

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

March 2011 Newsletter

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A. MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The theme of our upcoming biennial art show - "When I Was a Kid" - has me wading through memories from "small kid time," looking for inspiration. This year the Letters members are invited to participate and enter the show by teaming up with an Arts Member; they can also brave it *alone* with the understanding that it *is* a juried show.

The most successful art often comes from a specific assignment or a set of parameters. I remember an art class where the instructor told us to "bring in a painting the following week." Half the class was told they could paint whatever they wanted to; the other half was told that they must include the colors blue, black and yellow and create intersecting lines in some way. The latter group, by far, had the most successful paintings - the theory being that when we give ourselves a specific direction, we are better able to focus our creative energies.

"When I Was a Kid" gives us a juicy theme, but where will you go with that? Will it be a piece inspired by your first kiss in grade school or the terror you felt being left at the door of your kindergarten classroom that first momentous day? When you were ten you moved to another climate, and colors forever changed for you. And that one teacher who understood you in sixth grade made the biggest difference in your life. You may have been certain you were adopted because you just didn't fit in with the rest of the family - God knows your parents didn't understand you, and you didn't really look like any of your siblings. What does joy look like on paper? How do you paint abandonment? Or giddiness? Or confusion? What would it look like to be the playful kid you were at three?

Anything goes here. Give yourself permission and give us a slice of your childhood. Make us wonder...keep us guessing...scare us...seduce us...invite us in...take a sliver in time and reflect it back to us in any way you'd like. We'll assume poetic license as viewers as we walk along with you.

For more details on the Honolulu Pen Women Biennial Art Show:

<http://www.nlapwhonolulu.org/artshow.htm>

--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 2 pm: 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 was 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 **Barbara Clemens** reports that several Microsoft Office 2010 texts that she edited have recently been published by Course Technology/Cengage Learning. She also authored *Windows 7 Illustrated Essentials*, which has been among the company's bestsellers since its release last spring. Her set of 100 instructional videos will be released this summer. And Interweave Press has just released a special edition magazine called *Knitting Traditions* that includes an article she wrote a few years ago for *Piecework* magazine. The article is about the newspaper column written by her great-great grandmother in the 1880s in New Hampshire, and includes photographs as well as a knitting pattern from the column.

Member **Mara Miller** was a first-time Invited Artist at the Punahou Carnival Art Gallery in February--where she recognized Friend **Baerbel Miller's** work as well. Mara's and collaborator Scott Robertson's set design, in the Norwegian painting style called Rosemal, was featured in TAG's recent production of Henrik Ibsen's play *Ghosts*, and was subsequently purchased by Roger Jellinek and Eden-Lee Murray's office.

Mara also spoke at the University of Hawaii's Center for Japanese Studies on "Teaching the Unbearable: Confronting the Horrors of Modernity Through Japanese Anime (Barefoot Gen and Grave of the Fireflies)" on February 25.

Mara has also finally updated her website! It's found at: maramillerart.com.

Member **Nancy Moss's** play *Anna: Love in the Cold War* will have a New York City showcase at Abingdon Theatre from April 22nd to May 8th. More details at nancysplays.web.com.

Friend **Winnie Inui** was just featured in Japan's largest English daily. Please see: <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fl20110226a1.html>

Winnie, a trendsetting foreign wife in Japan, is a wonderful woman and sensitive poet.

Corresponding Secretary, **Shan Correa**, sends a warm "mahalo" to the wonderful artist members who answered her plea for donated cards for the C.S. to use for hand-written notes of thanks, sympathy, and such, from our group. **Rita Gustie, Victoria Gail-White** and **Sabra Feldstein** shared their small art works, enough so that notes written on them can be whimsical, serious, or just plain beautiful. Sincere thanks from Shan!

Stephen Mooser, President of the Society of Children's Writers and Illustrators and Editor of the national SCBWI magazine, the *SCBWI Bulletin*, personally accepted a verse written by **Shan Correa** for the *Bulletin* this month. He also signed the check which accompanied the poem! "Editoring," which will appear in a future edition of the monthly magazine, is a humorous piece dedicated to Vicky Holyfield, Shan's remarkable editor of her middle-grade novel, *Gaff*.

Member **Rita Ariyoshi's** story, *Oh, Bull*, won first place in the 2011 Ian MacMillan Short Story Contest, sponsored by *Hawaii Review*, and her novel in progress, *Lion's Way*, was a finalist for the James Jones Literary Fellowship.

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friend **Connie DeDona**, author of *Letters to a Prisoner*, announced she will be at Kapolei Public Library on April 16th at 10:30a.m., speaking on a panel about alternative publishing.

Friend **Jan McGrath** will appear in a staged reading of *The Belle of Amherst* presented by TAG (The Actors Group) Saturday, 3/26 & Sunday, 3/27. The Reading will be followed by High Tea with gourmet treats & champagne by Director/Chef **Victoria Gail-White** (a fundraising event for TAG).

Members **Susie Anderson** and **Ann Gommers** will participate in a juried exhibition, En Plein Air Painters of Hawaii, from March 4th – April 3rd in Paia, Maui

E. FEBRUARY AND MARCH MINUTES

(Starting this month, the newsletter will contain the minutes of the meeting that occurred during the current month; therefore, both February and March are included here.)

National League of American Pen Women

February 2, 2011

The February meeting of the National League of American Pen Women Honolulu Branch took place at Alan Wong's Pineapple Room. Attendees included 26 members, 16 friends, 21 guests, and 1 visitor for a total of 64.

President **Susan Killeen** opened the meeting with the words, "We're nothing if not flexible." She reminded those who hadn't finished *Anshū* by Juliet Kono, speaker at our January meeting, to do so. She then asked first-time guests to introduce themselves.

Susan introduced new Friend **Jan Oppie**, who teaches English as a foreign language.

Susan then made the following announcements:

1. The National Pen Women office has a new Youtube site, by which one can send things to National or contact them.
2. The 18th annual Dancing Poetry Festival will be held in San Francisco, CA on September 24th. They are looking for suitable poetry to be choreographed and presented on stage. For more

information go to: <http://dancingpoetry.com/dpfpoetrycontestrules.html> or send poems to contest chair: Judy Hardin Cheung, 704 Brigham Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

3. **Maya Leland** will have an article, “Coming Out of the Closet,” in the next issue of *Hawaii Women’s Journal*.

4. **Anita Benson Bradley** has recently published a book entitled, *Mermaid Rhymes and Tails*.

5. **Elsha Bohnert** has been named recipient of the James M. Vaughan Award for Poetry at Hawai’i Pacific University.

Elsha, who is co-chair with **Margo Goodwill** of the next Biennial Art Exhibit, gave information about the exhibit, which will be held at the Honolulu Country Club from May 22 – June 25. The theme “When I Was a Kid” gives artists broad latitude: one can paint a childhood memory or dream, make a toy, draw like a child, create something inspired by a cartoon or book you loved, create a fairytale scene, etc. They encourage writers to create artworks based on their writing. Artist members can enter up to three works, and will be guaranteed that at least one of their works will be hung in the show, but the judge will decide which works by writers will be hung. Writers, therefore, might want to team up with artists. Set up for the exhibit is May 15, and the opening reception will be June 5. Everything about the Art Exhibit will soon be on our web site.

Susan reminded us that the next day would be Chinese New Year, and that Valentine’s Day was coming soon. She said that themes of love play a big part in literature and movies. Several Pen Women members in a variety of masks and costumes gave everyone a creative heart and danced.

Vice President **Victoria Gail-White** opened her share of the program by wishing everyone Happy Ground Hog Day. She then introduced our two speaker/entertainers, dancer **Yuki Shiroma** and story teller **Nyla Fujii Babb**.

Yuki Shiroma was born in Hawai’i, raised in San Francisco, and she trained in Japan. She was Director of Dance at Mid-Pacific Institute from 1987 to 2006. As an Okinawan American dancer, she was aware of the two very different dance styles. In Okinawan dancing, all dancers do the same things at the same time, very unlike American dance, where individuals may be performing different movements at the same time. For a long time Yuki kept the two styles very separate. Later she began combining them. She said it takes a solid understanding of the separate elements to blend them into a product that will be larger than any of its parts.

In 1990 Yuki, Ben Moffat, and Michael Harada founded the dance theatre company, Monkey Waterfall, which has performed shows all over the world combining Western choreographic structures with Okinawan dance. They decided to do a show, “Monkey on My Back,” about addictions. The next year, they did “Still on My Back,” based on Yuki’s mother’s World War Two experiences, which ended up being kind of an anti-war piece. Other shows include “Shrines to Paradise,” dealing with the impact of tourism on our islands, and last year they did a show about the public’s obsession with celebrities.

She showed a video of their signature piece, “Monkey Waterfall.”

After the video, Yuki and Nyla collaborated on a dance-theatre piece called “The Bones.”

Nyla Fujii Babb, a storyteller and retired librarian, is of Chinese, Japanese, and Hawaiian ethnicity. She has performed as a story teller in many different venues, and she narrated many of Tom Coffman’s programs on KHET. She and Yuki frequently collaborate on programs, which Nyla referred to as “a fusion of a non-dancing storyteller with a non-speaking dancer.”

In introducing “The Bones,” Nyla said that it grew out of a period when both Yuki and Nyla’s dads were dying, and they were both eager to get their fathers’ stories down in writing.

For their piece Nyla was dressed completely in black, her eyes blindfolded by a black scarf. Yuki was dressed in black pants, a white coat, white gloves, and a white mask, with a black scarf around her neck and head. Yuki danced and Nyla narrated while the rest of us watched entranced. At the end of the story, Nyla whipped the scarf from her eyes, and she and Yuki began singing, “These Bones Gonna Rise Again,” soon joined by the audience.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Alpert Mower
Recording Secretary

National League of American Pen Women

March 2, 2011

The March meeting of the National League of American Pen Women Honolulu Branch took place at Alan Wong’s Pineapple Room. Attendees included 23 members, 15 friends, 8 guests, and 1 visitor for a total of 47.

The following flyers were on each table:

1. “Celebrate Taste of Waialua” at the Historic Waialua Sugar Mill, April 23, 2011, a gathering of local art, food, coffee, chocolate, Hawaiian music and community groups to celebrate the Rebirth of the Old Sugar Mill Town of Waialua.
2. “Letters to a Prisoner by Connie D.” This book by member **Connie DeDona** contains poems and letters from a Mom to her Meth addicted son in prison.
3. “Tea With Emily Dickinson” (See details below under information about Pen Women in the News.)

President **Susan Killeen** opened the meeting at 12:15 p.m. with the words, “Hope you got the Oscar winners you wanted.” For the sake of visitors, she explained what our group is all about and discussed the difference between members and friends, saying that applications were available on the reception table. She’s been teaching writing to young children and said “They are very good.” One second grader asked her how old she was. She replied, “Well, I’m over forty.” The child responded, “Yikes! My dad is forty.”

Susan then asked first time visitors to introduce themselves, and she introduced new Friend, **Mary Bertolino**.

She gave information about Pen Women in the News:

1. **Connie DeDona** will be part of a panel speaking about Alternative Publishing at Kapolei Public Library, April 16, at 10:30 a.m.
2. Friend, **Winnie Inui**, was recently featured in Japan’s largest English daily. “Poet Winnie Inui reflects on three decades of foreign wives’ association of Kansai.” (See link in our online newsletter.)
3. **Jan McGrath** will give a staged reading of scenes from *The Belle of Amherst* by William Luce, March 26 at 7:30 p.m. and March 27 at 2:00 p.m. This is a Fundraising Event for The Actors’ Group. (Admission \$50.00) 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! Call 722-6941 for reservations.

Susan then read from a newspaper clipping from 1938 about our Pen Women branch. Kathleen Worrell was President at that time. The women held a “Chapeau Party.” Each member appeared in an original creation. Real hats were taboo. The article, which appeared in several publications at the time, described some of the hats. **Elsha Bohnert** suggested that we do the same thing, and Susan said that Elsha could be chair of the committee.

Vera Williams’s friend, Demery Mezin, art coordinator at Sunset Beach Elementary School, is looking for guest artists. As a guest artist one would be offered a small stipend. Contact Demery Mezin (808) 258-2248 or designsbydemery@hotmail.com.

Marcia Zina Mager invited those present to attend her performance “Off the Deep End,” which she described as a “deeply transformational work,” to be held at Waldorf Lower School, March 20 at 7:00 p.m. This is a culmination of an eight-week program through Breakthrough Performance. Tickets are \$10.00. Contact Marcia MZM@hawaii.rr.com.

Margo Goodwill, co-chair of the Art Exhibit, talked about the exhibit, which will be held at the Honolulu Country Club from May 22 – June 25. The theme is “When I Was a Kid.” She said six awards are in place already, and that there was a sign-up sheet on the reception table for potential award givers. She asked for volunteers to help with the opening reception to be held Sunday, June 5, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. They are asking members to donate prizes and gifts for the reception. Some suggestions are books, a massage, and dinner by a good cook. Margo ended by

saying, “Play hop scotch, fly a kite, get in touch with your inner self.” All information and entry forms are now available on the NLAPW web site. www.nlapwhawaii.org.

Because Vice President **Victoria Gail-White** was traveling, past president **Nancy Moss** introduced our speaker, Victoria Kneubuhl, playwright and mystery novelist. Victoria won the Hawaii Award for Literature in 1994, the Elliot Cades Award for Literature 2006, and in 2007 she was Distinguished Writer in Residence in the English Department at U.H. Manoa. Her latest play, *The Holiday of Rain*, opens at Kumu Kahua Theatre, March 22. Her first novel, *Murder Casts a Shadow*, was published by U.H. Press in 2008, and her second novel, *Murder Leaves Its Mark*, will be published by U.H. Press this spring.

Victoria spoke first about Exposition, which is when you need to fill in background information in the plot. Exposition depends on dialogue more than stage action. She spoke of two types, Dynamic Exposition, where the audience soaks up the information without realizing it, and Direct Exposition, which is like a Greek play where one character speaks directly to the audience.

Nancy Moss and Victoria read dialog from *The Holiday of Rain* to show how this works. In the first scene, they presented an example of Dynamic Exposition, where information is fed smoothly through the characters’ dialogue, and the audience is hardly aware of it. Examples from the second and the last scenes showed Direct Exposition, where a character communicates directly with the audience through monologue or reflective soliloquy. Victoria said that sometimes exposition works well by talking about something else. One should avoid giving too obvious an explanation. The explanation should be minimal, but sufficient to the action.

Victoria then spoke about her novels. *Murder Casts a Shadow* was set in Honolulu in 1935. She deliberately set the novel in a time before she was born as she wanted to talk about Hawaii as she remembered it from her childhood. She refers to historic sites that are still here today. *Murder Leaves Its Mark*, also set in an earlier Honolulu, involves a train that at one time went from Honolulu around Kaena Point all the way to Haleiwa.

A question and answer session followed:

Q. Who are some of your favorite playwrights?

A. Some of the early feminist playwrights from England, such as Louise Page and Caryl Churchill. Also Shakespeare and the early plays of Sam Shepherd.

Q. How long would a train ride take from Honolulu to Haleiwa?

A. Probably a few hours.

Q. Do you learn best from reading plays or seeing them live?

A. When beginning to write plays, you should do both. But she learned the most from acting.

Q. Do you decide ahead of time that this work will be a play or a novel?

A. Our own creative process is still a huge mystery. Like a journey, you start and think you're going someplace, but you end up somewhere else.

Q. How did you get your first play produced?

A. Her playwriting teacher, Dennis Carroll, was one of the founders of Kumu Kahua Theatre.

Q. How did you get your first novel published?

A. She was shopping at Safeway in Manoa and saw the editor from U.H. Press who had published her plays. She asked the editor to recommend someone who might be interested in her novel, and the editor said, "Send it to me. We've been talking about publishing a mystery for the past two years."

Q. How do you divorce yourself from the research and become creative?

A. At some point you have to tell yourself to stop, that you've got what you need. But sometimes research is a path to the creative. It's not one or the other. Both can be interwoven in ways you might not expect.

Before adjourning the meeting, Susan announced that our speaker next month will be Maile Yawata—just in time for the art show.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Alpert Mower
Recording Secretary.

F. NEXT MEETING

DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2011
TIME: 11:30 A.M.
PLACE: THE PINEAPPLE ROOM (MACY'S ALA MOANA)
SPEAKER: MAILE YAWATA, ARTIST

G. CONTACT THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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