

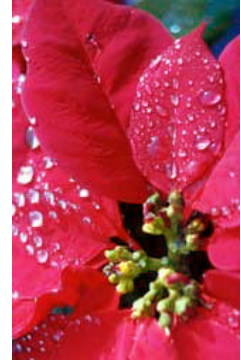
# National League of American Pen Women

## Palm Springs Branch

P.O. Box 1166, Palm Desert, CA 92261



# Happy Holidays



Newsletter Volume XI, Issue 18  
December, 2009  
Patricia Moloney Dugas, Editor

Promoting the development of art, letters, and music of professional women

### The President's Message by Joan Petit-Clair



Thanksgiving is a time for family; an opportunity to reunite with loved ones, friends, and relations. It's also a day to give thanks and an opportunity to eat copious amounts of food without feeling too guilty!

That said, I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Now that it's over and everyone is sick of turkey, before you know it, Christmas will be here at warp speed.

There's something special to be said for the holiday season. While everyone celebrates the season in their own way, for me it has to do with the spirit of the holidays. Traditionally, during Christmas week we would go into Manhattan to see the decorations, go to Saint Patrick's Cathedral, see the Christmas Show at Radio City Music Hall; then at night, we'd go to Rockefeller Center to see the tree.

One building opposite Rockefeller Center was covered in huge snowflakes that lit up in tune with the bells that played holiday music. There was a sense of magic in the air – people of different cultures, religions, and beliefs, who came together to enjoy the holiday season in their own way.

However you celebrate, I wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season. **Joan Petit-Clair**

### December 15, 2009 Luncheon

Guest Speaker **Julie Warren**  
on The Altered Book Art Project

Have you ever wondered if editors are the only ones who alter books? Julie Warren, Public Relations Manager for the Palm Springs Public Library, will discuss the journey of an Altered Book Art Project. She will share how this project began and how the Palm Springs Public Library and Palm Springs Art Museum partnered together to present this program to the community for three years. Julie will display some of the actual artworks that were created by the artists.

Reservations: Make your reservations at least 1 week before this luncheon which is held at the Desert Falls Country Club, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Reservations are a must. You must cancel 24 hours in advance if you cannot make it, or we will have to charge you for the reservation. \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members.

Make your reservations by email to  
Joanna Jacobs  
[penluncheon@earthlink.net](mailto:penluncheon@earthlink.net) or call her at  
760-902-3273.

## **Nominations for Women of Distinction in the Arts 2010 now being accepted.**

Several women in the Coachella Valley deserve to be honored for their outstanding contribution to the arts. Please nominate one or more women who are not Pen Women to receive the Palm Springs Branch Women of Distinction in the Arts award at the April 11, 2010 luncheon. The woman you nominate does not have to be an artist, writer, or composer, but perhaps a patron or teacher who has made a significant contribution to the Arts in the Coachella Valley.

Please submit the name, contact information, and list of accomplishments for your nominee to Marge Dodge at [margedodge1@aol.com](mailto:margedodge1@aol.com) or PO Box 1166, 45 Portola Avenue, Palm Desert, CA 92261-9998 by January 1, 2010.

**Remember the criteria for nominations:** 1) Not a member of Pen Women, 2) Lives in Coachella Valley, 3) Outstanding contribution to the Arts.

### ----- **Upcoming General Meeting Agendas** -----

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b><u>January 19, 2010</u></b>  | <b>Maureen Gilmer</b> on turning your passion into a business                 |
| <b><u>February 16, 2010</u></b> | <b>Patricia Taylor Lee</b> on Virginia Waring International Piano Competition |
| <b><u>March 16, 2010</u></b>    | <b>O'Jay Vanegas</b> on the history and art of storytelling                   |
| <b><u>April 11, 2010</u></b>    | <b>Women of Distinction in the Arts at Wally's Desert Turtle</b>              |
| <b><u>May 18, 2010</u></b>      | <b>Ekphrasis</b> exhibition presented by Dessa Reed                           |

*The programs listed are subject to change.*

### ----- **Events of Interest** -----

#### **CD: A WORLD OF WOMEN**

**A WORLD OF WOMEN** is the story of women in developing countries, told in a unique way, through a blend of newly composed piano and harp music and original poetry. International peacemakers are highlighted. This presentation is twenty-five minutes long, including an optional five-minute video introduction. It concludes on a note of hope and optimism.

La Jolla Pen Woman Bette Miller is inviting published poets to contribute a 200-word poem about one of the following women: Ellen Johnson Shirleaf, Makhtar Mai, Corizon Aquino, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, Sonabai Rajawar, Usha Narayane, Indira Gandhi, Aung San Suu Chi (of Burma), Christiane Amanpour, or Mary Robinson.

Please contact Marge Dodge at 760-333-0733 or [margedodge1@aol.com](mailto:margedodge1@aol.com) for more information.



## Who's News

by *Dodie Cross*

Linda Cross – has been busy. Her short story, “Four Stars,” has been published in the latest edition of *Cantaraville*. Also, “The Minister’s White Collar” and “Storm” will appear in *The Word Worth Journal* in the near future. Her short story, “The Dungeon,” is a finalist in the *Aurora Artisans Contest*. Another short story, “Frequent Flyer,” will appear in the spring publication of *RiverSedge*.

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Dessa Reed – is continuing her poetry/creative writing class once a week at Juvenile Hall for incarcerated teenagers. She has had some amazing experiences and feels the program is making a difference in their language (and social) skills. She uses her own first published book, *The Butterfly Touch* as a teaching tool. Dessa was also the guest speaker for the "Healing Word" series at the Lucy Curci Center in November.

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Dessa Reed, Kathy Bjork, Carol Mann, and Vicki Mills – along with three associates, were the featured poets for "Valley Voices of the Muse" Poetry Society program held on Friday evening, Nov. 6, 2009, at Barnes and Noble in Palm Desert. The group, known as Poetry Seven, was invited by host Patricia D'Alessandro. "Valley Voices of the Muse" is funded by *Poets and Writers Magazine* through a grant from the James Irvine Foundation.

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Vicki Mills – a member of the Poetry Seven group, enjoyed a paid poetry reading gig this past month at Barnes and Noble bookstore where she read two poems, “Joy” and “Computerese.”

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Marci Stillerman – says her book: *Something Terrible Happened on Kenmore Street*, has been published and is now available at bookstores and Amazon.com.

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Dawn Spitz and Marge Dodge – presented the Palm Springs Writers Guild's first Grammar Bee. Marge did the power point presentation. Dawn wrote eighty-five questions, but only half of them were needed to eliminate all but the winner, Jenny Gumpertz. Jenny won the \$100 prize and the drawing for the basket of cheer as well. Dawn also won the prize of a \$25 gift certificate to Border's for her Mary Poppins costume.

Joanne Hardy – will have an article, “Palm Springs, Hero City,” in *Straightjacketmagazine.com* in the December issue. She has been covering charity events for *The Desert Sun*; The ShowStopper Cabaret at the Stroke Center, for Well in the Desert; The Chef Auction at the Rancho Las Palmas Resort; for the Pendleton Foundation and Garden Party at the Cary Grant estate for The Living Desert.

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**Kathryn Jordan** – now has 133 pages written in her new Egypt novel (no title yet), and possibly 250 more to go. She hopes to finish her book by early 2011. She says her agent has read the first four chapters and loves it! Kathryn also joined fourteen ladies for a “Hot Water” tour and party at Two Bunch Palms on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2009. “It’s still hot!!!” she says.

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**Carolyn Sollano** – has finally made a move to publish her first children’s book with iUniverse. She’s in the process of working with an art student for the illustrations, but says she’s not sure if it’s ready. She is still working on a name for the book.

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**Mary Barrer** – handled the promotion of the film *Amelia*, the story of Amelia Earhart, a pioneer aviatrix and founder of the Ninety Nines International Organization of Women Pilots. Mary has been a member since 1970. She arranged for displays at the Regal Theaters and Camelot Theater. She appeared on *Eye on the Desert*, and the *Steve Kelly Morning Show*, and made six stage presentations at the Camelot to audiences before the film was shown. She also gave a lecture to an aviation group on women in air racing. This month, Mary completed two editions of *Westchester World*, a monthly publication that she produces for the Miami, Florida market.

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**Kristin Johnson** – completed two more client screenplays, and her poem, "Waiting for Brahma," appeared in the last quarterly edition of *The Pen Woman*.

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**Dodie Cross** – yours truly, is making strides in her new book: *A Broad Abroad in Iran: One Strappy-Sandaled Foot Ahead of the Mullahs (during the revolution)*. I’m on page 250 and plan to go to about 350. Moving right along...

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**Patricia Moloney Dugas** –was contacted by a woman who wants her to ghost write her book. This woman found her name and phone number on the NLAPW Palm Springs website. Pat has met with this client, laid out the initial outline, and will negotiate fees and deadlines. She has been doing line-editing for other authors. Pat has submitted a drawing in the NLAPW competition for the new logo. The decision will be made by the national board in January, 2010.

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Send descriptions of your current professional accomplishments to me at [info@dodiecross.com](mailto:info@dodiecross.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month so that I may include them in this column. Pen Women are interested in and inspired by the accomplishments of fellow members. Dodie

*Reporter at Large Kathryn Jordan*

**November 17<sup>th</sup> Luncheon Presentation – Margaret Seeley**

I cannot remember when a Pen Women meeting rang with so much laughter and fun as at our November 17th luncheon. If Theodor Geisel was listening from his Cat-In-The-Hat heaven, he could not have been more pleased with Margaret Seeley's tribute, especially her rendition of two of his most obscure and delicious poem-stories, "The Rabbit, the Bear and the Zinniga Zanniga" and "I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew." Margaret prefaced her talk with facts about Geisel's life as a writer, how he was discovered by the famous editor Bennett Cerf who told "Ted" if he signed with Random House they'd publish anything he wrote. Imagine! And "Ted" became Dr. Seuss, Random House's biggest selling author of all time! Two hundred and twenty-two million hardback copies in fifteen languages and still counting.

Margaret is a terrific writer herself; we've been in the same read and critique group since 1987. This and her many years teaching kindergarten sharpened Margaret's already keen appreciation for the genius of Dr. Seuss, his amazing mastery of rhyme, rhythm, and word play. The Dr. Seuss signature, in fact, is that childlike freedom to make up whimsical words to match the rhyme. He claimed not to write with a moral, but his poems belie this. I think what he meant is not to let the lesson get in the way of the fun. That there's a message to his madness only deepens our delight.

Falling in love with Dr. Seuss at age five, Margaret later read her favorite poems so many times they became embedded in her memory. To recite an eighteen-minute poem without a glitch! But her rendition goes beyond what the doctor ordered (excuse the pun). The voices and nuances are all her own. Who would think the genius of Dr. Seuss could be enhanced, but Margaret Seeley did just that. We were honored with this rare performance.

If you know of other organizations that would enjoy hearing Margaret's presentation, her email is: [pugnumber3@aol.com](mailto:pugnumber3@aol.com)

Kathryn Jordan

This **Christmas tree** never made it to the White House. It got busted one winter at the top of the tram in Palm Springs. Kinda looks like a Charlie Brown tree...

We'll pretend...

*Pat Dugas*





## Who's New by Lynne Spreen

### Review of the 2009 Membership Tea November 7th

We had 17 prospective members, and about the same number of Pen Women at this Saturday afternoon Tea. Lina Simoni graciously offered her beautiful home in Palm Springs for the event. Champagne and a copious array of hors d'oeuvres contributed by members were enjoyed by everyone.

Anice Schwartz, Palm Springs NLAPW Historian, brought one of our giant-sized scrapbooks from years past. The prospective members attending told us a bit about themselves. Dessa Reed concluded with an overview of her program of teaching poetry to incarcerated young people; she also read a poem entitled "Rap." I think we were all moved by it, and by the camaraderie of the day.

Thanks again to all who helped make this such an enjoyable and productive event. I look forward to introducing all of you to the women who will soon be joining our organization.  
Lynne Spreen

A reminder: **If your contact information changes**, please let me know. Contact information will no longer appear in this newsletter, as it then becomes accessible on the internet. If you need contact information, please call me at 951-926-3875 or email me at [LMSpreen@yahoo.com](mailto:LMSpreen@yahoo.com).

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### Communications to our membership:

Informational communications from the Board to the Membership will come from Corresponding/Communications Secretary Carol Mann from her email: [cstanfield@dc.rr.com](mailto:cstanfield@dc.rr.com)  
Members will be informed of notices, events, and announcements.

**Please DO NOT REPLY to Carol Mann but do reply to the designated person within the email if so indicated.**

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***Our Scholarship Fund***  
Please contact any Branch officer  
if you wish to make a donation to  
our scholarship fund  
in memory of a loved one.

Our tax ID # is 23-7214209



***Have a Wonderful  
Holiday Season***

***Patricia Moloney Dugas  
Editor***