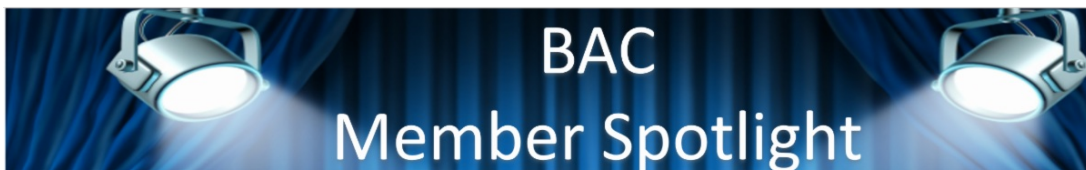




Boston Authors Club

March 2023 Newsletter

- **Member Spotlight: Janet Costa Bates**
- **Meeting the Market: Penny Noyce, Tumblehome Books**
- **Author News: Book Launch for *Jack the Library Cat***
- **Reading Right Now: *The Magician***
- **Yesteryear: A Second Serving of Curry**



This month's Member Spotlight is on Janet Costa Bates, author of the Rica Baptista chapter book series featuring a Cape Verdean American girl navigating family and friend relationships. First in the series is *Llamas, Iguanas, and My Very Best Friend* (Candlewick), a Junior Library Guild selection. *Time For Bed, Old House* (Candlewick) is listed on several 2021 best books lists and was nominated for an NAACP Image Award. *Seaside Dream* (Lee and Low), received a Lee and Low New Voices Honor Award.

What aspects of being part of a community of writers and appreciators of literature are most important to you?

As an introvert, it was difficult to make my way into the writing community, but so worth it. What I value most are the lifelong friendships I've made. I've tried to quit writing a few times, but even then, I decided I would never walk away from this world of writers. If I wasn't going to write, I would work with writing organizations and conferences to support writers so that I would still be able to spend time with this wonderful community. Luckily, my attempts to quit writing didn't take, partly because ideas kept plopping into my head, but also because of the encouragement I received from writer friends. Some of that encouragement came in the form of laughing when I said I was going to quit writing, but it worked. I still write. Without that support, I would have given up on *Time for Bed, Old House*, a manuscript I had figuratively put in a drawer, for over a decade; a manuscript which received four starred reviews and an NAACP Image award nomination. Without that support, I would have never gone through the trouble of transforming my unsold middle grade novel into a chapter book; a chapter book which is now the first in the ***Rica Baptista*** series. I will always be grateful for the support, inspiration, and friendship I've found in the writing community.

What works have shaped you as a reader and/or writer?

There are far too many works to list, so I'll just share a recent example. As preparation for my work-in-progress, I read *Look Both Ways* by Jason Reynolds. After the first page, I said, out loud to myself, 'I need to step up my game.' Talent, in any form - literature, art, music, theater, etc. - inspires me. Seeing someone put their heart and soul into their work makes me want to do the same.

Interview by Lisa Rogers

*Dr. Pendred (Penny) Noyce is a doctor of internal medicine, writer, educator and publisher. She co-founded and leads Tumblehome Learning, which publishes STEM books and learning resources for young readers. As a nonprofit, Tumblehome's mission is to make STEM education more fun and meaningful by embedding scientific content into a narrative format, helping children to imagine themselves as future scientists or engineers. Noyce has written 14 books; her biographies of women in science, *Magnificent Minds* and *Remarkable Minds*, are recognized as Outstanding Science Trade Books by the National Science Teachers Association and Children's Book Council.*



In this interview, Dr. Noyce talks about publishing STEM books from the both publisher and author perspectives.

Q: Tumblehome has been enabling STEM learning for children through its books and activity kits for over a decade. What are some of the changes in the children's publishing market that you have seen in that time?

A: I think there's a large interest in children's literacy today. We know that kids in general lost probably seven or eight months in their reading ability over the course of the pandemic. There are still very enthusiastic and bookish young readers, but they have become more of a minority. Kids are spending more and more time on social media; they're more likely to watch TikTok than to pick up a book. So, it seems that there is more need to really jazz up the book with excitement and pictures and short chapters, that sort of thing. I think that unlike the rest of the book-publishing market, children's books are still not strong in the ebooks market. And I think that ebooks will probably not grow significantly in the children's book market.

Q: What strategies and innovations at Tumblehome are helping you to reach more young readers and teachers with STEM-based materials?

A: Even before the pandemic, we were trying to move in the direction of providing more activities and learning resources, working directly with schools, and thinking about getting grant support to do so. The pandemic led to an acceleration of these efforts. Very early on before COVID even had a standardized name, a friend and I talked about how we were obsessed with tracking global infections data from day to day. We saw how this public information could be a great vehicle for children to learn about data, and about the spread of disease and epidemiology

To kick off the project, I started writing *The Case of the COVID Crisis*, my friend created related activities and lesson plans, and we convinced the Museum of Science to host an online book club on the topic. That program attracted about 75 middle school kids, and it went very well. In fact, it became the model program in our successful application to NSF for grant funding to serve more kids and schools. In the first two years of the NSF grant, we've developed additional resources to support STEM after-school programs and we're expanding the book to include diseases besides COVID – the bubonic plague will be there by popular demand. We have incorporated activities to teach kids about time series data and epidemiology. These topics that are not traditionally covered in school classrooms, but they are increasingly important in our lives.

Tumblehome is now making it a priority to partner with entrepreneurial authors and organizations to develop a variety of STEM resources, activities, and programs to accompany our new titles. We've learned that creating teacher guides with a range of activities to use with Tumblehome books is a great way to boost sales. We want teachers to know that there's a whole package of classroom and after school resources available to complement the book in teaching STEM.

Q: What advice would you give to authors who want to write and publish (and sell) STEM-centric works for young readers?

A: It is probably not news to anyone that the vast majority of children's book authors make very little money from writing and selling their books. Many of the authors that do make a living are doing so by focusing on making classroom and school visits and talks. To be in demand for paid school visits, authors really have to develop their ability to go beyond just talking about their book and be able to involve kids in multiple activities, including writing exercises. For STEM authors in particular, it's very good to have a series of classroom activities, and to offer online resources for in-class, after school, and at home. And it's important to be familiar with the [Next Generation Science Standards](#), which suggest a framework for what kids should be learning in each grade. For example, if kids are studying the sun, moon and stars in third grade, authors should know that it might be good to tailor their new book on sun,

moon, and stars to third grade readers.

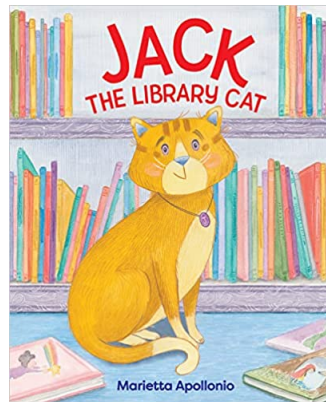
In addition, of course, authors need to figure out how to market themselves and their books through the web and social media. Increasingly, our books are sold either through Amazon, or to libraries, including school libraries. In addition to matching their book to the correct grade level for the science standards, authors can create something different from the books on their subject that are already in the library. Schools are buying more in nonfiction at the moment, because the Common Core standard emphasizes nonfiction and that science and social studies are an obvious place for that. But Tumblehome publishes both fiction and nonfiction. I think it's still important to have a strong narrative, not just a book of facts.

At Tumblehome, we see narrative as a way of getting kids interested and engaged in science. Fiction has some real advantages in developing strong characters that readers can identify with, and it allows authors to address other things besides just scientific facts. Whether writing fiction or nonfiction, authors have to make absolutely sure that their book's science is authentic and true. It's worth having your work reviewed by a specialist in the area before you send it off to a publisher.

Finally, I encourage STEM authors to read our submission guidelines and if their book seems like a good fit, to submit it. For more about Tumblehome visit <https://tumblehomebooks.org/who-we-are/>

Interview by Mary J Cronin

BAC Author News



Congratulations to Marietta Apollonio, whose debut author-illustrated picture book, *Jack the Library Cat*, comes out on March 1.

Marietta will be celebrating at a Book Launch event on Saturday March 4, 11am to 12pm at The Silver Unicorn Bookstore in Acton, MA

Reading Right Now

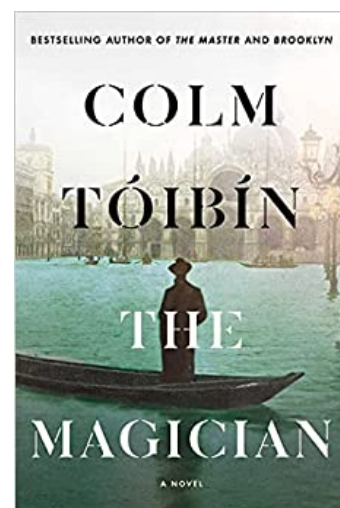
Mike Mansfield, CEO of ProAge.org, is based in Amsterdam. Right now he is reading *The Magician* by Colm Tóibín, and he is loving this novel about the life of Thomas Mann.

Q: What motivated you to pick up this title?

I have rediscovered a love of reading physical books and also supporting our local, independent bookshop. The lady who runs the shop recommended this book and, in my experience, she is always spot on in her recommendations. I was a bit reluctant to go with it as the book is almost 600 pages and she handed me the Dutch version rather than the English!. I figured what the heck, I am up for a challenge and felt it would improve my Dutch. I am also a big fan of Colm Tóibín's work and have read several of his other books and so felt I was on safe ground with this title.

Q: Would you recommend it to friends? Why or why not?

Absolutely, I would recommend this book. I must admit that I knew nothing about Thomas Mann before



picking up the book and feel I have learned a lot about him as an author and a person. He started writing and became famous at the time the Nazis were coming to power in Germany. As the outbreak of war neared, he fled to Switzerland and then the US. His conflict with being critical of the Nazis is beautifully described, on the one hand he sees his country changing for the worse yet on the other he is afraid that criticism will impact his livelihood and is slow to rock the boat.

The book also describes what it means to be German at a very difficult time in history and how he had to find a way to navigate dangerous waters in the US as an influential author, being asked on one side not to call for the US to join the war in Europe and at the same time wanting to see democracy and freedom from the Nazis restored to his homeland.

Interview by Mary J Cronin

YESTER YEAR

A Second Serving of Curry

We continue the saga of Boston Authors Club member Samuel Silas Curry this month, with a note about Curry's biography of Alexander Melville Bell, father of the more widely known Alexander Graham Bell. The Bell senior biography was published in 1906 by the School of Expression that Curry co-founded and headed with his wife, Anna Baright. This work connects Curry's own study of speech and elocution with the more experimental, "hard science" studies of speech and sound transmission by the Bells. Curry begins his biography by writing of Bell père, "Teachers of every method of elocutionary training had long recognized Professor Bell as leader of the profession. His studies, discussions, and discoveries have thrown light upon every department of phonological science and use of the voice in speaking."



While one may catch an occasional whiff of self-promotion in the book, as in this quote, "Sixty years after the printing of his first book, when I saw him for the last time, he looked into my face and inquired about my work," the biography is evidence that Curry kept abreast of the quantitative aspects of speech as well as its qualitative aspects. In his lengthy foreword to Curry's book of poetry, Harvard critic, Nathan Haskell Dole, writes, "The School of Expression was founded as a school of scientific research, applying laboratory methods, and attracted students from every State in the Union, and even from abroad."

If you happen to be a mathematician, you may find yourself pausing for a moment to gaze at the far corner of the room. "Haskell? Curry? Dang! Where have I heard those names before? Wasn't there a mathematician who had a name something like that?" Exactly so. You must be thinking of Haskell Curry (pictured above) who, it turns out, was the son of the BAC's very own Samuel Silas Curry and Anna Baright. We will wrap up our saga with Haskell's accomplishments.

Known mostly for his work in formal logic, Haskell wrote two of the very first books on computers, based on his work at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds during WW II, *A study of inverse interpolation on the ENIAC* and *A study of fourth order interpolation on the ENIAC*. Among his lesser distinctions, he is the only person after whom three computer programming language are named: Haskell, Brook, and Curry. As a point of reference, Facebook's anti-spam program is written in Haskell.

There is a technique in mathematics and programming called currying that lets you express a process involving many things as a series of steps each involving one thing. A fried egg breakfast, for example, might be described as a process involving three things: breakfast(pan, butter, egg). If we curry this we get: egg(butter(pan)) or in words "egg a buttered pan." Butter butters whatever single thing that it is given and egg puts an egg in whatever single thing that it is given.

Stigler's law of eponymy which states that no discovery is named after its original discoverer is at work here too. Moses Schönfinkel had the idea of currying six years before Haskell, so maybe in fairness to him we should call currying schönfinkelling. But as a parting thought on why that's unlikely to happen, Stigler's law of eponymy was first articulated by the sociologist Robert K. Merton.

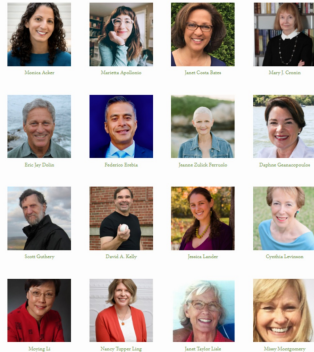
By Scott B Guthery

authors!
AUTHORS!

Newsletter, send your events,
news, and publications by
3/29/23 to

bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com

Claim your spot in the
BAC Author Gallery!



**A REMINDER THAT ALL BAC
MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO
ADD THEIR INFORMATION TO
OUR NEW AUTHOR GALLERY.
Email us for details**

bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com

Become a member OR RENEW NOW for 2023!

Membership dues are \$50 annually for the calendar year. You can join and renew online by [clicking here](#). If you would rather pay by check, please make your check out to Boston Authors Club and mail it to the following address:

**Nancy Tupper Ling
Boston Authors Club
1600 Providence Highway #247
Walpole MA 02081**

| BOSTON AUTHORS CLUB | bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com |

STAY CONNECTED



Boston Authors Club

Boston Authors Club | 103 Conant Road, Lincoln, MA 01773

[Unsubscribe bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com](mailto:bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com powered by



Try email marketing for free today!

