

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN
HONOLULU BRANCH**
www.nlapwhonolulu.org

February 2011 Newsletter

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A. MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We hear about being our authentic selves as artists and writers – allowing our own truth to direct the work: *Write from your passions, your own beliefs and experiences. Paint whatever your soul tells you to paint... let your subconscious take the brush.* Sure, I want to let my authentic artist rip, but admittedly I must wonder at least five times a day who I really am, where I came from, and where I'm going? As the expression goes: *It's not always easy being me.* I still find myself wanting my writing to be as directed and as streamlined as doing the dishes. I walk up to the sink, turn the hot water on, add soap, and one by one I pick up the items and give them a little attention with the mesh sponge. I don't anguish over whether I should do the blue plates first or whether I should alternate washing the forks and then the spoons or ... oh I don't know, lead with the knives? Rinse with cold? Maybe I should be more focused or inspired before attempting the job at all (I really want to do it well)...should I read something about house cleaning - perhaps that would allay my anxiety? I don't particularly enjoy doing dishes, but after that initial moment of resistance, I'm there ... moment by moment until the end. I'm in it until they're finished. I don't break for a 'well-deserved' coffee or a piece of chocolate. It's not a big deal. I always manage to get it done. I figure it out; I'm a capable woman after all. But when it comes to my writing, resistance is a very sneaky thing, because unless I walk up to the computer, turn it on and take my seat, a part of me can still believe there are no more stories in me to spin...no more words to weave, nothing worth writing. That's a sadness that I can't allow. Here's my truth: my authentic self is sometimes messy, confused and more than unwilling, but she sure loves being coaxed to a more satisfying place. She loves seeing that Times New Roman inch along across the page. I've found that if I'm willing to be uncomfortable for the first five minutes, something in me shifts and I'm caught and seduced by the sway of phrases unavailable to me only moments before. Magical.

Get black on white. Guy de Maupassant

Susan Killeen

B. DELECTABLE DETOUR

MARCH DELECTABLE DETOUR

WHAT: "The Holiday of Rain," a Kumu Kahua commission by Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl

WHERE: Kumu Kahua Theatre
46 Merchant Street, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

WHEN: Sunday 2pm: March 27

TICKETS: Box Office Phone: (808) 536-4441

Email: kumukahuatheatre@hawaiiantel.net • URL: www.kumukahua.org

TICKET PRICES: General Admission: \$16, Students with valid ID: \$5, Seniors 62 years of age and up: \$14

Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl will be our Pen Women speaker for March. Seems like a natural to follow up her presentation by enjoying her talent as a playwright in performance. Please purchase your own tickets and meet other members of the Pen Women at the theatre. Seating is open.

At the Sadie Thompson Inn in Samoa, guests can take part in an unusual experience: a reenactment of W. Somerset Maugham's 1921 short story *Rain*. But thanks to a magician's time warp, the real Maugham finds himself on the guest list. Swirling together fantasy, history, humor and drama, Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl, winner of the Hawai'i Award for Literature and the author of *The Conversion of Ka'ahumanu and Ola N? Iwi*, deconstructs one of the world's most popular writers.

Additional performances, if you are unable to join us on March 27th.

Thursday, Friday & Saturday 8pm: March 24, 25, 26, 31; April 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 2011

Sundays 2pm: March 27, April 3, 10, *17, 2011

C. PEN WOMEN IN THE NEWS

Member **Elsha Bohnert** has been named the recipient of the James M. Vaughan Award for Poetry at Hawai'i Pacific University. Elsha will receive a \$250 cash award and be recognized at HPU's 14th annual Ko'olau Writing Workshops Saturday, March 5, at the HPU Hawai'i Loa Campus. Elsha's poems "The Razor" and "To Kwan Yin" will be published in Volume 25 of the *Hawai'i Pacific Review*, HPU's literary magazine.

Maya Leland will have a piece, *Coming Out of the Closet*, in the upcoming Hawaii Women's Journal.

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

TAG presents TEA WITH EMILY DICKINSON, a staged reading by **Jan McGrath** of scenes from *The Belle of Amherst* by William Luce. The reading will be followed by High Tea with gourmet treats and champagne by Director/Chef **Victoria Gail-White**, starring "Black-Cake" from Emily's own recipe. This is a fundraising event from The Actors Group: \$50. Saturday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 27 at 2 p.m. Call 722-6941 for reservations.

E. BARBARA BETTS

One of our favorite Pen Women, **Barbara Betts**, died on February 8th in Arcadia Retirement Residence, where she and her husband Jim have lived happily for over ten years. She was a longtime member of our branch, a gracious and talented lady who was an artist, a respected teacher, and the owner of Ho'olaule'a Designs. Barbara's art was juried into shows of the Hawaii Watercolor Society, Honolulu Printmakers, Association of Hawaii Artists, The National League of American Pen Women, and the Department of Education Art Teachers Association. For those who did not know Barbara, the art-exchange.com website offers a lovely picture of her and a brief summary of her professional accomplishments.

Barbara's career as an artist and a teacher didn't limit her enthusiasm for other interests, and she never retired from learning. She and Jim not only loved listening to the music and writing presenters at our meetings, they also attended many writing conferences together, including our Pen Women Biennial Writers' Conferences. **Dorothy Wright** recalls that the last time she saw Barbara and Jim was when they were walking back home from the conference at Punahou last spring. It will be sad not seeing Barbara in her pretty straw hats, their brims circled with flowers, and hearing her soft voice again. We will miss her very much.

Services for Barbara are scheduled for this Friday, February 18th, at 10:00 a.m. in the chapel at the Arcadia Retirement Residence, 1434 Punahou Street in Honolulu.

--Shan Correa

F. JANUARY MINUTES

National League of American Pen Women

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 12th

Alan Wong's Pineapple Room (Macy's at Ala Moana) There were 61 attendees: 28 members, 16 friends, 15 guests, and 3 visitors.

The meeting was called to order by President Susan Killeen. After giving a short history of our organization for visitors, she asked first-time guests to identify themselves. Leilani Madison announced that there would be a new writers' group forming in Kailua starting in February, on Tuesday evenings. Anyone interested can contact Leilani.

New Members

Susan welcomed two new members:

Gail Pike Hercher: Gail teaches art and has written about art and architecture. She teaches at Linekona and at Kamehameha School. She has received a grant to teach art in rural schools on Oahu. She is currently writing a book about mosaics in Hawaii.

Mollie Foti: Molly is an artist and her studio is in Kailua. She is a founding member of the Windward Potters, almost 36 years ago.

Pen Women 2011 Art Show

Susan announced that this year's Pen Women Art Show will be chaired by **Elsha Bohnert** and **Margo Goodwill**. The theme will be "When I Was A Kid." Artists are encouraged to create works based on their memories of being a child, perhaps their favorite things. Pen Women letters members are also encouraged to collaborate with an art member. Elsha also noted that this would be a great time to join the organization, for those who have been thinking about it.

Update Bios

Susan encouraged all members to update their bio on the Pen Women website. You can email your updated write-ups to Susan at killeens@hawaii.rr.com.

SCBWI Conference

Susan also announced the upcoming Annual Conference for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), on Saturday, 2/19/2011 at the Ala Moana Hotel Ilima Room. It will feature Kauai author John H. Ritter, along with Reka Simonsen, executive editor at Harcourt Children's Books; local publisher, author, and illustrator Michael Furuya, and other local authors and illustrators. In addition, it will feature a workshop, open to conference attendees, called "How to Give Your Stories Depth, Interest, and Intrigue." The workshop will be held on Friday 2/18 from 9 – 2:30 at Paki Hale, 3840 Paki Avenue, Kapiolani Park.

Guest Speaker: Juliet Kono

Victoria Gail-White introduced our guest speaker, poet, author, teacher, and ordained Buddhist minister, Juliet Kono.

Juliet S. Kono was born and raised in Hilo, Hawai'i. She teaches composition and creative writing at Leeward Community College. Her previous publications include two books of poetry, *Hilo Rains and Tsunami Years*; a collaborative work of linked poems with three other poets, *No Choice but to Follow*; a collection, *Ho'olulu Park* and *The Pepsodent Smile* and other stories; and a children's book, *The Bravest 'Opihi: How Two of Hawaii's Smallest Sea Creatures Saved the Day*. The recipient of several awards, including the US/Japan Friendship Commission Creative Artist Exchange Fellowship, she also won the Hawai'i Award for Literature in 2006. She is working on a new novel, *Misao's Body*.

Her first novel, *Anshū: Dark Sorrow*, published by Bamboo Ridge Press, is based on historical events in 1941 between Hawaii and Japan. It is a story of "human triumph in the face of extraordinary adversity."

"To write *Anshū* the author had to live with the novel's fictional narrator for years of her life, in order to learn and to tell the unspeakable about a subject few if any Americans before Kono have been able to speak about without guilt or revulsion. *Anshū*, the very word defined by this novel, means an understanding, an apprehension deeper than guilt, deeper than fear, than hate, than love and pity and sympathy, deeper than resignation, deeper than acceptance." Stephen H. Sumida, University of Washington.

Ms. Kono began her presentation by performing two chants. She then asked the group to fill our spiritual mandalas.

She told of her early life and her encounters with personal tragedy, which led her to writing as a survival tool. She used writing as a tool to deal with the challenges she faced growing up. She wrote her first story in third grade. It was about a ghost. Chided for not telling the truth, she discovered fiction. She later went to poetry, but needed a deeper understanding of not only poetry, but herself.

She attended the University of Hawaii, but quit several times. Developing a love of reading proved to be a pivotal part of finding herself.

In her growth as a writer, she has learned ten lessons:

1. The importance of a college education in giving her a broader perspective needed for growth.
2. Persevere: Work hard and long, even when you reach a limitation, as you learn the craft of writing.
3. There is no need to be critical of your first writing – go easy on yourself.

4. Face writing with enthusiasm and joy.
5. Be careful who you show your first drafts to; choose someone "safe" for you.
6. Be careful what you say to others. Not everyone has a thick skin.
7. Appreciate how hard it is to write a novel.
8. Many good people will help you.
9. Take care of yourself. You need your physical and emotional health to sustain your work. Appreciate that with age, things may take longer and time is getting shorter.
10. Writing is a labor of love, and it is often thankless. But on the positive side, the advent of the Web has leveled the playing field—you no longer have to wait for New York to call in order to get published.

In the question and answer session, she also talked about her process in writing *Anshu*, in particular that she did a lot of research, and then found it most helpful to put it away and focus on her characters.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Barbara Clemens

G. NEXT MEETING

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011

TIME: 11:30 AM

PLACE: PINEAPPLE ROOM, MACY'S, ALA MOANA CENTER

SPEAKER: Honolulu playwright and author, Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl. She will discuss her new mystery novel, "Murder Leaves Its Mark," and her new play, "The Holiday of Rain," being produced by Kumu Kahua Theatre in March.

H. CONTACT THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

If you have news to share, please email editor Glenda Hinchey by the 13th of the month:
glendahinchey@yahoo.com.