

# National League of American Pen Women



**Palm Springs Branch**  
P.O. Box 1166, Palm Desert, CA 92261

Newsletter Volume XI, Issue 14  
April, 2009  
Patricia Moloney Dugas, Editor

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

## The President's Message By Audrey Moe



By request, I'm repeating the history of some of the spectacular women who belonged to NLAPW during its formative years and over its 110-year span. There is no doubt spectacular women are members today, but it is not only important, but also inspiring to celebrate our past.

Let's take a look at some of the strong women who achieved greatness at a time when women were not granted the same rights as men. On Tuesday afternoon at the membership event, I thought it appropriate in this year of honoring Abraham Lincoln to begin with Vinnie Ream, sculptress of the iconic statue of Lincoln in the Capitol Rotunda. Lincoln sat for her just days before his death. Vinnie, at age 17, was not only the youngest person to win such a commission; she was also the first woman. The statue was dedicated in January of 1871. Vinnie went on to complete other commissions, many of which can be seen in the Capitol.

Ida M. Tarbell was credited with breaking the monopoly of J.D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Co. She was the first woman to be called a trustbuster and a muckraker.

Continued on page 5...

## **Women of Distinction in the Arts 2009** Sunday, April 26

11:00am to 2:00pm at  
Wally's Desert Turtle

**Honorees:**  
Betty Francis,  
Valerie Mahabir,  
Kim Waltrip



### The days events:

- A special version of a silent auction called "Pick a Flower for a Scholar."
- Music performed by our very own harpist Jeannette Debonne.
- Lunch with fashion show featuring El Paseo's finest boutiques & music by Joe Arndt.
- Presentation of the Women of Distinction.

**\*\* Details of the honorees, directions, and how you can assist, on page 3.**

**Reservations:** Please respond by Monday, April 20, 2009. \$70.00 per person, pre-paid along with your reservations. Make checks payable to National League of American Pen Women, PO Box 1166, Palm Desert, CA, 92261. To charge it, send the information on a card, with card #, name on the card, expiration date, billing zip code, and your signature to the same address above.

**Questions, contact:**  
Kathy Bjork, [kbo677@yahoo.com](mailto:kbo677@yahoo.com), 760 567-3525.

## WHOOS NEWS

By Joan Petit-Clair



**Judy Fabris** - On Saturday February 28 my play, *Blood Rules*, was read by actors but not staged, at the Dezart Gallery Play Performance Series. If you think I'm excited, that is put in the mildest language possible. Best of all, the director has asked me to write another.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Arlene Howard** - My short essay called "Fighting Boreas" appeared in the March issue of *Story Circle Journal*.

I, along with more than twenty other Palm Springs Writers Guild members, attended a memoir writing workshop on March 15, 2009, at UCR Palm Desert. The workshop was lead by Tom Larson, author of *The Memoir and the Memoirist*. I learned that the path I am proceeding in writing my memoir is correct. Since I still have questions about the definition of a memoir, I am looking forward to Tom's next workshop to find the answer. I am also attending a weekly poetry workshop lead by Dorothea Bisbas at Rancho Mirage Library.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Kristin Johnson** - Kristin Johnson was a guest blogger at "All the Blog's a page," run by Shon Bacon, a.k.a. Chick Lit Gurrl.  
<http://alltheblogsapage.blogspot.com/2009/03/writer-of-all-trades-dotcomerstv.html>. Kristin is also a travel editor for [Goparoo.com](http://Goparoo.com).

\*\*\*\*\*

**Audrey Moe** - Spring is a busy time for Audrey Moe. After an appearance at the Wildflower Festival at the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center where her new book, *Desertwalk* was well received, she spent mornings working steadily in her garden. Audrey's garden was the first stop for the busload of garden enthusiasts from the Living Desert who were on their Secret Garden tour.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dawn Spitz** - I received word that my poem "The Colors of 1940" was accepted by *Passager Magazine* for their special Martin Luther King issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mardiyah Tarantino** - Mardiyah won the January Palm Springs Writer's Guild contest for "New Year's Resolutions." A good thing, too, since she has also won an avalanche of rejection letters for her *Alice* book. This being the case, she has re-thunk her talents and is now starting an oil painting in hopes that by looking the other way, the Query Letter Fairy will relent.

\*\*\*\*\*

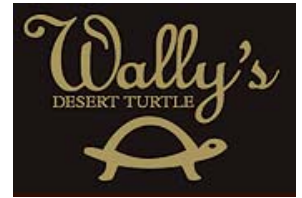
**Pat Dugas** - sold another pair of her daisy photographs. The flowers were found in the vacant lot next to Albertson's Market. Beauty can be found in the most mundane locations.

### WHOOS NEWS Column timeline

This column is a wonderful opportunity for all the members to share their activities, achievements, hopes, and plans. Please feel free to share with others. Send your email to [luncheon123@aol.com](mailto:luncheon123@aol.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Items received after that date may have to be included in the next newsletter. Give us time to do justice to your "stuff."

## Our April Pen Women Event

### Women of Distinction in the Arts 2009 Sunday, April 26, 2009



We will honor the following women at the **Women of Distinction in the Arts** event on, Sunday, April 26, 2009, at the wonderful **Wally's Desert Turtle**

#### The days events:

- A special version of a silent auction called "Pick a Flower for a Scholar."
- Music performed by our very own harpist Jeannette Debonne.
- Lunch with fashion show featuring El Paseo's finest boutiques & music by Joe Arndt.
- Presentation of the Women of Distinction.



**Betty Francis:** nominated by Cynthia Frohlichstein, is the Society News Director for *The Desert Sun*. Before starting with the paper she belonged to countless non-profit groups and served on many boards. She still serves on the Board of the Desert Literary Society. Her mission is to increase awareness of local non-profit organizations through her writing.



**Valerie Mahabir:** nominated by Shirley Brenon, is the founder of the Desert Youth Ballet, a non-profit group with the mission to inspire the boys and girls of the Coachella Valley to become involved in dance, enhance their performance skills, develop self-confidence, and provide a lifelong interest in the arts.



**Kim Waltrip:** nominated by Kristin Johnson, is the Director of *Adopt a Sailor*, a film recently shown at the Palm Springs International Film Festival. She is a former model and actor. She teaches theater at UC Riverside and is on the Board of Women in Film.

At the Women of Distinction in the Arts event, we are introducing "Pick & Flower for a Scholar." This fun, new variation of a silent auction will raise funds for our scholarship program. Please come, bring your friends, and participate. [See page 1 for fees and reservations.](#)

**Directions:** Wally's is conveniently located on Highway 111 in Rancho Mirage, across the street from The River Shopping Center. Their website: <http://www.wallys-desert-turtle.com/map-directions.html>

**Asking for your help:** This year's Women of Distinction Awards promises to be as fabulous as the previous three. My job for that day is Hostess. If anyone would like to join me, it will be appreciated. Please email me at [shirleymuircoombs@dc.rr.com](mailto:shirleymuircoombs@dc.rr.com) or call 760 674-4744. Thank you! Shirley.

\*\*\*\*\* This event will replace the April luncheon. \*\*\*\*\*

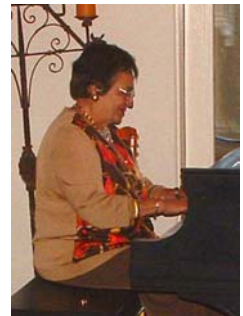
## PALM SPRINGS NLAPW MEMBERSHIP TEA AND ART

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Palm Springs chapter of the National League of American Pen Women had their annual Membership Tea. This year, the Pen Women were asked to bring a sampling of their books and art to display the talents of the Palm Springs branch. The gathering was hosted by member Rachel and her husband Charles Druten at their lovely home in Desert Hills Country Club Estates in Palm Desert.



Around a luscious display of festive dishes and wine, the members and their guests met in the early evening to revisit members' works, to meet new members, and greet the invited potential candidates. Later in the evening, the president, Audrey Moe, sans arm cast, presented a brief update of events, beginning with a history of the Pen Women Association (see her President's Message on Page 1).

She then introduced the accomplished poet Dessa Reed, [www.dessareed.com](http://www.dessareed.com), who read two of her poems, "Unstoppable Woman" and "Thoughts of Mona Lisa While Being Painted by Leonardo da Vinci." Shirley Coombs, Membership Chair, introduced two new members (see her Membership column in this newsletter), Dotti Reiss and Fritz von Jessen. Marge Dodge, First V.P. of Programs, then gave the latest information on the April 26<sup>th</sup> Women of Distinction (WOD) Luncheon (details of this event are on pages 1 and 3 of this newsletter).



Judy Fabris closed the presentations by introducing Cynthia Prietto, who delighted the gathering with music from her extensive repertoire.

Special thanks go to Anice Schwartz, Historian, and those who provided the wonderful spread of hors d'oeuvres and desserts.

This chapter of Pen Women from all areas of the Coachella Valley is a group of especially accomplished professional writers, artists, and musicians. The energy in this group is most infectious! Ageless women, energized by being together with fellow writers and artists, shared their lives and current endeavors. The level of professionalism was very evident as members moved from group to group, balancing wine and hors d'oeuvres. After pausing for the meeting, they again plunged into the networking and camaraderie. Visit their web page, [www.nlapwpalmsprings.org](http://www.nlapwpalmsprings.org) and check out their newsletters for their ongoing events and accomplishments. Patricia Moloney Dugas, Editor. Photography: Shirley Brennon and Pat Dugas.



## **President's Message** Cont'd from page 1 ...

Margaret Sanger went to jail in 1917 for publishing a book called *Family Limitations* because it contained information on birth control. But we remember her as the founder of Planned Parenthood.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who wrote a syndicated column, "My Day," was involved with radio broadcasts and speaking engagements and furthering women's rights, right along with supporting her husband in his position as president of the United States.

The first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for poetry was Leonora Speyer. The year was 1927. Audrey Wurdemann Auslander, great-great-granddaughter of Percy Bysshe Shelley was the youngest member of Pen Women at age 16 and the third woman to win a Pulitzer for poetry.

This is but a partial list of famous Pen Women and doesn't include those in our own chapter who astound us with their achievements, and those who are working towards greatness in their fields. I'm proud to be a member of an organization that includes Pulitzer Prize winners, artists, writers, musicians, and pioneers in social and civic rights and diligent campaigners for worthy causes.

We continue this important work in our own branch of NLAPW with our yearly fundraiser honoring women who make a difference in our community. Through this effort we provide funds for young women to pursue their educations in the arts. I urge every member to support our event, Women of Distinction, to be held this year at Wally's Desert Turtle on Sunday, April 26. Please check the details in this newsletter and make your reservations right away. You will be doing a good thing.

**Audrey Moe**  
**Thanks for the opportunity**

## **Bulletin Board**

**April 1:** First Wednesday Art Walk, 6:00pm  
Backstreet Art District, Cherokee Way, Palm Springs. 760 328-1440

**April 2:** El Paseo Art Walk, with artist receptions, gallery hospitality, and festive atmosphere, 5:00-9:00pm, El Paseo Drive, Palm Desert. 760 346-8885.

**April 4:** First Saturday Desert Art Displays, sponsored by Friends of the Desert Mountains, Santa Rosa and San Jacinto National Monument Visitor Center, 9:00am – 4:00pm, 51500 Highway 74, Palm Desert. 760 862-9984.

**Palm Springs Writers Guild web site:**  
<http://palmspringwritersguild.org/>

**New snow in Palm Springs, February, 2009.**



## -----Membership by Shirley Coombs -----

**BYLAWS CHANGE:** The following has been received from N. Taylor Collins, our National President: "The 5-year requirement was dropped with the last bylaws change." This refers to publication of books: i.e., LETTERS, ART, and MUSIC compositions. I have requested a copy of the new bylaws.



**New member: Dotti Reiss, 2255 S. Calle Palo Fierro #83 Palm Springs, CA 92264 Phone: 619--962-4998 E-mail: [dottireiss@yahoo.com](mailto:dottireiss@yahoo.com)**



Dotti is a published writer, many times. She wrote two weekly newspaper humor columns, one from 1970 to 1972 for The Country Almanac, Woodside, California and the second from 1999-2001 for Redwood City Almanac. She has written song lyrics with composer Anita Kerr and has won two prizes for her poetry. Her 30-year career was in health care management and marketing, where she wrote brochures and advertising for Kaiser Permanente. Dotti taught Report Writing for the community college system and holds a lifetime credential in California for teaching written communication. Welcome, Dotti.

**New Member: Fritzie Von Jessen 416 S. Patenico Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262 Phone: 760 325-5316 E-mail: [fvonjessen@aol.com](mailto:fvonjessen@aol.com)**



I would like to welcome Fritzie von Jessen, who is a new member in LETTERS. Fritzie was born in Denmark and moved to the U.S. in 1960. She spent more than twenty years on the North Shore of Long Island and graduated from The Fashion Institute of Technology with degrees in communication and interior design. She worked in both fields before moving to Palm Springs in 1985. During her years in the desert, she volunteered for five years as Docent at The Living Desert. She has been writing most of her life and her beautiful book, *Tough Plants In A Fragile Land*, is the first to be published. Fritzie is

working on another book – an ecological memoir about the environment and personal connection to nature.

**New Provisional member: Dolores Carruthers, 78875 Champagne Lane, Palm Desert, CA, 92211. Phone: 760 772-7819 E-mail: [dnc722@aol.com](mailto:dnc722@aol.com)**

**New Provisional Member: Elizabeth Boyd, 719 Riverside Place, Apt. #3, Palm Springs, CA, 92264. Cell phone: 760 333-8371 No email as yet.**

***BRANCH OFFICERS and CHAIRS***

**President**

**Audrey Moe**  
760 251-1143

[Audrey@moefamily.net](mailto:Audrey@moefamily.net)

**First V.P., Programs/  
Special Events**

**Marge Dodge**  
760 564-9329

[margedodge1@aol.com](mailto:margedodge1@aol.com)

**Second V. P., Membership**

**Shirley Coombs**  
760 674-4744

[ShirleyMuirCoombs@dc.rr.com](mailto:ShirleyMuirCoombs@dc.rr.com)

**Third V.P., Newsletter**

**Patricia Moloney Dugas**  
760 327-6624

[pdugas@usc.edu](mailto:pdugas@usc.edu)

**Treasurer**

**Kathy Bjork**  
760 346-4433

[kbo67@yahoo.com](mailto:kbo67@yahoo.com)

**Recording Secretary**

**Carol Mann**  
760 564-0834

[cstanfield@dc.rr.co](mailto:cstanfield@dc.rr.co)

**Corresponding  
Secretary**

**Judy Fabris**  
760 327-9435

[jgfwrite@sbcglobal.com](mailto:jgfwrite@sbcglobal.com)

**Historian**

**Anice Schwartz**  
760 321-1351

[misswindsor54@gmail.com](mailto:misswindsor54@gmail.com)

**Scholarship**

**Kathryn Jordan**

[katejor@earthlink.net](mailto:katejor@earthlink.net)

**Publicity**

**Christine Hall**  
760 674-1790

See the [lite@verizon.net](mailto:lite@verizon.net)

**Hospitality**

**Joan Petit-Clair**

[luncheon123@aol.com](mailto:luncheon123@aol.com)

**Web Master**

**Judie Ruzek**  
831-8344

[plus2@aol.com](mailto:plus2@aol.com)

**Hostess**

**Rachel Druten**

[Rdruten@aol.com](mailto:Rdruten@aol.com)

***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 53-0115640.



**California Poppy**