical acclaim from readers and noted Bram Stoker winning authors Joe McKinney and Gary Braunbeck. *Filter* marks Gehlert's third personal anthology with a darker, deeper tone than his previous work. His collaborative effort with phenom artist Mary Doering has added an extra visual touch to the collection. He's currently writing *Red Triangle 2* and various invites to several anthologies. His work *Contagion* and *Carnie Creek* have been optioned for audio for a 2016 release. He lives in the Hudson Valley with his wife and children.

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Natalie Gehlert

Natalie Gehlert's art has been featured annually in New York's Vassar College's art show. The young teenager has had her work prominently paired with her father's work in various publications around the world, including the British horror magazine *Nightmare Illustrated Volume 3*. Her cover art for *Filter* blends the beauty and mysticism of the dream catcher. The fourteen year old lives at home with her twin sister, siblings, and parents. When not doing artwork, she is very active in the Down Syndrome community for her younger sister, and is an active member of her school's volleyball team. Natalie is currently working new projects.

Tammy Gehlert



The Spirit of Love is Tammy Gehlert's first published collection of short stories. This collection of short stories brings love to light from the dark clutches of sacrifice, death and just plain lust. Previous works have been included in *Ghostprints* and *Demon Revolver*, short story collections by Jason Gehlert. She lives in upstate New York with her husband and children. *The spirit of love has no boundaries. Love defies logic and even death.*

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Michelle Birkenstock

Michelle Birkenstock was born, raised and continues to live in the majestic Hudson Valley. Michelle's career began in education. After being home to raise her three children in their most formidable years, she began to write for online publications. This eventually brought her to her first book in print, *Harry The Caterpillar*, followed by *Baxter's Hibernation*. "Holding the first copy of my work in print, worthy of a limited resource, was surreal and humbling", says Michelle. School Author Visits are part of the great reward of being a published author, allowing her to connect with her audience. Besides her career as an author, Michelle is a licensed real estate salesperson. This doesn't hinder her progress as an author as she continues her author visits, and is currently working on another children's book as well as her first novel. "I have been blessed in this life and it's my goal to share that with as many people as I can in this short time we are here".



Dr. Richard W. Hull



Dr. Richard W. Hull is a Professor of history at New York University. He has a Ph.D in African history from Columbia University. He serves as the Town of Warwick's Historian and is the author of several books: *African Cities and Towns before the European Conquest*, *Modern Africa: Change and Continuity*, *American Enterprise in South Africa*, *Southern Africa: Civilizations in Turmoil*, *History of Jews and Judaism in Africa*, *Munyakare: African Civilization before the Batussee*, *People of the Valleys: History of Warwick 1700-2005*, *Sugar Loaf New York 1700-1997: The Enduring Vision*, *Warwick 1906: The Way We Were*, *Journey to the Mysterious Lands of Wawayanda, 1609*, *They Made it in Stone: The*

Mystery & Magic of Stoneworking in Warwick from Prehistoric Times to the Present. He is also the recipient of many awards and honors including: 'Citizen of the Year' Award Town of Warwick; 'Revered Citizen' of the year 2005, County of Orange; 'Golden Dozen Award for Teaching Excellence,' NYU; 'Distinguished Citizen' Award, United Nations; 'Distinguished Africanist' Award, NYS African Studies Association; Fulbright Fellowship; Templeman Fellowship for African Research.

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Vincent Begley



Once-upon-a-time, after reading my first book, I discovered a land of make believe where every ending was another beginning. It wasn't until as a sixth grader, when I was asked to write a class play, that I learned I could create my own lands of make believe. Reading and writing became my salt and pepper, my yin and my yang. Knowing that I would have to hone my craft I joined my high school newspaper staff and took what I learned to Marist College where I became an editor and a feature writer, writing a column while studying abroad at Oxford. Upon graduation I took every writing job imaginable....both paid and unpaid. While earning a living as a journalist, a senior advertising copywriter, and a travel and entertainment PR specialist, I turned my attention to playwriting and then to writing books for children.

Although my first published book *Missing Links* was a non-fiction account of my search for my birth parents, my first love was fiction. The publisher of my first book was also the publisher of my first two novels for young readers *The Adventures of Tom Tinker* and *Freedom's Light*. Those books were followed by a series of plays for children and *Looking for a Rainbow: The Story of Dorothy* and *Flying Lessons*, A retelling of the familiar Oz story was the basis for *Dorothy: This Side of the Rainbow* for adults and a number of other electronic books for children and adults. Currently, I am working on *The Search for the Missing Gemstones*, a novel for young adults.

Barbara Neiman

Barbara Neiman is an Integrative Occupational Therapist, Yoga Teacher 200RYT in Embodyoga®, a coach for professionals seeking a holistic practice and a National Seminar Presenter. She teaches courses on Yoga and Mindfulness around the country. She created her company, Health Discovery, in 1988, to provide services for infants through school age children. As a Certified Practitioner of Body Mind Centering since 1989, Barbara has taught experiential hands on, movement, and meditation classes to hundreds of students. Resources include coaching, trainings for mental health professionals, therapists and teachers on yoga in the schools, mindfulness for corporations, law enforcement and first responders, private yoga therapy sessions, a downloadable webinar, "Integrating Mind, Body, Spirit Medicine into your Practice," and professional manuals and journal articles. Blogs on her website include posts about digital detox, executive function skills for teens, sensory processing, wellness, etc. Barbara has several DVDs available on Yoga and Mindfulness at Pesi.com, online courses on guided imagery and meditation on her website, Her new book *Mindfulness and Yoga Skills for Children and Adolescents: 115 Activities for Trauma, Self Regulation, Special Needs and Anxiety* was published in 2015. She can be reached at bneiman1@gmail.com and her website is barbaraneiman.com.



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Christina Cameron



Inspired by the beautiful nature of growing up in the upstate area of New York, created a love for trees, butterflies and all things magical. *The House of Charms* series is a fantasy story of a hidden Heritage of Woodland Faeries and how three girls and a boy bring it back to life. The author's love of life, peace and keeping a young heart are woven into these stories to share with young readers who love adventure, of cause for the young at heart too.

Kevin Christofora

Kevin Christofora found his calling when he began to coach little league, He has coached the Mountain Valley Little League (formerly the Woodstock Little League) since 2008, More than a pastime, Kevin loves working with the children, He prides himself on teaching them that it's about more than a game: it's about honor, respect, and community, As president of the league, he enjoys working with the parents and community members that all have one main interest: the kids, As he puts it, "Mountain Valley Little League is real fun, real life, and real baseball, with no substitutions". Written for children ages three to five, Kevin wrote *The Hometown All Stars* as a "bedtime story" to get kids interested in the national pastime again, His goal in writing this book was to get kids out of the house and onto the field – "less screen, more green." He believes in the valuable lessons that children learn from playing the game: teamwork, discipline, strategy, and thinking before they act, In addition, he wants to bring back the joy of being outdoors and playing, that kids in recent years have lost. An engineer by education, Kevin gave up the corporate life to move back to his hometown to carry on the family business and become the local butcher and a dad, He has found more happiness becoming a baseball coach, than he ever had before, He hopes to pass the excitement of the game to other children with The Hometown All Stars series, *Nick's Very First Day of Baseball* is his first book in the series.



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Sandi Bischoff



Sandi Bischoff lives in the historic town of Cornwall, NY with her extremely patient husband and teenage son, she affectionately calls the Demon. She is a Pharmacist by profession but found her true calling in a simple twist of fate. A friend approached her to write in a forum on a popular networking website. Over the next five years her passion had found its niche. She went on to compose a few poems and short stories which she would post on her homepage at the same networking site. Her debut novel, *Beyond the Sun*, was published April 2013 by Bayou Brew Publishing. She recently was named to Amazon's best seller list in the Fantasy/Epic category. Sandra's second book in this series entitled *Beyond Time* was released earlier this spring in time for the Romantic Times Convention in New Orleans where she was a featured author at the Book Fair. She has since left Bayou Brew Publishing to embark on the next chapter of her writing career, Independent Publishing. As of this time she has re-released both books in e-book and paperback formats. They can be found on Amazon.com. Sandra is currently working on her third book in her *Dark Order of the Dragon Series*. Her hope is to have it ready for publication in early 2015. Website ~ <http://sandibischoff.webs.com/>

Bill Braine



Bill Braine is a Hudson Valley writer whose work has appeared in *Runner's World* magazine and in the critically acclaimed podcast "Getting On with James Urbaniak" (named one of Rolling Stone's "20 Best Comedy Podcasts," 2014). His blog *Exorbitude* was a funny and practical take on migrating north from New York. *Bone Hollow* (Hudson Heartland/Sloan Publishing) is his first novel. In addition to his writing, Bill has worked in marketing and product management for MasterCard and for Sotheby's auction house.

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Eleanor Kuhns



A lifelong librarian, Eleanor Kuhns is currently the Assistant Director at Goshen Public Library. She is the 2011 winner of the Mystery Writers of America/ Minotaur First Novel competition for *A Simple Murder*. She has since published *Death of a Dyer*, *Cradle to Grave*, and *A Death in Salem*.

Frances Brown



Frances Susanne Brown is an accomplished writer of both nonfiction and fiction. A graduate of NYIT, she received her MFA in Creative Writing from Lesley University. Frances began her career writing magazine articles. She is a still a regular feature contributor for Renaissance Magazine, as well as being one of their book reviewers. Her memoir, *Maternal Threads*, was released May 1, 2015 from High Hill Press. Writing under the pseudonym Claire Gem, her debut novel was released in February 2015. Addressing the themes of May-September romance and the heartbreak of Alzheimer's, *Phantom Traces* combines a modern love story, a historical tragedy, and a spooky paranormal in a multilayered, fast-paced plot guaranteed to take the reader on an emotional ride. Her other novels include *Memories of You*, Book 1 in The Lake George Series, coming soon from Lachesis Publishing. Her women's fiction, *The Phoenix Syndrome*, recently won first place honors in FCRW's The Beacon Contest. Originally from upstate New York, Frances has also lived in Florida, Texas, and North Carolina. She presently resides in Massachusetts with her husband of 36 years.

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Liz Matis

Liz Matis, an Amazon Top 30 Bestselling Author and Nook Top 15 Bestselling Author, is a mild-mannered accountant by day and romance writer by night. She thinks this makes her sound like a superhero! Married 30 years, she believes in happily-ever-after. Fun Fact: She read her first romance at the age of fifteen and soon after wrote her first romances starring her friends and their latest crushes!



Justine Williams



In 2006, she stepped out on the stage as the second oldest contestant in the Mrs. New York America Pageant, This was to be her Coming Out of the Closet Debut! Justine Williams is also a wife, mother of 13 biological children ages 14 through 36, grandmother of 17, and a self-described Domestic Engineer Extraordinaire. For years, she sought the time and space to develop a career, to find her purpose, because she was pregnant with dreams, visions, and ideas. In 2013, she became a first-time author of a children's book, *Nobody Likes Me: What Am I Doing*

Wrong?, inspired by her youngest child, No. 13, who was 8 at the time. After two years of deliberation, and an unexpected visit to the library on an Author Day, she knew, she had to stop the procrastinating, and publish her book. *Nobody Likes Me: What Am I Doing Wrong?* is illustrated by son-in-law Michael Martinez, a software engineer by day and an entrepreneur of sorts by night, His ability to capture the essence of Richie, the main character in the story, is what brought him to life. The book is marketed in schools, at community events, and anywhere you find children. It is a conversation piece at the dinner table and a great book to use in the classroom during group discussion.

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Pari Forood

Pari Forood is the author of the true-life novel, *The Gates of Light*, published in May 2015. After graduating from Vassar, she was the Press Secretary to Congressman Hamilton Fish, Jr. in Washington, D.C. where she was inspired to write her book about the issue of immigration, both as a policy statement and a personal account, relating her family's story. Ms. Forood has been the Executive Director of the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation since its inception in 2004. In eleven years the Foundation has given away over \$1.3 million dollars to support services and outreach for people affected by breast cancer within the 8 counties of the Hudson Valley, NY. Ms. Forood oversees all foundation activities, events and publicity and she has written articles for magazines, newspapers, and hospital publications. She has a BA from Vassar and a Masters in Public Administration with a concentration in Non-profit Management.



Michael J. Worden



Michael J. Worden is a police detective and author, which gives him a unique perspective as an investigator of the paranormal, and of true, historical crimes. Michael has a background in the sciences, having studied and worked in the field of exercise physiology and sports medicine for over ten years before pursuing a life-long dream of being a police officer. He has been a police officer since 1999, and has held the rank of detective since 2006.

Michael has a lifelong fascination with ghosts and hauntings – a fascination fueled by his own experiences in his grandparent's very haunted house. According to Michael, his passion was also driven by books written on the subject, including those by Hans Holzer and a local author Dan Cohen. He began working with author and paranormal researcher Linda Zimmermann in 2001. In the fall of 2009, Michael published his first book, *Ghost Detective*, about his experiences as a paranormal investigator. ***Ghost Detective*** is a fascinating look at ghost hunting through the eyes of an experienced ghost hunter and police detective.

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(Michael J. Worden – continued)

In the fall of 2009, Michael began work on a new project which he titled *Crime Scene*. This is a series of books about true, historical crimes – many of which are from the Hudson Valley and Orange County. He has spent the past five years delving into numerous cases and has investigated countless hours into tracking down sources and details. He launched the series with *The Murder of Richard Jennings: The TRUE Story of New York's First Murder for Hire* on October 19, 2013. Additional books are being researched and written.

Worden is married to his wife Renee, and is the father of twin sons Ryan and Michael. When he is not hunting for ghosts or investigating crimes – either current or past ones – he enjoys travelling, his sauna, learning special f/x makeup, and spending time with the family, and listening to music, especially Joy Division, his favorite band (and obsession, according to his family!). His most recent travels in 2013 were a family trip to northern Europe and the Baltics, visiting Sweden, Finland (his favorite- he's been there seven times!), Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Website: www.michaeljworden.com

Jeanne Bogino



By day, Jeanne Bogino is director of a small but busy library in rural New York. By night, she writes at her western Massachusetts homestead. She's published short horror, fantasy, romance, memoir, and gay fiction, and is a regular contributor at *Library Journal*, where she was named 2011's fiction reviewer of the year. An expert on zombie lit and horror films, Jeanne has published articles and appeared on panels devoted to these subjects. *Rock Angel* is her debut novel with Prashanti Press.

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Diana Slater

Diana Slater is the author of the crime novel *Better Left Buried*. A firm believer in Destiny, she believes that the opportunities she has taken advantage of were a result of both her experiences and being in the right place at the right time. She was born into a wealthy family in Argentina but instead of going from rags to riches, Diana went from riches to rags when her mother left her father and the family ended up on welfare. She has worked in a variety of fields in a number of different countries. As a teacher, she worked in high schools both in the United States and Argentina, where she also taught college courses. She worked as a consultant and designed a course for English language learners called *English in the Workplace* which is still being taught in the Hudson Valley. Diana took over as vice president in charge of production in her father's plastic factory in Argentina when he died. This led to a whole new skill set including designing a mold for a chocolate drink mix for Nestle and a blasting cap for the Nigerian government. While in Nigeria, she was asked by the vice-president to design a national language that would be taught to the different areas of the country in order to provide an element of unification. Unfortunately, the unification was unsuccessful. One of the most interesting yet difficult parts of working in both Argentina and Nigeria was dealing with the graft and bribes as this was not taught in any course in college. Home base is Middletown, New York.

Alan Lewis

Alan Lewis grew up on a farm in a rural area just outside Middletown, New York. In his book, he recounts his childhood memories so that we too can experience what life was like for a child growing up on a farm over fifty years ago. Old photographs artfully translated into full-page pastel renditions vividly depict life on a working farm as seen through the eyes of a young boy.



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Dawn Bonney

Dawn Bonney was born February 6th, 1990 in Valhalla, New York, to Richard and Dee Langone Bonney, and was raised in Middletown, New York. She is the author of "Crimson", the first installment in "The Town Of Crimson" series, which she hopes to adapt into films to bring her characters to life. Being an actress, she would love the chance for a cameo appearance. She is also a professional photographer, artist, and graphic designer. Her father encouraged her to always try new things, and supported her artistic skills. He passed away when she was 17. Her grandmother took her on adventures through story-telling and always praised her. She passed away shortly after Dawn's

21st birthday. It was at this point that writing became her therapy. She studied film and radio, graphic design, photography, drawing and painting in Ellenville High School, which she graduated from in 2008. She takes pride in her work and enjoys educating herself. When she's not working on her second novel in the series, modeling, or doing a photo shoot or art project, she's studying German, French, and Italian. She wants to be involved in as many projects in her life as possible.



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Amy Gopel and Keryl Pesce

Amy Gopel and Keryl Pesce are the creators of *Share This Journal*, a first of its kind book designed to encourage and document acts of kindness. Until now, those who perform kind acts were left to wonder if their act made an impact, who it touched and in what way. Share This Journal is designed to provide the giver of kindness just that.



Here's how it's done: After purchasing a copy of *Share This Journal*, the owner of the journal records his or her name inside along with whatever contact information he or she is willing to share. He or she then performs an act of kindness, describes the act inside and gives the recipient of his or her kindness the journal. That person then describes his or her reaction, performs his or her own act for another person, records it and passes the journal along. The journal is intended to follow 26 acts of kindness with the final act being to contact the original journal owner and return the completed journal, thus completing the loop and allowing the originator to learn of who was impacted and in what way by the chain of kindness he or she started.

The book additionally allows for the journal owner to dedicate the journal in memory of someone, in honor of someone or to celebrate an event. Journals have been sent out with kindness in response to someone's passing or to generate goodness with the thought of someone's healing in mind. The journals can be passed along to someone you meet, left with a gift (gift card, cash, etc.) inside in a public place such as on a train or on a coffee shop table and even become an annual holiday tradition with the journal being kept amongst family members.

The associated website, **www.ShareThisJournal.com**, is membership based and allows journal owners to create profiles and groups for their books and record their profile name and group inside, allowing for those in the chain of kindness to report in on the progress of the journal.

The book was co-created by Amy Gopel and Keryl Pesce, who dub themselves as "Partners in Kind." Amy is a wife and mother who guides her daily choices through the eyes of kindness. Keryl is a happiness expert, author and inspirational speaker.

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CHARLES S. ISAACS has been a schoolteacher, college professor, social activist, community organizer, financial analyst, ghostwriter, gambler, real estate consultant, storyteller and occasional journalist. His undergraduate studies were in Mathematics (LIU-Brooklyn), after which he attended the University of Chicago Law School. His later graduate work was in the Social Sciences, earning an M.A. (New School for Social Research) and a Ph.D. (The Union Institute & University). He currently resides in Newburgh, New York.