



David Ferry is a translator and a prize-winning American poet who has brought his gift for language to world classics and met with huge critical acclaim. Perhaps due to his personal literary success, his translations are known for their beauty as well as scholarly accuracy. *Gilgamesh* is the first of his poem-translations, but certainly is no exception. Having no background in ancient language, Ferry worked with word-for-word translations to create a more lyrical rendering in English verse. Born in 1924, he was married to literary critic Anne Ferry until her death in 2006.



Celia Barker Lottridge became a children's author after longing to "tell stories" all her life. As a child she traveled to many places and always found a home in the local library. She even became a librarian! Lottridge is keenly interested in the oral tradition and teaches courses in storytelling. Born in Iowa, her travels have led to her current residence in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Lottridge is an award-winning author of 19 books for children, including our selection for **Coming Together in Skokie**, *Home Is Beyond the Mountains*.

Deborah Ellis is the award-winning author of 14 books for youth and adults. Her best known series, *The Breadwinner*, was inspired by an interview with a mother in a refugee camp in Afghanistan. She is passionate about sharing the stories of people living in developing nations and increasing awareness through anti-war activism. Ellis is a philanthropist. Her financial support enables organizations such as Street Kids International and Women for Women to offer assistance and education to people in need. Ellis lives in Cochrane, Ontario, Canada where she was named to the Order of Ontario in 2006.





Romil and Victor Benyamino are second generation Assyrian-Americans living in California. Their parents, father from Iran and mother from Iraq, moved to the United States as teenagers. Although the brothers grew up

in a typical American community, their parents worked hard to instill in them an Assyrian identity. This identity drives their work. Creators of benyamino.com, they are passionate about sharing Assyrian culture and entertainment with their divided nation. When they aren't creating fun and interesting content for their website, Romil is a chemistry researcher and Victor is a graphic design student. *Sahra=Moon* is their first children's book.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Homer Ashurian: Born in Urmia, Iran. Received his M.A. in Archaeology, majoring in Assyriology. High school principal in Tehran. Elected to Iranian Parliament in 1975. He was curator of Cultural Museum of Tehran. He edited *Kirkha* ("The Scroll") and *Shvila* ("The Way") of The Assyrian Youth Cultural Society. Currently CIO of the Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation.

Vincent van Exel: Graduate student in Near Eastern Archaeology in the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He has excavated extensively in Syria and Turkey.

Edward Odisho: Edward Odisho is an Assyrian born in Kirkuk/Iraq. He is currently Professor Emeritus, Northeastern Illinois University. Holds a Ph.D. in speech sciences and linguistics and has published 9 books, 6 of which are at the Library of Congress. Has also published scores of research papers in different international journals.

Vasili Shoumanov: Orientalist and former wrestling champion of Russia. Graduated from St. Petersburg State University with M.A. in History of Eastern Civilizations. Editor-in-chief of *Atra* ("Homeland"), 1990-1996. Author of *The Russian-Assyrian Dictionary* and *Assyrians in Chicago*. High school wrestling coach. Currently works at AUAF library.

Christopher Woods: Associate Professor of Sumerian in the Oriental Institute, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and the Program on the Ancient Mediterranean World, University of Chicago. Received his B.S. from Yale University, his Ph.D. in Assyriology from Harvard University, and was a Junior Fellow in the Harvard Society of Fellows before joining the faculty of the University of Chicago in 2002.



DEBORAH ELLIS

Wednesday, March 7

10:30 a.m. Niles North High School Auditorium
7 p.m. Skokie Public Library

Friday, March 9

10:30 a.m. Niles West High School Auditorium
1:30 p.m. Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center

Saturday, March 10

10 a.m. National Louis University

CELIA BARKER LOTTRIDGE



Tuesday, February 28

5 p.m. Niles Township Schools ELL Parent Center
6:30 p.m. Highland School

Wednesday, February 29

6 p.m. Skokie Public Library, Petty Auditorium

