

The Pirate Tree

Social Justice & Children's Literature


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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The *Journal of Children's Literature* has a "call for manuscripts" on "Exploring issues of social justice through children's literature" for the Fall 2012 issue.

WHO WE ARE

Ann Angel is the author of several books for young adults, most recently the biography *Janis Joplin: Rise Up Singing* which won the 2011 YALSA Award for Excellence in Non-Fiction for Young Adults.

Nancy Bo Flood is the award-winning author of many books for children, most recently *Warriors in the Crossfire*, a young adult novel that explores one boy's experiences with impending war on the Pacific island of Saipan.

Lyn Miller-Lachmann is the author of several multicultural books, most recently the novel *Gringolandia*, a 2010 ALA Best Book for young adults. She is the former editor of *MultiCultural Review*.

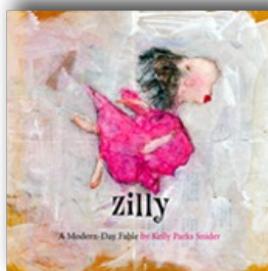
Peter Marino's young adult novels *Dough Boy* and *Magic and Misery* have been nominated by the American Library Association for Best Books for Young Adults. He is also a playwright: *The Grandma Show*, "Ralph Smith of Schenectady, New York..." and "The Good Samaritan" have been produced nationwide.

J.L. Powers is the author of *The Confessional*, a novel for young adults that explores racial tension and violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border, and the author of *This Thing*

Project Girl educates adolescents to recognize advertising manipulation

December 16, 2011

By [annangel](#)



"I give everything to the creative process. I write and paint to create a character, express a thought or make a connection. I am not concerned about adhering to a specific style, medium or format. This allows me to be fully absorbed in asking: What are all the possibilities here? What I seek is to share a profound connection I feel with a character, an idea or an aspect of my life. My hope is that readers feel that connection as powerfully." – Kelly Parks Snider

Kelly has always explored contemporary cultural and social issues which is why it was a logical progression to develop Projectgirl.org. Using art and words, she educates communities, stimulates dialogue about target issues and creates social change. As a visual artist, Kelly's work exhibits nationally through both public and private galleries. Rural Women: Voice and Spirit exhibit was funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Art Board and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commercial Land Exhibition was the culmination of a two-year exploration of the effects of contemporary media on young teens' lives and attitudes is exhibited nationally. Kelly is the co-founder of Project Girl (www.projectgirl.org), a nationally recognized non-profit, award-winning program and touring exhibition that combines art, media literacy and youth-led activism into a unique educational experience for children, parents and educators. Project Girl was recently featured in *Family Circle Magazine* and was an awarded youth program in the new national youth empowerment and philanthropy program called Best Buy's @15 Change Exchange project.

Kelly's writing and illustrating have also led to a new project. *Zilly: A Modern-Day Fable* is Kelly's first children's book. She considers Zilly to be her protest book. She has also co-authored curriculum with Jane Bartell (co-founder of Project Girl) and Lyn Mikel Brown, Ed.D. (Professor of Education and Human Development

ABOUT

The Pirate Tree is a collective of children's and young adult writers interested in children's literature and social justice issues. For editorial or administrative issues, please contact J.L. Powers at the address below. If you have a book you'd like to recommend for a review or an interview subject, guest writer, or topic that you'd like to suggest, please contact any of the individual writers at the following email addresses:

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 J.L.: [jlpowers \[at\] evaporites.com](mailto:jlpowers[at]evaporites.com)

MISSION STATEMENT

The writers at The Pirate Tree seek to expose and discuss literature and writers for children and teenagers that delve into themes of social justice and social conscience. The title, "The Pirate Tree," comes from a picture book that Lyn Miller-Lachmann once wrote about two children whose grandfathers fought on opposite sides of a war. The children were prohibited from going into each others' yards, but they figured out a way to meet and play pirates together by climbing a tree with limbs and branches above both their yards. Like the story suggested, we are interested in books and writers that question and rebel against the status quo, argue for peace

author of the film *Called the Future*, a coming-of-age novel set in post-apartheid, AIDS-ravaged South Africa.

at Colby College in Maine). Activism is the foundation for all of Kelly's endeavors. Her objective is to educate young people, parents, educators and communities about targeted issues in the hopes of shaking up the status quo, creating a catalyst, examining the questions that shape and inspire all of us. Her activism is rooted in a conviction that a healthy democracy depends on informed citizens, and our youth must be considered in this truth.

Kelly lectures nationally about media literacy, serves in artist-in-residence programs and produces workshops for people of all ages. She lives and works on a little farm outside of Madison, Wisconsin, with her husband, and four children.

I recently asked Kelly a few questions about her life as an advocate for adolescents.

Why did you decide to co-found Project Girl? The origin of an idea or a vision is always difficult to define. Looking through some old yearbooks...I began to reflect. I began to think of the word wars of my time, my friendships, and the complexities of adolescence, my relationships, my story, my interests and the culture of my youth some 25 years ago. As I recalled my memories, I began making some comparisons. I am the mother of four teenagers: three daughters and a son. As I questioned it and made some comparisons. It became obvious to me that the reality that my children live in today is far more polluted and complex than the realities of our youth. I started asking WHY? Why is a dangerous question? Asking why usually requires social action. This was the beginning of Project Girl- • Why are we all having such difficult time getting along? (Stereotypes, attitudes generalizations, girls vs. girls) • Why are we all dissatisfied with our bodies? • Why are we distracted by materialism looking towards buying things to solve our problems to create happiness? • Why are girls/boys feel that they have to be sexy so soon? • Why do we encouraged to stereotype and generalize? • Why is violence glamorized? It seemed that the absurd had become the living reality for many of our kids.

Is Project Girl just for girls or is this a workshop that also involves boys on occasion? Project Girl workshops, curriculum, lectures, and traveling art exhibition provides an easy-to-follow roadmap for educators and youth group leaders working with boys and girls to critically examine our contemporary media-based culture and explore key media literacy themes and issues. We believe that we need to expect more from our youth. Community service isn't just for adults. Project Girl encourages girls/boys to create the change that they want to see in the world. Rather than limiting their role to being mere passive bystanders of their culture, we expect them to be leaders in necessary reform. Active youth participation in Project Girl is central and the young people's ideas are paramount. This is the difference that defines our program. This is youth in action and this is the powerful difference.

You've created a picture book that reflects some of the concepts you teach in your workshops. What message do you hope *Zilly: A Modern Day Fable* brings to readers? *Zilly* is my response to what I hear from parents and educators searching for literature that provides a creative way for children to examine the complexities of contemporary kid culture and advertisements. The modern-day fable celebrates the



and reconciliation, take the side of the marginalized and powerless, and use creative solutions to overcome obstacles.

BLOGROLL

Crazy Quilts: Rambling of an urban high school librarian
Fledgling: Zetta Elliott's (other) blog
Reading in Color
Strong in the Broken Places
Teaching Tolerance

power of friendship and being true to one's self. The website www.zillybook.com is full of information about Zilly and plenty of fun activities for kids such as coloring pages, a children's art gallery, information for parents, teachers, and librarians, and to learn more about Kelly. The book includes discussion questions for children and caring adults, providing a springboard to introduce thoughtful dialogue about peer pressure, bullying, and the role of media in our life.



If readers want to get in touch with you about bringing a Project Girl workshop to their school or community, how do they contact you? I am doing Project Girl art-based workshops for 4-12 grade and Zilly school visits and appearances for k-3. ZILLY'S school visits and art -based workshops provide children and caring educators and adults with a springboard to introduce thoughtful discussions about the influence of media on our lives. A book reading, information sharing and group discussions are followed by a unique art and home-grown book project encouraging reflection and process-based expression. Young artists and authors will have the option of submitting their creative works to become part of Zilly's Gallery and Book Shelf. If you would like more information about content, scheduling, and rates, please contact me directly at kpsnider@charter.net

(Illustrations created by Kelly Parks Snider and used with her permission)



One Response to *Project Girl educates adolescents to recognize advertising manipulation*

Dan on February 7, 2012 at 4:42 am



Hey. My friend is leaving May 1 from Ottawa as part of the Otesha project. I'm writing an article about it in a local Ottawa paper. Would it be possible to interview you?

REPLY

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