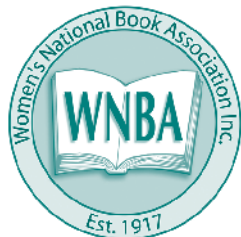


BOSTON
DETROIT
LOS ANGELES
NASHVILLE
NEW YORK CITY
SAN FRANCISCO
SEATTLE
WASHINGTON, D.C.



inside: WNBA AWARD NRGM RECAP ASSEMBLING A BOOK PROPOSAL PACKAGE

President's Message: *One Path to Publication*

How does an author sell 4,000 copies of a historical novel and then land a two-book, six-figure deal with Random House? How does a therapist and writing coach build a national network, write and publish two books under her own imprint, and then sell her book to a national publisher? How does a first-time poet sell almost 2,000 copies, a figure unheard of in the poetry world?

Some might say luck—but these writers would beg to differ. Various as their topics appear, what these authors have in common is a strategy they carefully designed and then diligently worked. On top of a marketing and publicity plan, on top of self-publishing their first editions and then tirelessly and strategically promoting them, they created a community through WNBA and other organizations, leveraged the power of the Internet, and built national networks of supporters and advocates. Commonly called a "platform," this is what publishers require from any writer seeking a publishing deal.

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The BOOKWOMAN

Vol. 72, No. 1
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The Official Publication of the
Women's National Book Association

Writing from the Heart

by Janet Hulstrand

"Everybody is talented, original, and has something important to say."

With these words, Brenda Ueland opened her book, *If You Want to Write*, first published in 1938. Now a classic, Carl Sandburg called it "the best book ever written about how to write" when it first came out.

What does it really mean, to write from the heart? And how does one find the courage, or the stamina, to do so?

"Be bold, be free, be truthful," Ueland exhorted her readers. Well, yes, but that's easier said than done, isn't it? And then again, maybe not.

"Writing is not about grammar, it is about telling the truth," says Nancy Slonim Aronie, in her wonderful book *Writing from the Heart*. And in *The*

continued on page 11

An Interview with Judith Nies

by Jonatha Ceely

I first met Judith Nies when we, by chance, sat next to each other at a Boston WNBA annual dinner in June of 2007; Judith has been a WNBA member since 2003. We plunged immediately into conversation about writing and enjoyed ourselves so much that we agreed to meet again to continue our discussion, which we have yet to reach the end of. Recently we got together to talk about Judith's latest book, The Girl I Left Behind: A Narrative History of the Sixties (Harper Collins, June 2008).

JC: I enjoyed *The Girl I Left Behind* last spring when it came out and recently read it again for discussion with my book group. It stands up well! And it certainly gave rise to a lively exchange of ideas and of our memories of growing up in the 1960s and 70s. Tell me, where did the impetus to write the book begin?

JN: The seed for the book was planted at the dinner table in Yaddo in 1995. In 1996, I published an essay titled "The Girl I Left Behind" in the journal *American Voice*. That essay launched a twelve-year journey of exploration and writing. But the book I ended up with took shape when I was able to read my full FBI file in 2000. Previously, I had received copies of highly redacted pages—almost all black. With the help of my congressman, I finally saw the full thing. It had wonderful notes that reminded me of people I knew and work I had done. That put it all in a larger con-

continued on page 10

An elegant WNBA Award Ceremony

by Nancy Kelly

Best-selling author Amy Tan was the featured speaker at the Women's National Book Association's 2008 WNBA Award ceremony honoring Kathi Kamen Goldmark, held on November 8 at San Francisco's Century Club.

The biennial WNBA Award recognizes an American woman who has made extraordinary contributions to promoting literacy, freedom of expression, a love of reading, or women's careers in the world of books. Goldmark was honored for founding the Rock Bottom Remainers, a band of literary superstars who belt out "Wild Thing" and other rock staples to raise money for book-related causes. The Remainers have raised more than \$2 million, and Tan and Goldmark have shared a microphone as "Remainderettes" since the band's founding. Tan is better known as the author of such much-loved novels as *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Bonesetter's Daughter*. Other band members include Stephen King, Dave Barry, and Matt Groening.

Other featured speakers at the ceremony included Marcia Schroeder from the San Francisco Public Library; Effie Lee Morris, 1984 WNBA Award winner and founding president of the San Francisco chapter of WNBA; Joan Gelfand, national president of WNBA; and Mary Knippel, co-president of the San Francisco chapter. Laurie Beckelman, immediate past president of WNBA, presented the award citation to Kathi.

Special thanks to Vicki Weiland, hospitality chairperson, WNBA-SF, and her committee for their tireless efforts in helping to make the 2008 ceremony such a festive, elegant, and memorable occasion for all of us.



Mary Knippel, San Francisco chapter co-president, welcomes Kathi Kamen Goldmark with a corsage.



From left to right: Former WNBA National President Laurie Beckelman, novelist Amy Tan, WNBA Award winner Kathi Kamen Goldmark, WNBA Award Chair Nancy Kelly, and WNBA National President Joan Gelfand.

WNBA is a national organization of women and men who work with and value books. WNBA exists to promote reading and to support the role of women in the community of the book. *The Bookwoman* is the publication of the Women's National Book Association.



The Bookwoman
Women's National Book Association
c/o Susannah Greenberg Public Relations
PO Box 237, FDR Station, New York, NY 10150
www.wnba-books.org
publicity@bookbuzz.com

Editor/Layout: Shannon Janeczek



*From L to R:
Mary Knippel
with Amy Tan
and Kathi Kamen
Goldmark.*

continued on next page

CORRECTION: The 2008 Eastman Grant winner's last name is Krichten, not Kritchen, as shown on our Web site and in the previous issue of *The Bookwoman*. We apologize for the error.



WNBA Nashville 2008 holiday dinner

From left to right: Merrill Galbraith; Lacey Galbraith (WNBA); Tameron Hedge; Carolyn Eakin, author of *A Little Travel Guide for High Maintenance Women*; Ginna Foster (WNBA); Karen Fairbend; Lee Fairbend (WNBA); Carole Rietz.

WNBA AUTHORS – BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY AND WNBA WEB SITE REMINDER

Remember that there are at least two ways to use the WNBA to promote your book! All WNBA members who are published authors should send two copies to Katherine Dibble (see Katherine's address on the back page of *Bookwoman*) for the Boston Public Library Collection. You should also know that you can enter your book into the WNBA author Web site, but it does not go live immediately. There is an automatic check on whether the author is a WNBA member and we also review the entry for any typos. If the author is not in the WNBA national directory, the chapter president is contacted to confirm the membership and the member's name is added to the directory.

GREEN TIP: Other Uses for Yellow Pages

If you can't throw your Yellow Pages into a recycling bin, here are a few ideas for reusing it:

- Paper maché crafts
- Composting and mulching
- Food for a worm farm
- Bird cage liners and general pet cleanup
- Packing material

WE NEED YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!

The Bookwoman welcomes contributions from WNBA members, especially essays and articles on any aspect of writing and publishing. Writing for *The Bookwoman* is an excellent way to be involved in the organization and to add to your portfolio.

PLEASE READ THE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FIRST
(on www.wnba-books.org),
then submit proposals to
Shannon Janeczek at sjeditor@yahoo.com.

We regret that because of space considerations, or because of a recent article on a similar topic, we may be unable to publish all submitted articles.

Thank you for your help and understanding!

WNBA THANKS OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS:

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Bamboo River Associates
Booksbywomenforwomen.com
HarperCollins Publishers
Ingram Book Company
Paz & Associates
Penguin Group, Inc.
Random House, Inc.
Random House Publishing Group
Susannah Greenberg Public Relations

WNBA PANNELL AWARD SPONSOR

Penguin Young Readers Group

NATIONAL READING GROUP MONTH SPONSORS

HarperCollins Publishers
Random House Publishing Group



MEMBER NEWS

WNBA members contribute to a wide variety of aspects of the book world. We created this column to celebrate members' most newsworthy accomplishments.

LOS ANGELES

Julia Drake won first prize with her travel essay, *Bruja Crocodilo—The Crocodile Witch*, in the DeepTravelers.org Travel Writing Contest this past October.

Carol Ann Howell has just finished a play titled *SKYFIRE*. In it, the Prince saves his people by bringing a sample of the aurora borealis from the North Pole to his kingdom. The play has vampires, witches, and lots of allusions to Shakespeare and history. Carol Ann is looking for an agent.

LaVonne Taylor is starting publication of *The Taylor Trust: Poetry & Prose*, a quarterly journal. Since the project began, poetry and short stories have been flowing in from around the world. The premier issue is due out January 15, 2009. Guidelines and schedules are available by emailing the editor at lavonne.taylor@sbcglobal.net, or going to her Web site, www.thetaylortrust.wordpress.com, and click on "Writer's Guidelines." Taylor says, "I'm finally fulfilling a dream."

In October, the Dream Project started the school year by working with 50 sixth graders at Nimitz Middle School, who came up with brilliant ideas to end poverty and hunger. In January, we will hold our first Dream Project Teacher's Training in L.A., which will offer teachers innovative strategies to capture student

interest, strengthen leadership skills and increase productivity. For information, send an e-mail to Kelly@dreamprojectUN.org or check our Web site to find out more: www.DreamProjectUN.org.

Ina Hillebrandt has new books in the "How to Write Your Memoirs" and "Stories From The Heart" series, slated for 2009. Boardroom.com's December 2008 print newsletter also featured an article written by Ina. She is proud to return to UCLA for "The Living History Project at UCLA," an inter-generational class drawing on writing, storytelling, and personal interaction. She's also started writing coach services to help authors develop and publish their own memoirs.

Sharmagne Leland-St. John and her band of poets, Poetry in Motion, will be celebrating Valentine's Day at Coffee Gallery Backstage (2029 N. Lake) in Altadena, CA, on Friday, February 13th, from 8-10 p.m., by reading love poems and performing love songs from their published works.

NASHVILLE

Gary Slaughter's *Cottonwood Winter: A Christmas Story* was an adult fiction finalist for the *ForeWord* 2008 Book of the Year Award and a finalist for both the general fiction and young adult fiction 2008 Indie Book Awards. Gary's books are richly detailed

reminiscences of life on the American homefront during the last year of WWII.

Bunkie Lynn's article, "What's Your Hurry?" appeared in the August 8 issue of *Lifeway's Living with Teenagers* magazine. The author of two books, Lynn writes a monthly column for Igigi.com, a San Francisco-based clothing retailer.

Pat Ballard, "The Queen of Rubenesque Romances," had the honor of participating in an article in the November 23 issue of *First* magazine. In a magazine that Pat feels pushes unrealistic diets, her article, "I Fought Body Snarking and Won," encouraged the reader to "be happy with yourself, no matter what size you are."

Joanne Slaughter has agreed to represent WNBA as our 2009 ATHENA Award nominee. This annual award, to be presented on March 23, celebrates the unselfish commitment to community and family by one woman in the Nashville area. Joanne exemplifies those qualities, and we are proud to be able to nominate a WNBA member with such worthy accomplishments.

BOSTON

In November, Clea Simon's short story, "Dumb Beasts," was included in *Deadfall: Crime Stories by New England Authors*.

NEW YORK CITY

ForeWord Magazine awarded Carol Hoenig's *The Author's Guide to Planning Book Events* a gold medal for Book of the Year in the writing category. Also, one of Carol's essays is part of the *New York Times* bestseller *Will Work from Home* (August 2008) by Tory Johnson and Robyn Freedman Spizman.

Anna Olswanger coordinated the 10th Annual Jewish Children's Book Writers' Conference. The conference took place in Manhattan on November 23. Award-winning author Johanna Hurwitz gave opening remarks, and there were sessions on subjects like publishing and writing in Israel, as well as individual consultations with editors and agents.

Deborah Brodie, freelance editor, moderates the New School Forum on Writing for Children, Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at 66 West 12th Street, Room 510.

Fran Cohen has been invited to facilitate a series for a "Reading Between the Lines" discussion group, to take place at Washington Library in Port Washington, Long Island. Visit Fran's Web site alendar at <http://www.BookFran.com>.



MEMBER BOOKS

WNBA Members: If you have written a new book, been written about in a new book, or published a new book, please tell us. Send your name along with the book title, publisher, price, ISBN, and 50-word description to your chapter's *Bookwoman* correspondent. Descriptions over 50 words will be edited for space considerations.

NASHVILLE

J.T. Ellison

14

(Mira Publishing, 2008. \$6.99, ISBN 9780778325567)

Nashville residents fear that the Snow White Killer has struck again, and it's up to Homicide Lieutenant Taylor Jackson to solve the crime. *BookPage* called *14*, the second book in Ellison's Taylor Jackson series, the "nail-biting sequel to her debut novel, *All the Pretty Girls*." www.jtellison.com

Helen Hemphill

The Adventurous Deeds of Deadwood Jones

(Front Street Press, 2008. \$16.95, ISBN 9781590786376)

Geared toward readers ages 9-12, Hemphill's action-packed book chronicles the adventures of two young African-American boys working a cattle drive from Texas to Deadwood, South Dakota. *Kirkus Reviews* called Hemphill "a strong new voice in children's literature." Learn more about this well-regarded juvenile fiction writer at www.helenhemphill.com.

Michael Glasgow

The Bridge: The Eric Volz Story—Murder, Intrigue, and a Struggle for Justice in Nicaragua

(Nonfiction. Morgan James Publishing, 2008. \$29.95,

ISBN 9781600375026)

Twenty-five-year old Eric Volz moved to Nicaragua in pursuit of paradise. When his ex-girlfriend, beautiful Doris Ivania Jimenez, was found brutally murdered, Eric's paradise quickly became his prison. The day he helped lay Doris to rest, Eric was arrested for her murder. Contact Mike at mikeglasgow@comcast.net.

SAN FRANCISCO

Joan Gelfand

A Dreamer's Guide to Cities and Streams

(San Francisco Bay Press, January 2009. ISBN 9781604610093)

A Dreamer's Guide to Cities and Streams is both earthy and mystical, leaving readers longing for love, beauty, and the natural world. Gelfand's use of sensual, evocative language opens readers to deep, startling feelings. Poetry lovers will enjoy playful observations of the small, intimate details of daily life as well as poems that open our souls to the urge to be a part of something larger, and more humane.

LOS ANGELES

J.K. Johnson

(Ina Hillebrandt, editor)

The Angel Chronicles

(Teen Fiction. Angel Fire Publications, 2008. \$22.98.

ISBN 9780981919300)

When J.K. Johnson was a teen, her mom committed suicide as she watched. J.K. got drunk, caused an accident, and landed six years in prison. She wrote *The Angel Chronicles* story, often on toilet paper, during those days. And every night the other inmates would listen anxiously for the next installment. More info at AngelFirePublications.com or InasPawprints.com.

Kelly Sullivan Walden

Goddess in a Pinch...How to be Heavenly When Hell is Breaking Loose!

(Available as an e-book series on www.YouPublish.com/gjp, \$4.95)

The PINCH series explores issues that typically throw Goddesses into dramaland. Pinches include JEALOUSY, MONEY, PMS, and TRAFFIC, with the premise that it's easy to be a Goddess when everything is going your way, when the sun is shining... but what do you do when things aren't going so well? *Goddess in a Pinch* is an ebook series filled with quick solutions to daily challenges that will connect you with your Higher Self, the keeper of the keys to your wisdom, strength, confidence, and power.

Sharmagne Leland-St. John

Contingencies

(Poetry. Quill and Parchment

Press with WynterBlue Publishing Canada, Inc., 2008. \$15.00, ISBN: 9780976424420)

Sharmagne Leland-St. John's natural ability for self-revelation is reflected generously throughout her collections of poetry. Like her first two collections, her newest book, *Contingencies*, invites the reader to travel alongside her through passages of time... One can't help but be deeply moved by the sincerity of her poetic voice... Recommended as a wonderful addition for all personal and professional libraries. <http://quillandparchment.com/store.html>

Maria Espinosa

Dying Unfinished

(Wings Press, February 2009. ISBN 9780916727451).

This book continues the saga of characters in a previous novel, *Longing*, which received an American Book Award. It is the story of Eleanor and her daughter, Rosa, told through their alternating voices. Rosa's husband, Antonio, has an affair with Eleanor, adding tension to an already troubled relationship. Rosa feels conflicted with rage and longing for her frustrated mother to find fulfillment with Antonio. More info at www.wingspress.com.

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Sustaining Member Spotlight

Books by Women for Women™ (BBWFW) is what so many women authors and readers have been looking for—a fantastic marketing opportunity for women who are anxious to read the works of other women and a place to buy and sell books written by women. Its unique approach has women reading, writing and talking with excitement: “Finally an amazing resource for female authors’... ‘A fantastic concept’... ‘Really, really brilliant!’... ‘The female Amazon’... ‘It’s about time.”

BBWFW was created by Carolina Loren, who was a book publisher for over 16 years. In the fall of 2007, Carolina had just spent three exhausting months publishing a book about women having it all. At the same time, she was reading two books by incredible female authors—*Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza and *Infidel* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Carolina relates that she was in awe when she reflected on who these women were, and yet she had never heard about them. At the same time, she was also given two extraordinary coffee table books written by two other outstanding women.

Carolina was so inspired that she started reflecting on all the other remarkable female authors out there, then wondered where they were and how to promote them. How could you bring them all together? Sitting at her desk one evening, she came up with BooksbyWomenforWomen.com.

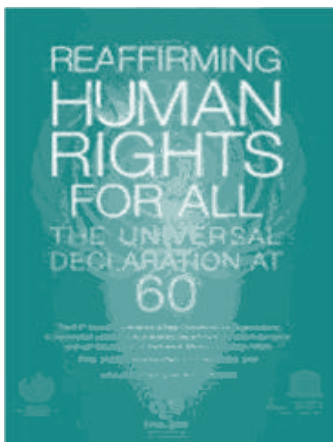
BBWFW recently became a Sustaining Member of WNBA, and this month, the BBWFW organization is offering a 40% discount on the monthly BBWFW membership fee to all WNBA authors/members. For only \$15.00 per month, you can have your book on the BBWFW website. And for all members who sign up during this special promotion, BBWFW will give back 10% of your BBWFW total membership to WNBA. Orders that come in from the Web site will be automatically sent to your e-mail. You then have two weeks to mail out your book to the customer, along with any other promotional materials you may want to include. At the end of each month, you will receive a check from BBWFW for the price of your book, plus shipping, minus 8%.

Books by Women for Women will become the world's #1 online resource for female authors worldwide. It will serve as a community interface where millions of women readers come to find long-time favorite authors and discover fresh new talent. They will also connect with like-minded women seeking knowledge and inspiration from great books. This marketing vehicle will provide vast international exposure to women readers seeking women authors. No female author can afford to miss it!

Check it out: www.booksbywomenforwomen.com.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights turns 60



Sixty years ago, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a groundbreaking document recognizing fundamental, equal, and inalienable rights for all individuals, which was drafted at the UN under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt [a WNBA Award recipient].

Thanks in large part to the Declaration, much progress has been made in the realm of human rights. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go.

In a 21st-century world in which violence, torture, human trafficking, and even genocide continue to persist, the Universal Declaration remains a unique and invaluable instrument for promoting universal respect for basic human rights.

Help commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and honor the legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt, by calling on President Obama to recommit the United States to the Declaration's enduring principles and to

work through the UN to promote human rights.

TAKE ACTION NOW by visiting: <http://capwiz.com/unausa/utr/1/JEEUJNBHDJ/BYZEJNCRDZ/2696605101>.

Member Books, *cont. from page 5*



Gail Perry Johnson

The Social Cause Diet, Vol 1.

This book is pure inspiration and encouragement for living a fulfilling life. *The Social Cause Diet* is perfect for book clubs or a gift for that special friend. Email gail@cupolapress.com or call 925-977-9300 for a great discount on ten or more books, or to request signed copies. Or consider sending in a story for Volume 2!

NEW YORK CITY

Carol de Giere

Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz, from Godspell to Wicked (Applause Books, September 2008. \$24.95, ISBN 9781557837455).

The first authorized career biography of Broadway and film songwriter Stephen Schwartz. For events and info, please visit www.defyinggravitythebook.com.

Francis Keeping and Roberta Prada

Opera and Its Characters (Vox Mentor LLC, 2008).

A witty book full of the historical information for and performance history of twenty operas. Behind the scenes at an opera house, there is a zany world of larger-than-life characters, both on and off stage. Filled with tales told by two singers and their friends, giving you their take on twenty operas through the eyes of the characters. Currently available at Barnes & Noble, Amazon, and voxmentor.com.

BOSTON

Marion Kilson and Florence Ladd

"Is That Your Child?" Mothers Talk about Rearing Biracial Children

(Lexington Books, November 2008. \$22.95, ISBN 79127632).

It's the question, the title, and none of your business. Mothers of mixed-race children may not resemble their offspring and are frequently asked that innocent, yet intrusive, question. Social scientists conduct interviews with biracial families to explore the challenges of raising a mixed-race child in a culture that continues to be suspicious about "differences."

John Myerson and Judith Robbins

Voices from the Other Side of the Couch: A Warrior's View of Shamanic Healing (Life Arts Press, 2008. ISBN 9780981642000. \$19.99).

Judith Robbins brings forward the voice of John Myerson, a present-day shaman, who helps clients to find their own voices with which to negotiate their outer and inner worlds. Available on Amazon.

Diane Rapaport

The Naked Quaker: True Crimes and Controversies from the Courts of Colonial New England

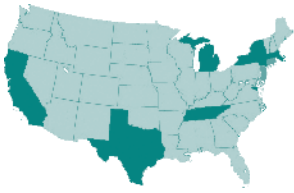
(Commonwealth Editions, October 2008. \$19.99, ISBN 9781933212579).

An attorney and historian reveals the adultery, drunkenness, theft, and public nudity which existed in 17th and 18th century New England. The book was named a finalist for *Foreword Magazine's* "Book of the Year" Award for History.

Clea Simon

Probable Claws (Poisoned Pen Press, April 2009. \$24.95, ISBN 9781590585641).

This is the fourth book in Clea Simon's Theda Krakow (and pawed partner, Musetta) series, part of a new genre of mystery—"pet noir."



CHAPTER NEWS

NASHVILLE

“WNBA Nashville: Connecting the Book Community” is our new tagline, and nothing better exemplifies our commitment to the book community than our presence at October’s Southern Festival of Books. Chapter members organized activities, transported authors, moderated panel discussions, and lent support wherever it was needed, all in an effort to ensure the festival’s success. We also manned a WNBA booth, where we introduced festival goers to our organization and promoted books by our chapter’s authors.

In celebration of National Reading Group Month, Nashville hosted a “Breakfast with an Author.” Elizabeth Strout, author of *Olive Ketteridge*, was our featured speaker, and she welcomed short story writer Bobbie Ann Mason as a special guest. Authors, guests, and WNBA members gathered for conversation and a light breakfast, and then relaxed over coffee as Strout discussed her latest best-seller and answered questions from the audience. The gathering radiated the warm, comfortable atmosphere of a very large book club, inspiring Strout to post the following on her Web site, “...to be in the presence of readers who are also invested in what we writers have to say, was a true thrill. I write for other people. And there they were. Book clubs are giving me hope...to

visit a group dedicated to the art and act of reading reminded me that people are still actively receiving what it is we writers do alone.” Bobbie Ann Mason graciously agreed to speak as well, and the audience showered her with questions about her prize-winning Nancy Culpepper chronicles. Mason’s honest, self-effacing answers lent her discussion the same relaxed, convivial ambience we enjoyed with Elizabeth Strout. Attendance was twice the number we had hoped for, and attendees left raving about the experience. Many referred to it as the highlight of the festival and asked to be put on next year’s invitation list.

The Nashville chapter continues to explore opportunities for members to socialize. We kicked off the year with a Garden Party/Book Swap, and we always look forward to our annual Book Sale and Holiday Dinner. Additionally, a large group from our chapter went to David Sedaris’s hilarious play, “The Santaland Diaries.”

Our membership rolls have increased dramatically this fall, thanks to our strong presence at the book festival, our “Breakfast with an Author,” and the invitation we extended through Facebook last summer, asking people to our first meeting. Attendance at the chapter’s bi-monthly book club continues to increase as well, and, because we meet at the library, our discussions are open to the public, giv-

ing us yet another opportunity to introduce more book lovers to WNBA.

LOS ANGELES

The LA chapter had a visit in August from Boston chapter member Amy Kwei, who told us about her book, *Intrigue in the House of Wong*. We held our meeting at PI restaurant and enjoyed fine Mediterranean food as we listened to Amy discuss her YA book. Amy then donated several copies to our chapter for fundraising!

September brought with it our annual booth at the West Hollywood Book Fair. This year we outdid ourselves! In addition to our usual fare of great books for sale, featured authors, and hand-made items, Kelly Sullivan Walden organized a panel of chapter members who presented a discussion titled *Birthing a Book: The Shero’s Journey!* Our esteemed authors were Bernadette Coleman, Laurel Corona, Ina Hillenbrandt, Pamela Oland, and Mira Tweti, with Kelly as the moderator. It was very successful, getting rave reviews from several people, including the person in charge of the speakers’ pavilion, who listened to every panel all day long and deemed ours the best!

Our October three-author event at Book Soup on Sunset Blvd. was a big success. Thanks go to Jill Tardiff, who managed to get us three exceptional authors

to celebrate National Reading Group Month—Lisa See, David Fuller, and Yxta Maya Murray. All three were funny, interesting, and informative, and they really captivated the audience. After listening to them and asking questions, we went to the back of the store for book signings, wine and lots of schmoozing. David Fuller was able to join us for dinner afterwards and delighted us further with his being-an-author stories.

Our newsletter continues to be a real winner! Our new and brilliant newsletter editor, Julia Drake, does monthly interviews with a chapter member in the newsletter. She is also very “green,” and gives us lots of tips for greening up our lives.

Our holiday gathering this year was held on December 6th, and was organized primarily by chapter member Mira Tweti, who showed her film, *Little Miss Dewie, a Duckumentary*. Kelly Sullivan Walden also showed her film, *Will You Listen?*, in which teenagers address human rights issues that societies are dealing with around the world. There was also a successful silent auction—and a pet psychic on hand!

SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco has had a sensational fall season, beginning with September’s Membership Mixer at Kepler’s Books and Magazines, this year’s WNBA Pannell Award winner. We toasted their award

and heard about the accomplishments and work of some 50 members and guests.



October saw WNBA-SF hosting a reception at Book Passage (see picture above), recognizing NRG and featuring Philippa Gregory, author of *The Other Queen*. She spoke of her writing methods and showed slides detailing the research involved in her work. The evening culminated with everyone eating cake as we celebrated the riches of our own queen-like lives and the fact that we are not living in those challenging times.

October brought several WNBA members to LitQuake, San Francisco's Literary Festival, in which events take place all over the city and hundreds of accomplished authors and poets read their work. WNBA-SF participants included: Joan Gelfand, Paula Hendricks, Lucille Lang Day, Alice Wilson Fried, Christopher Gortner, Connie Post, and Elisa Southard.

November's event attracted many WNBA members to the Bay Area to witness another milestone in WNBA history, as Kathi Kamen Goldmark received the WNBA Award at a beautiful ceremony at the historic Century Club (where we learned how the

words, "Hey, do you wanna...?" can be life changing)!

In December, we hosted

Christine Comaford, *New York Times*-bestselling author of *Rules for Renegades*, who shared her words of

wisdom about how to make your book a bestseller.

We are making plans for our next Meet-the-Agents event, as well as the Author Showcase, offering members an opportunity not only to find an agent for their book, but also market their completed work.

NEW YORK CITY

National Reading Group Month, Take 2—On October 27, 2008, the 2nd National Reading Group Month was celebrated.

Organized by Jill Tardiff, National Reading Group Month chairperson, and chapter president Valerie Tomaselli—and under the sponsorship of Harper Perennial, Hyperion/Voice, and Random House Publishing Group/Readers Circle—the event offered up conversation and readings from five acclaimed authors:

-Anisha Lakhani (*Schooled*, Hyperion)

- Alice Mattison (*Nothing is Quite Forgotten in Brooklyn*, Harper Perennial)

- Dalia Sofer (*The Septembers of Shiraz*, Harper Perennial)

- Elizabeth Strout (*Olive Kitteridge*, Random House Trade Publishing)

- Anya Ulinich (*Petropolis*, Viking).

Our moderators—Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp (authors of *The Book Club Cookbook*, Tarcher)—kept the authors and audience engaged with probing questions.

We've had an exciting year so far! Listed below are the upcoming 2009 panel events to come:

- Legal Issues for Writers, Agents, and Other Publishing Professionals, Wednesday, January 21.

- Mystery Books: Readers and Writers' Perspectives, Wednesday, February 18.

- Marketing Workshop—Getting the Word Out: Marketing Your Book in a Brave New World, Wednesday, March 18.

- Food Books for Every Booklover's Palate, Wednesday, April 15.

DETROIT

The Detroit chapter kicked off the new program year with a meet-and-greet networking event. On September 10, members shared a yummy potluck dinner at the Wayne Public Library. The evening provided attendees an opportunity for recruiting new members and networking with current members.

WNBA Detroit hosted a National Reading Group Month program on October 2, at the Huntington Woods Public Library, featuring HarperCollins

author Dr. Thomas C. Foster as the guest speaker. Tom Foster is the author of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and *How to Read Novels Like a Professor*. Dr. Foster spoke for an hour on "Reading Character," discussing characters as the main element of a novel, as well as the character of reading and the way that the reader interacts with the characters in a novel. The talk was followed by a half-hour of lively Q and A. A local independent bookstore brought copies of Dr. Foster's books to sell, which he signed for guests. The program was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

On November 19, Detroit chapter members met for a fire-side book chat at the home of Vice President Annette Haley for a belated National Reading Group Month commemoration. Annette, a very gracious hostess, served an assortment of finger foods and desserts. Annette led a thoughtful discussion of the book *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace ... One School at a Time* (by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin).

An interview with Judith Nies, *cont. from front page*

text. I guess I should thank J. Edgar Hoover for his help.

JC: The book is such an interesting combination of memoir and history.

JN: The poet Czeslaw Milosz has a memorable observation about memoir: "It made no difference to the people on the trains to Auschwitz if father was cold or mother drank." He was critical of the fact that so much American memoir focuses on mother-father-siblings under a bell jar. So I took a cue from European memoir in which the narrator is expected to understand the historical era he or she is traveling through. That focus allowed me to frame my personal



experience in larger historical terms. I took the memoir form and morphed it into the larger story of the 1960s.

JC: Was it difficult to find a publisher?

JN: The big obstacle was the mixed genre of memoir and history. Several editors were interested but didn't know if the book would find its audience, or if it would get reviewed. Originally, I wrote a lot about growing up in Swampscott, Massachusetts, but most of that

got cut. It was more important to keep the narrative moving and to see the larger picture for women, than to unpack family history. When editors liked the writing style but were reluctant to buy the work because there was no book like it, Jill Conway offered to write a letter saying the book is important because no one else has done it. That made a huge difference. She really mentored the book. She's a historian, a scholar of memoir, and the first woman president of Smith College. She gave me some great advice.

JC: For example?

JN: Don't expect to get it right the first time around. And imagine you are writing for your perfect reader.

JC: How have readers responded to the book? Have there been surprises?

JN: I have met such a variety of people through readings and book clubs. I hear from people through my Web site and blog too. I received an e-mail from someone I knew forty years ago: "Greetings from page 39," she said. The book is a story of the Boomer Generation, so women over fifty are interested, because it is relevant to their own experience. But they are also buying the book for their daughters

and their granddaughters. I heard from a seventeen-year-old who was writing a paper on "What Feminism Means to Me." The biggest surprise has come from fathers, who say they are learning about the women's movement in order to better guide their daughters. When the book talk I gave at Porter Square Books was broadcast on CSPAN, I heard from a woman in Missouri who wrote to say that she saw my work on par with *The Feminine Mystique* because I am telling the story of a generation.

JC: And you are! What else do you think women are responding to in the book?

JN: Women tend not to think of themselves as vehicles for history. A work like *The Greatest Generation* is about men, and men take that for granted. How often have you heard a woman say "She's the best of her generation"? Women are not taught to think historically; they tend to have amnesia about their own time. Friends who have read the book say, "I hardly knew you at all," because we have never talked about the 1960s and 70s, except in terms of individual choices. A recent reader said, "You captured what women were up against." So it's memories and also the context of the times—the history—that give women a fresh way of looking at their own lives.

JC: Did you have to put a lot of energy into reaching readers, into marketing with this book?

JN: Yes, and it's hard to do publicity for oneself. Hiring a publicity agent can make a difference, but there's the catch-22 of getting more sales while alienating the professionals at the publishing house. I have been lucky to have good communication with the publicity people at HarperCollins.

JC: Do you have any tips for other writers?

JN: Start early to think about marketing. I learned a lot about new media marketing with this book. Get quotes and blurbs. Have something—like a postcard—to pass out before the book is done. Get help from friends and relatives to spread the word. And good photographs are important: the Internet age is a visual age.

JC: Where can readers find you online?

JN: My Web site, www.judithnies.com. My e-mail address is there.

Judith Nies has worked as a journalist, teacher, historian, researcher, and speechwriter, and is the author of several books. Her work has appeared in the New York Times, the Boston Globe, the Christian Science Monitor, and other publications. She is currently at work on another book.

Jonatha Ceely is the author of two historical novels, Mina and Bread and Dreams, both published by Bantam Dell. She has also published short fiction. See www.jonathaceely.com for more information.

Writing From the Heart, *cont. from front*

Right to Write, Julia Cameron says, "Writing is about getting something down, not about thinking something up."

It's starting to sound easier—isn't it?

Robert Wolf, a wonderful teacher of writing and author of *Jump Start: How to Write from Everyday Life*, has more specific advice: "Write as much as you can without thinking about the book's organization," he counsels. "Arrange your writing later, after you have accumulated a large amount of material."

But how do you get started? Perhaps these words from the great German poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, might help: "There is only one thing you should do. Go into yourself," he wrote.

And once you get going? "You simply keep putting down one damn word after the other, as you hear them, as they come to you," Anne Lamott advises in *Bird by Bird*.

Of course that is not always so easy or so simple, as suggested by the mild curse word Lamott invokes. Lamott also talks about the importance of "shi**y first drafts," and their inevitability in a creative process that can be at times frustrating and painful.

Is it worth it?

Well, of course, that's a question for each writer to answer for herself. But for those who have the courage and commitment to try, the rewards can be great.

"Writing answers your questions—the ones you are afraid to ask and the ones you have been asking all your life," Aronie says, and adds, "You've always known the answers; writing helps you know you know them." And according to Lamott, "There is a door we all want to walk through, and writing can help you find it and open it."

What is to be found on the other side of that door? The poet Keats told us, "Beauty is truth, truth, beauty. That is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Could it be said any better?

Janet Hulstrand has been a Washington, D.C., member since 2007, and is a writer, editor, and teacher of writing and literature. Her next "Writing from the Heart" workshop will be taught in a village in France in April 2009. Details on each of her websites: www.essoyesschool.com and www.winged-words.com

INSPIRATION & ENCOURAGEMENT FOR FEMALE WRITERS

The International Women's Writing Guild (www.iwwg.org) provides opportunities for networking, as well as educational, spiritual, and other personal nourishment. An annual June gathering provides women with a wealth of workshops. Periodic regional workshops match writers and agents, and local "kitchen table" groups and clusters help women get together with other writers in their area to keep their writing moving forward.

President's Message, *cont. from front*

These days, for an unknown writer to garner a significant readership, she needs a well-thought-out and phased plan, as well as the enthusiasm and desire to become a public persona. In the past, a publisher like St. Martin's Press would take a first-time author who could sell between 1,000 and 3,000 books, just to round out their list. Now, that same author must be able to deliver 5,000 book sales, just to be considered. That's a lot of sales for a first-time author.

Most authors see developing a marketing plan as a distraction that diminishes their valuable writing time. Still, I can only think of a handful of best-selling authors who do not have to do the footwork. John LeCarre, Stephen King, John Grisham, and Maeve Binchy have assistants, researchers, publicists and stylists helping them every step of the way.

I've learned only recently that even reclusive Emily Dickinson worked hard (harder than most realize) to become published in her time. What was interesting was that when she didn't find the acclaim she desired, she didn't stop writing. These days most writers have a hard time with the concept of post-humous fame.

Why this push for a marketing strategy? Why the push to overlay a stealthy business model on top of art? Because when publishing companies started hitting hard times a decade ago, the first budget item to take a lashing was marketing. No longer were authors (especially first-timers) given elaborate launch parties or sent on book tours.

How does the WNBA support this model? There are many ways authors can leverage their membership to build a network of colleagues and supporters.

When you join WNBA, you are joining a national network. When you plan your book tour, contact chapter presidents to help get out the local chapter membership for your reading. Call on local chapter leadership for introductions to libraries, bookstores, book festivals, and other high-profile events in their area from which you could benefit.

Another often-overlooked benefit of joining a national organization is the highly-sought-after endorsement. WNBA is a great way to meet established authors who can review and praise your book.

List your book(s) on our national Web site, and make sure that you have an announcement about your book in *The Bookwoman*.

We think the WNBA is one of the most effective marketing tools in the industry... and at a yearly membership price everyone can afford, even in this economy.

We're here for you, so let us all know what you've been writing, publishing, and marketing! We'd like to hear about your experiences with the publishing world. Send your stories to sjeditor@yahoo.com.

And Happy New Year!

-- Joan Gelfand

IN MEMORIAM

On June 30, 2008, Dr. Carol A. Nemeyer passed away in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Formerly one of our NYC chapter members, Dr. Nemeyer eventually moved to Washington, D.C. and founded the WNBA chapter there.

Dr. Nemeyer was a passionate advocate for libraries throughout her long and distinguished career. As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Freedom to Read Foundation and President of the American Library Association, she was one of the first to recognize the importance of networking. Under her leadership, ALA sponsored the first live nationwide broadcast of a major national conference.

Dr. Nemeyer was the librarian at the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, then joined the newly created Association of American Publishers in the early 1970s. She then left to join the Library of Congress, where she was in charge of creating (and gaining nationwide support for) The Center for the Book.

In Carol's memory, Elizabeth Geiser has established the Carol A. Nemeyer Memorial Fund at the Freedom to Read Foundation.

Contributions to the fund can be made by check, payable to the Freedom to Read Foundation, and mailed to:

Carol A. Nemeyer Memorial Fund
c/o The Freedom to Read Foundation
50 E Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611

You also may call (800) 545-2433, x4226 to donate, or visit <http://tinyurl.com/5kpr49> and click the orange "Give Direct" button (type "Carol Nemeyer Fund" in the comments section).

Bookseller Glenn Goldman Dies

The founder and owner of the West Hollywood independent bookstore Book Soup, Glen Goldman, died on January 3, 2009, at the age of 58, from pancreatic cancer. Goldman founded the store in 1975.

A posting on the store's Web site notes that "if you want to make a donation, please email the Glenn Goldman Booksellers Scholarship Fund at ggsbf@booksoup.com—which benefits the education and development of young booksellers worldwide."



Visit www.BookClubGirl.com for book club resources, giveaways, featured guest authors and more!

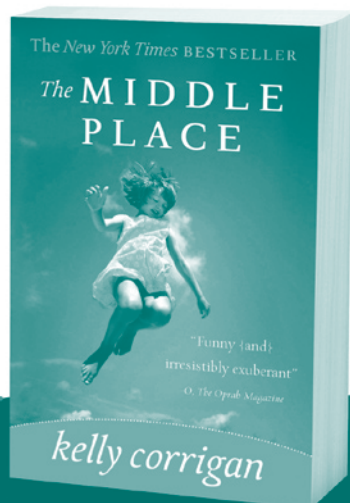
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*—Betty Smith,
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

Between being a child and becoming an adult THE MIDDLE PLACE



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is the perfect book club pick.

voice

KellyCorrigan.com

Assembling a Book Proposal Package

by John M. Daniel

Do you have a book ready to send out to agents and publishers? Your chances for success will improve if you prepare a strong book proposal. Your book proposal package should contain an excellent cover letter, a title page, an overview/synopsis, a market analysis and assessment of the competition, an author biography, and a SASE. The following materials should also accompany your proposal or be available to be sent if requested: an Introduction or Preface, the Table of Contents, and the first couple of chapters or first fifty pages. Of course, your proposal will be stronger if you can state that the book has been written (and edited) and is ready to submit.

Before preparing your proposal package, review the following questions and answer them as thoroughly as you can. Many of them may not apply to your book, but they will help you in discussions with prospective publishers and/or agents.

About the Author

1. Author's full name, and author's name as it is to appear on the book.
2. Author's addresses (work and home); author's email; phone numbers at work and home; fax number.
3. Occupation (give job title and brief description), and significant past employment (of relevance to the book).
4. Education. Provide names and addresses of schools/colleges you have attended, and, if possible, the names and editor's names of alumni magazines or newsletters. Also indicate the years you attended and any degrees earned.
5. Awards and honors earned.
6. Previously published books and their publishers. Other publications (e.g. poems, stories, articles etc., published in periodicals).
7. Significant organizations or associations of which you are a member. Include titles of any offices you've held.
8. Write a 100-200 word autobiography.
9. Do you have another writing project in the works? Is it related in some way to the manuscript that's the subject of this proposal?
Describe the new project briefly (30± words).

About the Book

10. Book title and subtitle.
11. Characterize your work's content in one sentence. Then write a 200-400 word synopsis of the book.
12. Provide names and addresses of magazines whose readers would be interested in your book. Names and addresses of organizations interested in buying quantities for their membership/catalog or whose lists could be used for direct mail.
13. Why did you create your work?
14. Who are the people or forces that influenced you the most in the creation of this work? If you have shown your work to others, what kind of response did you get from them?
15. What special service is performed by the existence of this work? What do you feel is the special significance of your work?
16. What human interest stories (current news events, trends, etc.) are related to the production or content of this work?
17. Is there some section of this work that is your favorite?
18. How long did it take you to complete this work? Where did you do most of this work?
19. For what audience was this book written? How extensive is your target audience?
20. List similar or competing books on the market and indicate how you feel your book differs from them.
21. If parts of this work have already appeared in print, give the date, name, and address of the publications where they appeared.
22. Any additional comments.

A few more things...

First, neatness counts. Make your proposal package clean, well written, and reader-friendly. Follow the manuscript guidelines if available; it shows you're easy to work with. Friendliness counts, too. If a rejection letter offers feedback, consider it a favor. Write back and thank whoever took the time to respond, even if you don't like what was said. And do your homework. Send your proposal to agents, publishers, and editors who indicate in *Literary Market Place* and *The Writer's Market* that they work in your genre or subject matter. Persistence is the name of the game. Chances are you won't land a contract or an agent on the first shot. Have the skin of a rhinoceros, listen to feedback, and always be ready with the next envelope. Good luck!

John M. Daniel is a former editor at Stanford University Press and an author of eight books. He and his wife Susan are the founders of Daniel & Daniel Publishers, Inc., a small literary press. This article is reprinted with permission.

National Reading Group Month Recap

Celebrating the Joy of Shared Reading

2008's National Reading Group Month signature event was held in Seattle this year. Our new Seattle chapter held a launch party at the University Book Store

From L to R, seated: Rebecca Willow (Parkplace Books); Dianne Hammond (Author: Hannah's Dream); Nancy Pearl (Author: Book Lust, More Book Lust and Book Crush); Cheryl McKeon (Third Place Books); Mary Ann Gwinn (Book Editor: The Seattle Times); Nancy Horan (Author: Loving Frank); and R, standing: Stesha Brandon (University Book Store). Photo courtesy of Joan Gelfand.



The sponsors and partners of National Reading Group Month are committed to celebrating the joy of shared reading and to reading groups everywhere. We thank them for their invaluable support.

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The Library at Hotel 140 provided a fitting setting for a discussion of writing and women when authors (from L to R) Deb Noyes (*Angels and Apostle*), Judith Nies (*The Girl I Left Behind*), and Gina Ogden (*The Return of Desire*), joined WNBA-Boston's NRGM celebration.



NYC observes National Reading Group Month at the New York Center for Independent Publishing; Guest authors strike an on-stage pose.
From L to R, seated on dias: Dalia Sofer (The Septembers of Shiraz), Elizabeth Strout (Olive Kitteridge), Anisha Lakhani (Schooled), Anya Ulinich (Petropolis), Alice Mattison (Nothing is Quite Forgotten in Brooklyn), Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp (The Book Club Cookbook, The Kids' Book Club Book)



WNBA-Nashville Members Celebrate National Reading Group Month at the downtown Public Library. *From L to R: Lee Fairbend (Chapter President, NRGM Event Chair), Mary Grey James (National Vice President, WNBA Pannell Chair), Etta Wilson (WNBA-Nashville member), Ginna Foster (Nashville Chapter Vice President).*

Photo courtesy of Lee Fairbend



From L to R: Nina Cardona, WPLN local host for "All Things Considered", interviews author Elizabeth Strout (Olive Kitteridge) at the Nashville event.

Photo courtesy of Lee Fairbend



WNBA-Los Angeles Chapter hosts special guests at Book Soup. *From L to R: David Fuller (Sweetsmoke), Yxta Maya Murray (The Red Lion Series), Lisa See (Peony in Love).* *Photo courtesy of Glenn Light*



(From L to R:) Lee Fairbend, Nashville chapter President, with Kathy Schultenover, Book Club Organizer for Davis-Kidd Booksellers



Washington, D.C.'s Reading Group Month event featured a panel discussion on mother-daughter book groups. *From L to R: WNBA/Washington Secretary Emily Sachs, who wrote a thesis on the history of American book clubs; Shireen L. Dodson, author of The Mother-Daughter Book Club, talks about her mother-daughter book groups; Mark La Framboise, bookseller and trade book buyer at Politics & Prose; and WNBA/Washington Vice President Lorine Kritzer Pergament, founder of three book clubs.*

**Send your chapter event and meeting photos—
with a caption clearly identifying all members,
and the name and date of your event—
to Shannon Janeczek at sjeditor@yahoo.com.**

**We must have high-resolution pictures for best print quality
(at least 300 dpi—camera phone pictures won't work).**

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