

I am sure by now all PHS students have come to the realization that our high school's hallways are dangerous places. Having suffered various injuries and many embarrassing moments myself - due to their crowdedness and rambunctious inhabitants - I feel compelled to rant and advise you on how to survive these risky passageways.

What to watch out for:

1 People moving quickly (shoving, pushing, pulling, running, jumping, swerving and power-walking unsteadily, the peevisish "passers" and backpack grabbers). Many people who engage in such activities also think that a hallway is the perfect ambiance for pulling pranks and horseplay.

2 People with angry or conniving expressions (they are more likely to join Category '1' and fall under the "passers" or potential pranksters).

3 The kid with the giant backpack, especially if he or she is moving quickly, as indicated above (this doubles the risk!). One turn and they could wipe you out. Face plant or wall/locker plant are inevitable. This I know to be true. Curse A-wing lockers!

4 Couples. This group is by far the most lethal. If you walk in front of or aside of them, they could easily trip or walk right into you because everyone knows they are only paying attention to each other. If they look safe and you foolishly decide to walk behind them, there are two likely scenarios. Holding hands, they could stop dead to attack each other at any time (literally or with over-zealous affection). Walking separately, they could decide to link up or hold hands spontaneously. This is especially a predicament if you are attempting to walk in between them at that very moment. You must learn the art of fast footwork or be victim of collision or death stares, probably both, and in that order.

Precautions:

Always walk at a steady rate. Slow down and take the time to watch where you are going if you are relatively on time. Do not wear heels. This creates an abundance of problems, especially for those of us whom gravity dislikes. If you cannot resist, go for the thicker heels with minimal length. I hate to disappoint, but in school, I guarantee most people will take no notice of your feet unless they make funny noises when you walk.

Remember:

*Note "Caution-Wet Floor" signs and other warnings. If they are in another language, you cannot pretend you do not know what they mean by this point in your life.

*Keep an eye out for what you are stepping on. There are many undesirable things on the floor that could cause you to slip and that you definitely do not want remaining on the bottom of your shoes.

Allentown author Sally Keehn talks to *The Trumpet*

by Dolly Malik

A few years ago, students at Springhouse Middle School were delighted to have an opportunity to hear and meet the author of the Newberry Award-winning book, *I Am Regina*. The author came to visit the school for the day and shared her presentation about herself and the books. Students even had the opportunity to have their own copies of her books signed. About five years later, *The Trumpet* has received the wonderful opportunity of interviewing her and sharing with Parkland students an insight into this amazing author, Sally Keehn.

Most students remember how exciting it was to have this author come into one of Parkland's very own middle schools, and they probably also recall reading Keehn's books and being captivated by stories of Indians, captives and horses. What students have probably forgotten is that they had a million questions they wanted to ask the author of those books, and these questions will finally be answered and their curiosity quenched.

When the interview began, Keehn had just returned from a walk with her husband, which she says she enjoys doing. Intimidating as it was for a small journalist to be speaking with such a successful writer, Keehn made it easier with her kind words, friendly voice and overall cheerfulness.

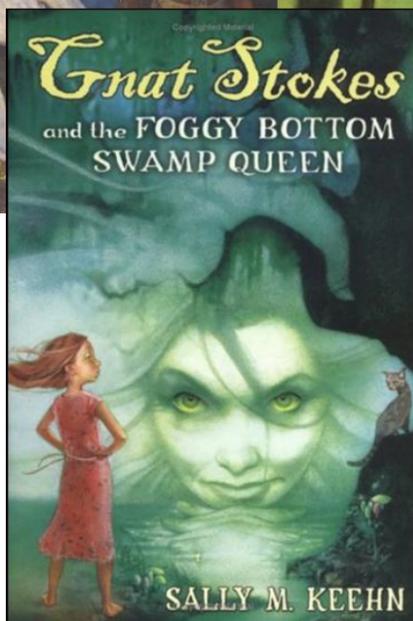
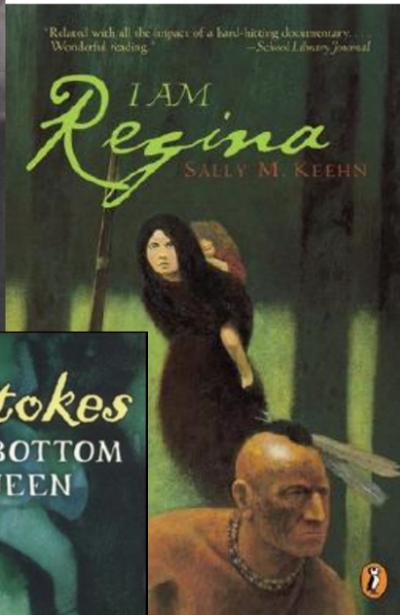
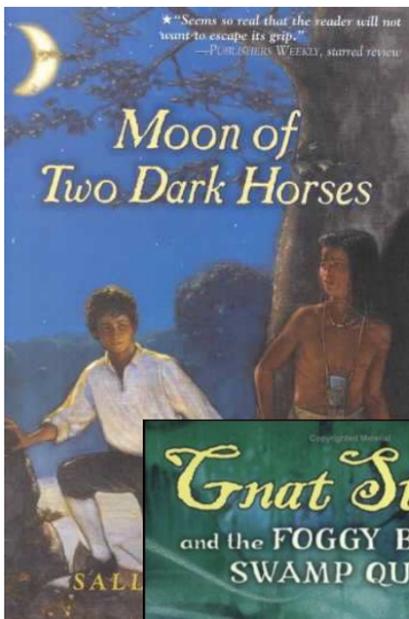
Keehn said that she has always loved reading and the idea of being an author, but she never really believed she was talented enough. Her first published novel was a travel guide she wrote with her husband, but her real success came with the publishing of *I Am Regina*. Upon hearing the news that her book was published, Keehn said, "I was absolutely stunned. It was the most exciting thing except getting married and having kids. My hands were shaking when I found out." It took three years of revision and work with her editor Pattie Gouch before it was finally published as a young adult book.

Keehn said that she was inspired to write the novel because she was always fascinated by Native American culture, and when she was in school, they did not study—this culture as much as students do today. She learned about this topic through movies and books. She said that she found something romantic in a story about captivity in which the captive is reunited with her family in the end.

Keehn really dives deep into the books she writes. She does a lot of research and even visits the settings she uses for her

novels, so that she can get a better sense of what she is writing and of her characters. She said, "The best part of being an author is that you get to walk in other people's shoes. You get to see life from other people's lives than your own. When you write you get to explore other worlds and be [the characters], which is really fun."

A lot of inspiration in her novels comes from her love of horses. As a teenager, these were her favorite things.



She said, "I just wanted to be out on the farm with horses!"

Keehn has three brothers, one being her twin. She said that her twin brother was her complete opposite; he was interested in math and science whereas she was interested in English. "I had crazy brothers who were boisterous and assertive, and I was the quiet one. By writing, I could get stories told."

The biggest questions many successful people are asked is whether or not their friends and family treat them differently. Keehn said that most of her friends are writers as well, so they understand the joys of writing and it is not a big deal. Keehn is part of many writers' groups and is friends with many other authors such as Jerry Spinelli, author

of *Stargirl*, and Katie DiCamillo, author of *The Tale of Despereaux*.

Keehn is married and has two daughters, and her whole family loves writing. Keehn said, "Writing is a great profession because you can write in your PJ's and have animals with you and there's no punch in card or anything, but it can get lonely sometimes." Yet, Keehn said the remedy to writers' loneliness is joining writers' groups. She suggests joining groups with writers who are better than oneself because then you can improve your writing.

In her free time, Keehn said she enjoys to garden, bike, crochet, do water aerobics and, of course, read. With two cats and one dog, Keehn also loves animals.

Keehn's favorite Disney movie is *Peter Pan*, and her dream vacation would be a photographic safari in Africa. Although for some questions she was

hesitant to pick a favorite, the

Keehn's most popular books include Moon of Two Dark Horses, Gnat Stokes and the Newberry Award-winning I Am Regina.

one she had the hardest time with was her favorite book. "There are too many great books to say one as a favorite. There are so many, but so different, and I've read a lot of great books."

Upon being asked what her favorite book that she had written was, she said, "That's like asking a mother who her favorite child is." She did say, however, that *I Am Regina* was her best-selling book.

Sally Keehn seems to be contemplating the story line of her next book.

Little did anyone know, but Sally Keehn is actually a resident of Allentown. She has been in the area for quite a while and even worked at the Parkland Community Library. The first book that she wrote, which was never published, was actually set locally.

Part of the book was set in Trexler Park and there was also a scene in Parkway Manor. Although it was never published, she did get to read it to first grade students at Parkway Manor. "It was one of those books, where I was just learning how to write," Keehn said.

Keehn also gave some advice for young writers. Laughing a bit, she said, "Write. I can't tell you how many people say 'I want to be a writer', and they don't write down their ideas. Keep a journal, and be willing to revise 90%. Allow yourself to write atrociously through the draft, just to get it done, and then revise!"

A quote that Keehn wanted to share was "Write through." It is a play off of the phrase "right through," meaning that in order to write anything, one has to write through it, until the very end. That is what she has been doing for a while now, and her books turn out amazing.

Currently, she is working on a book about the Underground Railroad. It is about a girl of mixed race who falls in love with a runaway slave on the Underground Railroad during a resistance movement. It will be titled *Broken Star*, so fans should keep on the lookout for it!

Keehn mentioned that one of her inspirations was the book *Sara Plain and Tall*. She said it was historical, but really simplistic, which inspired her to write *I Am Regina*. She said, "[Sara Plain and Tall] gave me hope that one day I could write for young people." She has, very expertly.

Sally Keehn is an extremely talented author, and her books are available wherever books are sold. They are online and in stores and can also be found in either the high school's library or the Parkland Community Library. If any students are interested

in sending out some fan messages, they can e-mail her at SallyKeehn@aol.com.



photo courtesy of Sally Keehn