

Print Media Press Kit—*Sniffing for Democracy*

Nora P. Meek
Publisher PM, INK
www.pmink.net
ISBN 0-9753852-0-8

This kit contains the following:

Page	
2	Contact information
	Bio of Nora P. Meek, author of <i>Sniffing for Democracy</i>
3	Bio of Pamela Meek, Ph.D. creator and background researcher for <i>Sniffing for Democracy</i> and parent of author
	Dr. Meek's media experience with radio interviews
4	Headlines that express the concept of <i>Sniffing for Democracy</i>
	Media headlines that <i>Sniffing for Democracy</i> addresses
	The most controversial aspects of <i>Sniffing for Democracy</i>
	Two most important reasons for children to read <i>Sniffing for Democracy</i>
5	Synopses of favorite chapters
	Benefits to children by reading <i>Sniffing for Democracy</i>
7	Selected published article Young Artist and Author to Sign New Book
8	Selected press release
10	Sample news stories Short—A Crash Course in Democracy for Kids by a Kid Long—What's a Mom to Do with a Kid Like This?

Contact information

Dr. Pamela Meek

Telephone 301-424-0683

Email pamela.meek@verizon.net

Address 522 Anderson Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Ms Nora Meek Contact Dr. Meek. Nora is 12 years old and can be interviewed but only with permission

Bio—Nora P. Meek-Author

Ms Meek is an established artist who has shown her work in galleries in New Orleans, Washington, DC, Baltimore and Miami. Her sculpture designs and paintings focus primarily on dogs. *Sniffing for Democracy* is her first book. She is currently in the sixth grade. Ms Meek's artwork can be viewed at www.norameek.com.

Bio—Pamela Meek, Ph.D.-Creator, background research, parent

Dr. Meek has worked as a child psychologist for over 30 years providing therapy, consultation and psychological evaluations for children, families and schools.

Education

- 1976 Ph.D. Psychological Foundations of Education, U. of Fla.
- 1971 M.Ed. Psychological Foundations of Education, U. of F.
- 1970 B.A. Psychology, U. of Florida

License/Certification

- 1986 Psychologist District of Columbia-Inactive Status
- 1980 Psychologist State of Maryland-Inactive Status
- 1973 School Psychologist Maryland State Board of Ed.

Professional Experience

- 1973-2004 School Psychologist Montgomery County, Maryland, Public Schools
 - Individual and group counseling
 - Psychological evaluations for ages 4-21
 - Learning disabilities
 - Autistic Spectrum Disorders
 - Emotional disturbance
 - Intellectual Limitation
 - Consultations with students, staff and parents in alternative programs such as the Phoenix program for drug involved youth
- 1987-89 Psychologist, Part-time Montgomery Psychiatric Services, Olney, MD
 - Individual and family therapy
 - Psychological evaluations
- 1984-87 Psychologist, Part-time Oak Leaf Center, Bethesda, MD
 - Individual and group therapy
 - Psychological Evaluations

Publications

- 1990 The Role of the School Psychologist During a Post-Suicide Crisis

Dr. Meek's Media Experience with Radio Interviews

- December 29, 11-11:30am, WQYK, Tampa, Florida, Karen Boyd
- November 24, 1:35, KXL, Portland, Oregon
- November 3, 9:05-10am, WBIG, Chicago, Paul Morgan Show
- November 2, 8:10-8:20, WKRC Cincinnati, Jerry & Craig Show
- October 31, 3-4pm, KDKA, Pittsburgh, Susie Barbour Show
- October 25, 5:05-5:20 pm Nationally Syndicated Drew Mariani Show.
- October 16, 7:05-7:20, WTKK, Boston, Bruce Stephens Show

Headlines that express the concept of *Sniffing for Democracy*

- Teach Your Children Well...About Democracy
- It's Important for Young Children to Be Educated About Democracy
- What Should Young Children Know about Democracy, War and Elections?
- A Child's Point of View on Democracy, War and the Current Political Scene
- A Child Gets 'It.' Pass it On
- Ask Any Dog—Our Democracy Stinks!
- A Crash Course in Democracy for Kids

Media headlines that *Sniffing for Democracy* addresses

1. The Iraq War
2. The Kyoto Treaty
3. Count Every Vote, The Right to Vote
4. Outsourcing
5. Environmental Impact of Deforestation
6. The Presidential Debates

The most controversial aspects of *Sniffing for Democracy*

- The main character's sense of smell makes him smarter than the president who is a monkey. He senses that something is wrong with the democracy he lives in because it started to stink when he was arrested for criticizing the president.
- Dogs know better than to make a pre-emptive strike against another dog. The president, who is a monkey, should, too.

Two most important reasons for children to read *Sniffing for Democracy*

- Children are able to understand complex topics like freedom of speech, pre-emptive war, and outsourcing if they are presented in a child-friendly way.
- Parents need to educate their children about current events so they don't have to helplessly accept the world that is handed to them.

Synopses of Favorite Chapters

1. Chapter 1 Freedom of Speech Takes a Dive! The fast paced book begins with the arrest of the main character, Spangle, for criticizing the President of the United States of Dogs. Children are introduced to the idea that freedom of speech is one of the hallmarks of a true democracy.
2. Chapter 8 The Writing's on the Cave Wall-- In this chapter children learn about the African concept of Ubuntu which is tied in later in the book to one of the underpinnings of democracy, i.e. that government's job is to look out for the well-being of the common dog, not for the wealthy or elite.
3. Chapter 10 What is Democracy--The main characters are thrust back in time and meet dogs named Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. Children will learn about Paine's essay Common Sense and how it provided the foundation for democracy in the United States.
4. Chapter 13 Talk About Stench! Florida—Children learn about the studies that show the deterioration of the Florida Everglades ([Link](#)) as well as get a review of the Florida election debacle which leads into needing every vote to count.
5. Chapter 14 Election 2004! Not to give away the ending but the main character runs for president against the incumbent. Since the incumbent is a monkey, he can only hoot and holler in the debate.

Benefits to Children from Reading *Sniffing for Democracy*

Children will inherit a world they did not create, but which they will have to fix. This book presents in a child-friendly way the issues they will be faced with. Hopefully their heightened awareness will hopefully result in their taking a bigger role in demanding that adults change direction.

1. Studies show that young adults are not involved in the political process. It is predicted that many 18-21 year olds won't vote in the upcoming election. [Link](#)
 - Children need to learn from a young age the importance of participation in a democracy.
 - With Sniffing for Democracy the parent can teach their child at an early age about important aspects of a democratic system so that when they do reach voting age they are more likely to take part.

- The book inspires children to get involved in the political process at a young age.
2. Complex topics such as voting rights, war and democracy presented through the metaphor of a dog's sense of smell makes learning about complex topics fun for and understandable to the young reader.
 - Using the metaphor of a dog sniffing for a democracy that smells right the reader is taken around the world in search for the right smell.
 - The main character, Spangle, goes to England, France, Russia, China, Australia and South Africa in his attempt to find it.
 - He finally finds out what a true democracy smells like and learns its basic tenets by being thrust back in time to Philadelphia in 1776 what a real democracy smells like.
 3. From pollution to outsourcing to pre-emptive war, children can understand the dilemmas we face.
 - When Spangle goes to England he finds out that a U.S. car manufacturer makes pollution-free cars in England that are not sold in the U.S. He realizes why the air stinks back in his own country.
 - Spangle and his side-kick, Liberté, whom he meets in Paris, find out about outsourcing in China. They learn the difference between capitalism and democracy.
 - What do they learn about pre-emptive war? Dogs aren't supposed to attack another dog unless he comes into their territory in a ferocious way.
 - To follow up, how should parents talk to their children about war? [Link](#)
 4. Don't underestimate the child's ability to comprehend complex issues. They just need to be presented in a child-friendly way.
 - Many words and names were changed to a kind of dog language.
 - For example, the Kyoto Treaty is changed to the Boneyoto Treaty, the Vice President's name is Chow Chow, and the leader of the country that President Weed decides to invade is a Bully Rott, both of which are based on the names of breeds of dogs.

Selected Published Article

- Published in The Gazette, Maryland, June 16, 2004

Young artist and author to sign new book

by Margaret Bryer

Special to The Gazette

Eleven-year-old Nora Meek, already an accomplished artist and now an author, will hold the first signing of her book, "Sniffing for Democracy," on Saturday at the Brookside Gardens Conservatory in Wheaton.

The Rockville resident wrote and illustrated the 62-page book for young readers, which chronicles the adventures of a dog named Spangle, who searches the world for a democracy that smells right.

The staff at Brookside Gardens offered Nora the space for her book-signing event because they know of her artistic talents. She designed several sculptures that have been part of Brookside's annual sculpture show.

Nora, a fifth-grader at Beall Elementary in Rockville, designed her first sculpture at age 6. She drew "Big Red," a figure of a girl with red pigtailed, and her mother and fellow artist Phelan Meek created the steel and fiberglass sculpture.

Although Phelan Meek welds the steel pieces together and coats them with fiberglass, Nora designs and critiques during every stage of the creation process.

Nora has designed over 15 sculptures. Her favorite, she said, is called "Dog Angel."

"I had drawn it before on a piece of paper, and my mom found it lying around the house," Nora said. "She asked if she could make it into a sculpture and I was really excited about that. She made it really well."

Despite her accomplishments in sculpture, Nora said she enjoys writing more.

"It takes less concentration," she said. "My mom always needs to know lots about the sculpture. When I write, I can be as creative as I want."

Nora has written and illustrated at least 20 books of her own, but "Sniffing for Democracy" is her first published work.

"Sniffing for Democracy" was originally Phelan Meek's idea. However, the book soon became Nora's project.

"She wanted me to help her write a book about how the Republican side was going so badly and the Democratic side was going so well," Nora said. "I ended up writing 95 percent of it and illustrating it."

Nora is uncertain about any future publications. However, she and her mother are already planning another sculpture, "maybe a memorial for [Nora's] dog" that died earlier this year.

After her event in Wheaton, Nora will go to Bettcher Gallery, a Miami gallery that shows her artwork, for a televised book-signing event. Nora also has shown her artwork in galleries in Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Baltimore and Olney.

The local book-signing event will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday at Brookside Gardens Conservatory, 1500 Glenallan Ave. in Wheaton. "Sniffing for Democracy" is available through Amazon.com, Bowker's Books in Print, Alibris and other venues.

Selected Press Release

New Book by Child Author Teaches Children about Democracy in a Child-Friendly Way

With *Sniffing for Democracy* Nora P. Meek, age 11, teaches children about democracy, politics and current events in an approachable way, laying the foundation for them to be better able to participate in the political process when they become young adults. Ms Meek knows instinctively how to make difficult concepts accessible to children. In *Sniffing for Democracy* she uses a dog's sense of smell to teach what a democracy should and shouldn't smell like.

Sniffing for Democracy chronicles the adventures of a dog named Spangle who, after being arrested for criticizing the president, searches the world over for a democracy that smells right because his started to stink.

In chapters with titles like "Up Against the Great Wall of Outsourcing," "What is Democracy?" and "Talk About Stench! Florida" Spangle meets dogs around the world who instruct him about capitalism, pollution, outsourcing, the right to vote, freedom of speech and war.

Spangle finds out what a true democracy smells like when he is thrust back in time to the beginning of democracy in the United States of Dogs. Invigorated Spangle resolves to join with other dogs and change the smell of the democracy in 2004.

Lynn Chertkov, social worker and child therapist, "*Sniffing for Democracy*, enriched by the words and drawings of a child, opens the door for children to understand what democracy is—its strengths and weaknesses. It is both entertaining and an excellent educational tool. It encourages an exchange of ideas either in your home or in your classroom. This is not just a book to buy and put on your shelf."

Tony Trupiano, nationally syndicated radio show host of The Tony Trupiano Show, "*Sniffing for Democracy* opens a door to the ideal that empowering our children with a real understanding of the political process, and giving voice and reason to be engaged in what we have a birth right to participate in, is a gift any family can give. This book is an excellent first step to introducing young people in how to become engaged in and curious about their future."

Parents and teachers can use *Sniffing for Democracy* as a springboard for discussions about democracy, war, freedom of speech, pollution, outsourcing and voting rights. A set of questions for book discussion groups is provided to enable them to get the most out of this approachable way of teaching about current events.

SNIFFING FOR DEMOCRACY

Nora P. Meek

Published by PM, INK

ISBN 0-9753852-0-8/Trade Paperback/\$11.99

Available through the publisher www.pmink.net, www.SniffingforDemocracy.com, www.amazon.com, and www.barnesandnoble.com

About Nora P. Meek

Nora P. Meek is an eleven year old established artist who has sold her artwork in galleries in Baltimore, New Orleans and Miami. Her website is www.norameek.com. *Sniffing for Democracy* is based on an idea

by Ms Meek's mother, Pamela Meek, Ph.D. psychologist. Dr. Meek did the background research, Nora P. Meek wrote the text.

For media copy or interview, contact:
Pamela Meek, Ph.D.
301-424-0683
<http://www.SniffingforDemocracy.com>

###

Sample news stories

- **Short** A Crash Course in Democracy for Kids by a Kid

Nora Meek, age 11, wrote *Sniffing for Democracy* at the behest of her mother, psychologist Pamela Meek. Alarmed at the direction the Bush administration was taking on issues like freedom of speech, the Kyoto treaty, voter rights, war and pollution Dr. Meek convinced Nora to write a child-friendly book about democracy for kids.

A collaborative mother/daughter effort, *Sniffing for Democracy* employs dogs as characters to make these complex topics easy reading for children. In addition, they use the metaphor of a dog's sense of smell to assist understanding. According to Dr. Meek children are able to reason logically by age 7 and abstractly by age 11. The device of the sense of smell helps bridge the gap in comprehension of complex and rather abstract concepts like democracy. Dr. Meek pointed out "Children are taught at a young age that if something doesn't smell right, they shouldn't eat it." In *Sniffing for Democracy* use of the sense of smell helps the child understand what a good democracy is and what it isn't.

For example, in chapter one—Freedom of Speech Takes a Dive—children learn that in a good smelling democracy the citizens are allowed to criticize the government and the president. The main character, Spangle, sensed that the United States of Dogs didn't smell right when he was arrested for criticizing the president. Spangle and his sidekick, Liberté, finally learn what a true democracy smells like and why when they are thrust back in time and meet dogs named Ben Franklin and Tom Paine.

Why bother to teach children about democracy, freedom of speech, voting rights, war and pollution? Dr. Meek points to research that shows the relative lack of involvement in politics and voting in this country by young and old. "Perhaps, if we educated our children earlier they would participate at a younger age and have an impact in the world that's being handed to them," offered Dr. Meek.

- **Long** What's a Mom to Do with a Kid like This?

At 26 months of age, Nora Meek, announced "I want to write an inspirational story about the meaning of life" while scribbling madly. Her mother, psychologist and sculptor, Pamela Meek panicked. Was her daughter some kind of guru and how in the world was she to parent such a child?

The first thing she did was to consult with a fellow psychologist steeped in Eastern religion and gifted children and asked what he thought. All he could say was "Wow!" How should she parent such a child? He suggested for her to simply be a witness.

Shortly after Nora's announcement the principal of her nursery school asked to talk with Pamela about Nora. She was worried. "Nora has so much creative energy you're going to have to provide outlets for her creativity or you'll be in big trouble when she gets in school. Teachers aren't going to know what to do with her."

Nora drew and wrote in her spare time. She had a natural gift with facial expressions, gestures and words. She asked what every word meant that she didn't know from the time she started talking at 7 months. Her first word was "dog" so it was no surprise that most of her art and writings featured dogs.

Throughout the years Pamela learned to keep one step behind Nora, to stay alert and to provide supplies.

Since Nora was good at drawing and Pamela was a part-time sculptor they started a business together converting Nora's artwork into sculptures. Nora designed and Pamela fabricated. Nora did the initial drawings, directed the design process and recommended revisions. Their sculptures started selling in galleries in Washington, DC, Baltimore, New Orleans and Miami. Nora's first gallery show was at age 6.

Gradually, Nora wrote more and more. Pamela gave her a computer when she was 8 so she could write and revise as much as she wanted to.

Nora's writing process was remarkable. In the 3rd grade one of her assignments was to write an essay explaining the meaning of the term "out of my shell." She lay on her bed with her eyes shut swaying back and forth as if in a trance. After seeming to fall asleep, she leapt up and typed the essay into the computer. Her essay it turned out used an archaic definition of the term. Instead of using the typical notion of the term meaning to come out of shyness, she wrote about coming into life. But, true to the principal's prognostication the teacher gave her a "C" on her essay. She'd not heard of that definition of "out of my shell."

A new problem emerged with the 5th grade teacher. Moments after Nora turned in her first essay Pamela received an urgent email from the teacher. She suspected that one of her parents had written the text. No, they had not. Even they were impressed with the essay. Her father had commented when he read it that it was better than most college students.

* *

In the Spring of 2003 a book title popped into Pamela's head. Pamela thinks the derivation of the idea must have been a combination of worry about decisions of the Bush administration and worry about what Nora was going to do all summer. The title that appeared in her consciousness was *Sniffing for Democracy*. The theme flashed in her mind as well—a dog lives in a democracy that stinks.

But, Pamela realized immediately she didn't have the skill to bring the idea to fruition. After all she wrote like a research scientist. *Sniffing for Democracy* needed to be written in a voice that would endear itself to children as a fun tale and to adults as a political allegory of the time.

She asked Nora to write the book. That solved both problems: her worry about the world situation and how to keep Nora occupied over the summer. Nora loved the idea.

During the collaboration Pamela sat at the computer while Nora lay on the floor. They talked about story lines. For example, Pamela told Nora the news story about the man who was arrested somewhere in the Midwest for wearing a T-shirt that criticized President Bush. Nora's eyes shut and her body swayed back and forth. Out popped Chapter 1—Freedom of Speech Takes a Dive.

It went back and forth like that. Pamela gave Nora information which Nora converted to fiction from a dog's point of view. Pamela researched topics like voting rights, pollution and environmental deregulation on the internet, came with a fact relevant to current events and to the storyline which she shared with Nora. Nora would then go into her trance-like state after which she blurted out text which Pamela furiously typed into the computer.

The most unexpected fictionalization Nora came up with was when the main characters sniffed around South Africa for a good smelling democracy. Spangle and Liberté toured cave paintings representing the South African concept of Ubuntu. Ubuntu means roughly humanity towards others. Suddenly Spangle and Liberté were thrust back in time to Philadelphia to the beginnings of democracy in the United States. The uniting of the concepts of Ubuntu and Tom Paine's *Common Sense* for the common dog became apparent and we find out what a true democracy smells like.

What's next? A sequel, of course. Nora's got a lot more to say.