

Pre-Visit Packet for Karen's Visit

What's Inside?

This pre-visit packet will help you get your students, teachers, and the whole school community “revved up” and ready for our day together. It contains:

- 1) Checklist for a successful author visit – to help with planning
- 2) Book ordering info
- 3) Sample book sale & signing letter - to send home with students
- 4) Sample press release – to send to local media
- 5) Teacher's guides
- 6) Reproducible bookmarks – to give to students on the day of the visit

To prepare your students, it's important to read my books to your class or have the students read them independently. Reading and talking about my work will help your students have a richer, more meaningful experience when they meet me.

The **teacher's guides** will help you:

- build up to your author visit with activities based on my books,
- link my books and the information I will present during my programs with your curriculum, and
- continue to use ideas from my presentations and books as a touchstone for the rest of the school year.

Schedule

When you plan your schedule, please allow a minimum of 10-15 minutes between presentations so I can “re-group” and set up before the next program. And sometime during the day, please sandwich in a little time for a healthy lunch.

Location, Location, Location!

The best is a room where I can set up all my props and books for the day and where students will be comfortable, either seated on the floor or in chairs set in a half-circle around me. I love being in libraries (generally comfy but not crowded, cozy yet enough room for demonstrations, and surrounded by my favorite things – books!). There's a subtle, positive “message” when we meet in the **library**. But if you have a space better suited, that's terrific. If it is a large, echoey room like a gym or cafetorium, we'll need a microphone and speaker system.

Equipment Needs

- Tables (one or two) at the front of the room to display books and program props
- Microphone (for large groups or large rooms)
- Bottled water
- Computer with digital projector and screen, and someone experienced with the equipment to make sure it runs smoothly.
- Please* ask your AV/computer expert to contact me beforehand about your setup and whether an Internet connection is available in the room.

Book Sale & Signing

Book ordering is easy if you start early—at least six to eight weeks before my visit to your school. This should allow plenty of time for ordering and delivery. And because many local bookstores give discounts to schools, a book sale can pay off for your school. As a fund-raiser, books are:

- *more fun* than selling wrapping paper,
- *healthier* than candy (no carbs, no cholesterol, no calories) and, most importantly,
- *educational!* Yes, books are “good for you,” but they’re more like strawberries (yum) than spinach (not so yum). When a child takes home a book signed and personalized by an author he or she has met, it confirms for the child that the adults at school and at home truly believe reading is important.

Schools pre-sell books prior to my visit. This is the least amount of work and easily handled by parent volunteers. Most schools also order extra copies to have available for last-minute shoppers. After you talk with your bookseller, you can modify the **sample book sale & signing letter** and send it home to parents. Although books can be ordered directly from my publishers, most schools find it more convenient to order from their favorite local booksellers.

Questions

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions you may have.

1. Checklist for a Successful Author Visit

Karen Beil's scheduled visit date: _____

Two months before

- Contact a **local bookseller** or Karen's publishers (Harcourt and Holiday House) to enlist their help in ordering books for your upcoming book sale and signing. Just plug in your school zip code to find some local booksellers at www.BookSense.com.
- Plan and confirm the **schedule**, allowing at least 10-15 minutes between presentations, and setting aside time for lunch.

Six weeks before

- Modify the Sample **Book Sale & Signing Letter** and send home to families.
- Once the responses are returned, place your school's **order** with the bookseller.

Four weeks before

- Provide copies of **Karen's books** to the teachers so they have time to read and discuss them with their students.
- Copy and distribute the **Teacher's Guides** to the teachers and librarian early enough so that they can incorporate them into pre-visit activities. They contain ready-to-use, classroom-tested activities.

Two weeks before

- Mail **press release** to local media and school or district newsletter editor. (Reporters and parents are welcome to attend the sessions.)
- Make copies of **bookmarks** to give to all the children on the day of Karen's visit.
- Pick up the **books**. Insert into each book a completed form from the Book Sale & Signing Letter with the necessary autographing information.

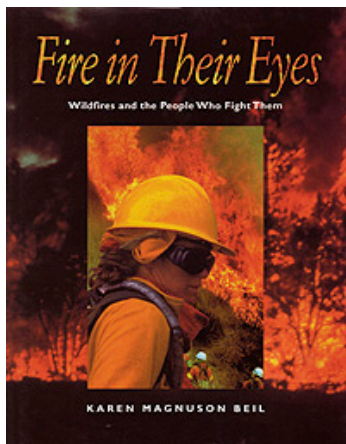
2. Book Ordering Information



Moove Over

By Karen Beil
Illustrated by Paul Meisel

ISBN 978-0-8234-1736-0
Holiday House Books for Young Readers
Available format: Hardcover
Retail price: \$16.95



Fire in Their Eyes: Wildfires and the People Who Fight Them

By Karen Beil
Photo-illustrated by the author and others

ISBN 978-0-15-201042-3
Harcourt Books for Young Readers
Available format: Paperback
Retail price: \$11.00

3. Sample Book Sale & Signing Letter

For parents.

You can copy and paste the sample letter below into your computer's word-processing program, then modify, print and send home to parents. (It can be fit on a single side.)

Dear Parents,

We're excited to tell you about an upcoming event. On **[INSERT DATE]**, author Karen Beil will visit our school to speak to all students in **[INSERT GRADES]**. Ms. Beil writes picture books for preschool through grade 3 and nonfiction books for children and adults. A former reporter and editor, she is an enthusiastic speaker who excites students about reading with personal stories and shares tips she's developed during her career as a working writer.

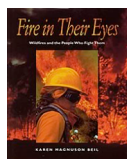
If you would like your child to have a book signed by the author or to order books for gifts, please complete and return this form with payment to your child's teacher. Ms. Beil will sign and personalize each book. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[INSERT YOUR NAME & TITLE]



Moove Over - "Readers will cheer as the ill-mannered bovine gets her comeuppance . . . the illustrations will keep them in stitches as they practice counting." - *The School Library Journal*



Fire in Their Eyes: Wildfires and the People Who Fight Them - "This stirring on-the-scenes account of the lives of firefighters who courageously battle wildfires is guaranteed to spark the imagination . . . Action photos and personal narratives make this book stay on readers' minds long past the final page." - *Voice of Youth Advocates*

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Book Order & Autograph Form

Child's Name (please print) _____

Child's Teacher _____

MOOOVE OVER!

_____ books @ \$ **[PRICE]** each = \$ _____

FIRE IN THEIR EYES: WILDFIRES & THE PEOPLE WHO FIGHT THEM

_____ books @ \$ [PRICE] each = \$_____

Total = \$_____

Please make check payable to [INSERT YOUR SCHOOL NAME] and return to your child's teacher by [INSERT DATE].

4. Sample Press Release

For local media.

You can copy, paste, and modify this sample press release below into your computer's word-processing program, then print and send it to local news organizations and your school district newsletter. (It can be fit on a single side.)

Media contact

For more information, author photo, or to schedule an interview: Karen Beil

Email: karen@karenbeil.com

Website: www.karenbeil.com

Date: [INSERT MAILING DATE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On [INSERT DATE] children's author Karen Beil will visit [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] to speak to students in [INSERT GRADES]. Ms. Beil writes books and articles for children of all ages, including picture books for preschool through grade 3 and nonfiction for children and adults. An experienced speaker, she excites students with personal stories and shares writing tips she's developed during her professional career as a working writer.

Her book, *Fire in Their Eyes: Wildfires and the People Who Fight Them*, was honored as a top nonfiction book by the National Council of Teachers of English, and by The American Library Association as a book that would also appeal to reluctant readers. *The Voice of Youth Advocates* called it a "stirring on-the-scenes account," saying "Action photos and personal narratives make this book stay on readers' minds long past the final page."

The School Library Journal reviewed her math-related picture book, *Mooove Over: A Book about Counting by Twos*, saying, "Readers will cheer as the ill-mannered bovine gets her comeuppance . . . the illustrations will keep them in stitches as they practice counting."

A graduate of Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Communications, Ms. Beil has worked as a news reporter in Chicago, IL, a science editor, magazine journalist, and publisher of an award-winning regional natural history magazine in New York. She lives in Guilderland, NY.

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