

Women's National Book Association

Los Angeles Chapter

The Ultimate Resource for the Book Community

December 2008

Newsletter

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DEAR CHAPTER MEMBERS,

Welcome to our December Newsletter!

December is a month to celebrate with family and friends, to express gratitude for the old year, and look forward to the new year. In this spirit we invite all our members and friends to please join us at our Holiday Gala on December 6th, to light the holiday spirit and celebrate our amazing community of bookwomen. For those of you, torn between cherished tradition and environmental responsibility in your Christmas shopping, find out how to have it both ways in our Green Tips section.

Inspirational Quote of the Month

"Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love" ~ Hamilton Wright Mabi

A Word from Kelly...



"The greatest gift you can give to someone you love is your presence." ~ Thich Nhat Hanh

Holiday Greetings Wonderful Bookwomen!

I started my holiday celebration this year with a sigh of relief followed by a fast and furious cross-country road trip. Within moments of pressing the SEND button on an e-mail to my publisher that contained the first draft of my Zone Golf manuscript (under the

holidays with Dana's family. By the time you read this, we will have hopped on a plane from Albuquerque to Los Angeles to celebrate the rest of the holidays with my family. Whew! I love the holidays, and I am saying that with a straight face--hyperventilating--but with a straight face.

Having been steeped in the Dream Project for the past two years (click [HERE](#) to check out our new blog), I've become more of a Pollyanna than I've ever been. Some people talk about the impossibility of celebrating the holidays in the (financial) fashion they have grown accustomed to. But I see a great opportunity. Instead of focusing on the absence of mountains of presents under the tree, why not compensate by heaping the quality of presence on our loved ones. After all, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Thich Nhat Hanh said, "The greatest gift you can give to someone you love is your presence."

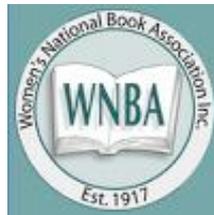
Taking quality time to be with your loved ones, sincerely thanking and acknowledging them for all the ways they enrich your life is one way that the holidays can be more (not less) heart-warming and presence-filled than ever.

Speaking of presence-filled, I look forward to seeing you all at our Holiday Gala on Dec 6th, from 2-5 pm, where you will experience a plethora of holiday festivities: delicious holiday treats, handmade sweets, an afternoon buffet, two film screenings, a silent auction, and many opportunities to practice giving and receiving presence.

See you there. Happy Holidays,

Kelly Sullivan Walden

RECENT EVENTS 2008 -- A SHORT REVIEW



Saturday, November 8, 2008 WNBA Award, San Francisco

By Ruth Light

Every other year the Women's National Book Association Executive Board meets behind closed doors to choose the recipient of the WNBA Award. This award is given to "a living American woman who derives part or all of her income from books and the allied arts, and who has done meritorious work in the world of books beyond the duties or responsibilities of her profession or occupation."

This year, the award ceremony was held in San Francisco, and it was quite a party! First of all, the recipient, Kathi Kamen Goldmark, has an impressive resume: including writer, singer, author escort, and publicist. Kathie is, perhaps, most famous for starring (and singing in) the all-author rock band, "The Rock Bottom Reminders," and as such we were treated to a lengthy and witty toast to Kathi from her friend, Amy Tan. The other speakers, although less well known, were equally illustrious and inspirational. They were Joan Gelfand, President of the Women's National Book Association; Effie Lee Morris, Founder of the WNBA San Francisco chapter and the 1984 WNBA Award Winner; and Nancy Kelly, WNBA Award Chair. The actual award was presented by Laurie Beckelman, the immediate past president of WNBA.

The ceremony was held at the Century Club of California, which was founded in 1888 as a private women's club, with Mrs. George Hearst being the Century Club's first president. The club began in 1888, but their building was built in 1905, with lots of beautiful wood, a large fireplace, high ceilings, and lovely furnishings. The setting was elegant, and the attendees were exuberant and happy for Kathi.

The food that was served was excellent, and still several of us went out to dinner afterwards to continue our celebration. It was truly an interesting, literary, and delightful gathering.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2008 -- A SNEAK PEEK



Saturday, December 6----WNBA/LA's Holiday Festivities 2008

By Ruth Light

Please join us, and bring your family and friends, for our December holiday event!

WHAT: A plethora of holiday festivities you won't find anywhere else! Delicious holiday treats - handmade sweets and afternoon buffet - two film screenings - and a silent auction...to name a few!

The silent auction will boast boutique holiday gift items that will be treasured for years! They include hand blown glass, tapestry bags, and stained glass decorative panels made by one of the top stained glass designers in Los Angeles. And you can pamper yourself or a dear one with gift certificates for massages and beauty makeovers, or win car washes, free veterinarian house calls, and more!

You won't want to miss the special screening of two half-hour films:

Little Miss Dewie: a Duckumentary. Produced and directed by WNBA member, Mira Tweti, the newly completed film was an audience favorite at the Asheville Film Festival in North Carolina and has been accepted into six other festivals already!

And WNBA/LA chapter president, Kelly Sullivan Walden's documentary, *Will You Listen?*, in which teenagers address several human rights issues that societies are dealing with around the world. This film discusses the role that young people play in the fulfillment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

\$10 per person. Several people have RSVP'd, but many of you have not. Please RSVP, whether or not you can attend, so that we will be better able to plan. RSVP to <ruthabc@ca.rr.com>

WHO: All are welcome - members and the public -- bring friends!

WHEN: Saturday, December 6th --- 2 pm - 5 pm

WHERE: Hosted by WNBA/LA member Mira Tweti at her building complex on the ocean in Playa del Rey!

Laguna del Rey Apts, 6200 Vista del Mar, first floor rec room. Enter and walk to the end of the breezeway. There will be signs. The complex is located at the north end of Vista del Mar. Take a right on 63rd Street. The entrance is 75 feet further down on the right.

PARKING: Street parking is available, or park in the free public lots behind Gordon's Market on Culver Blvd., or on Esplanade a block north of Culver. It's just a few minute walk to the complex from any of these places.

WHY: To light the holiday spirit, share our successes and challenges of 2008, and celebrate another fabulous year of women coming together around writing!

Any more questions? Call Ruth Light at 310-397-4503 or e-mail at [<ruthabc@ca.rr.com>](mailto:ruthabc@ca.rr.com)

WEBSITE/NEWSLETTER NEWS

As we have welcomed many new members into our organization last month, here is a review of the information and services, featured on our WNBA/LA Web site and our WNBA/LA newsletter.

WNBA/LA Web site:

<http://www.wnba-books.org/la>

This is the link to our local WNBA/LA Web site. Bookmark it NOW on your browser. Here is why:

Our WNBA/LA web site features:

- **Recent and upcoming events:** Many events are open to members and the public, so you can invite your friends and spread the word.
- **Member news:** Find out what's happening in our member community. Who just published a book? Who's doing a book signing? Who's hosting a media event?
- **Member benefits:** What benefits do I enjoy as a member of WNBA?
- **Member books:** A list of books, published by our members
- **Member blogs:** Here's your chance to connect with other members and to share with them and the world what you're about and what's cooking in your career. Even better, you don't have to set up your blog yourself. Our web designer, Terri Negron, will set up your own personal blog for you. Terri's e-mail is: [<ttorg@aol.com>](mailto:ttorg@aol.com)
- **Newsletter Archive:** Missed a newsletter? Just download it on PDF.
- **Newsletter Submission Guidelines & WNBA style sheet:** Have a great idea for a submission to the newsletter? Refer to these guidelines and send your story off to [<juliadrake28@gmail.com>](mailto:juliadrake28@gmail.com)

Click [here](#) to download the WNBA style sheet & Submission Guidelines!!

In addition, our WNBA/LA Web site also provides links to connect you with **WNBA National**--our thriving organization all over the country.

Password for "Member's only" section

Interested in accessing an audio library with panel discussions, expert advice on pitching, publishing, editors, agents, and some inspiration from successful authors in the book industry? Request your member password from Ruth Light [<ruthabc.ca.rr.com>](mailto:ruthabc.ca.rr.com) or Julia Drake [<juliadrake28@gmail.com>](mailto:juliadrake28@gmail.com)

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH



Hillary Carlip--A Woman Unaccording to Plan

By Julia Drake

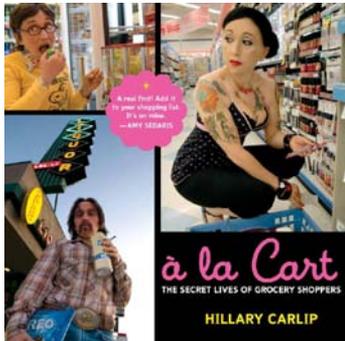
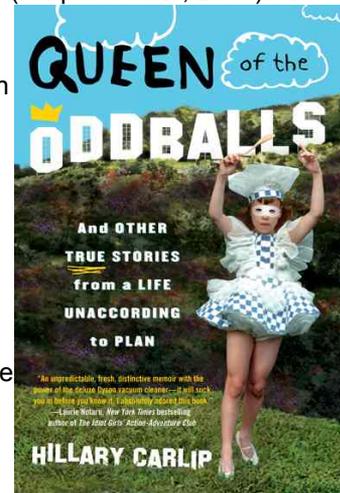
"I used to think that I should put all my focus on just one career, but life kept offering me too many possibilities. So I realized that rather



unaccording to plan, which Hillary chronicles in her recent award-winning memoir, *Queen of the Oddballs* (Harper Collins, 2006). A collection of hilarious and touching essays, the book traces her journey of self-discovery as an artist, growing up in

Los Angeles.

In Hillary's recent book, *A la Cart: The Secret Lives of Grocery Shoppers* (Virgin Books, 2008), she has taken real, found shopping lists, and transformed herself into the imagined authors by being photographed as 26 different characters who vary in age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, even facial hairstyles, and writing unforgettable stories about each. "You can tell so much about a person by what they're buying, their handwriting, the paper they used to make the list, etc.," Hillary says. "To me, shopping lists are the new memoir."



Putting herself into the shoes of other people allowed Hillary to marry her experience as an author and performance artist. Hillary knew early in her teenage years, that she wasn't made to pursue a conventional profession. "I always wanted to be a performer. But I couldn't sing, and I was a horrible dancer, so the sister of a friend of mine taught me how to juggle. Somehow juggling came to me easily." Hillary became a professional juggler. One of her most celebrated performances remains the hysterical comedy juggling song with which she won The Gong Show in her teens.

Although Hillary has moved on to other things, she reprised her Gong Show act at readings and book signings throughout the country as part of her *Queen of the Oddballs* book tour. "Writing and performing come from two very different places inside of me, and it's nice to switch things up to keep your mind fresh and open."

Staying open and allowing yourself to be inspired, is how Hillary explains her process of coming up with ideas. "I've always been someone to not have a set path, and I make sure to take lots of left turns. Also, for me, creativity comes from paying attention to mundane things"--she chuckles, "such as found shopping lists."

So Hillary's advice for fellow artists is: "Do things unaccording to plan. Be creative in how you sell yourself, and don't judge your work. You have to have extreme belief and confidence in your vision. I think the biggest hurdle for artists to fulfilling their potential is that they limit their self-expression by editing themselves. Don't!"

As an example of creative marketing, Hillary cites her approach to getting her memoir published. "When I told my agent I wanted to write a memoir, she told me to first get some of my essays published to establish a platform. So I sent them out and just never heard back from people. That's when I thought, am I going to sit here and wait, or take matters into my own hands?"

Hillary opted for the latter and started Fresh Yarn (www.freshyarn.com), an online salon for personal essays, which, in its four years of running, has become an award-winning Web site. "It was a way to showcase my work, but more importantly, the work of other writers, which then gave me a platform to sell and market my memoir." She continues, "I think personal essays are the perfect form for the limited time and attention span of our fast-paced society right now."

Writing *Queen of the Oddballs* forced Hillary to look back at her life and uncover the thread connecting

MEMBER STORIES

This month's stories are like Christmas: loving and joyful, with a twist of melancholy.

Carol Ann Howell: [It's a Frog Story](#) (Short Story). This story is about how love means being able to let go.

Julia Drake: [Albert: The Story of a Christmas Tree](#) (Short Story). This story chronicles the rise to fame and fall of a Christmas tree.

Anna Bruni Benson: [Flowers of the Wind](#) (Poem). This poem pays tribute to the Santa Ana winds.

MEMBER NEWS

MEDIA EVENTS

Mira Tweti

This week, Mira's duckumentary, *Little Miss Dewie*, was accepted into the Connecticut Film Festival and Anchorage International Film Festival.

Screenings in Conneticut (Dec 5-7): The film screens Dec 5-7 in Bethel, then midweek and weekend around the state until the main festival weekend of June 2-7 in Danbury.

Screenings in Anchorage (Dec 5-14): Little Miss Dewie screens Saturday, Dec 6th, at 2 pm at the Loussac Library, Anchorage

Please go, enjoy the film, and report back if you're in either location! If you're in Anchorage I may be able to get a few tickets for you!

Also, here are the recent news on her books:

World Parrot Trust - [Psittacine Magazine](#): You can download the great review by Rosemary Low [HERE](#).

[Humane Education Teacher](#) is featuring both Mira's books, *Here, There and Everywhere*, and, *Of Parrots and People*, on their booklist and caged birds pages.

You can also catch Mira online:

KPFA - San Francisco - radio interview of Saturday 11/15, by Kris Welch can be heard online at Saturday Morning Talkies. Click [HERE](#) to go to the interview.

This Sunday VegNews is running an online interview with Mira for Thanksgiving. Click [HERE](#) to read the interview.

MEMBER SERVICES/REQUESTS



Weekend of December 19-21, 2008, Mining the Self to Create Characters: A Writing Workshop with Lisa Doctor at the Esalen

them their own unique voices? We do this by mining our own stories, memories, truths, and experiences.

Through a series of writing exercises and discussion, Lisa Doctor will teach you how to

- Create a character in the context of a moment in time and then explore his or her full range of feelings, from pure joy to fear, loneliness, and pain.
- Allow our characters to speak to us, to answer important questions, and to open up about that which haunts and thrills them.
- By the end of the weekend the character will emerge with a unique and authentic voice, a personal history, and a distinct identity.

This workshop is designed for writers of every level, including beginners who are seeking their first group writing experience in a safe and nurturing environment.

Click [HERE](#) for pricing and accommodations.



WriteGirl is a nonprofit organization for high school girls (14-18), centered on the craft of creative writing and empowerment through self-expression. Through one-on-one mentoring and monthly workshops, girls are given techniques, insights, and hot tips for great writing in all genres from professional women writers.

The seven multiple award-winning anthologies that have emerged out of this fertile collaboration between mentors and mentees, feature a diverse collection of poetry, essays, lyrics, and stories from new as well as accomplished writers in the **WriteGirl** Program.

WriteGirl is looking for mentors and volunteers for their 8th season of creative writing workshops and mentoring for teen girls. **WriteGirl** welcomes all women of diverse professional backgrounds to join their energetic community of writers.

For more information on WriteGirl, please visit: www.writegirl.org

MEMBER REQUESTS

Carol Ann Howell

Carol Ann Howell would like to know of paying markets for short stories. Please contact her at howellca@fairpoint.net

GREEN TIPS



Greening Tradition By Julia Drake

Yes, we live in an age of hyperconsumption and overpackaging, putting stress on our environment, and honestly, how many things do we really lack? But against

when thinking of giving up cherished traditions that root back deeply into our childhood and culture?

As human beings, we are creatures of habit, so I suggest that the answer to the dilemma is balance. Don't throw out the baby with the bath water. If you serve the environment, but snuff out your and your family's Christmas spirit in return, nothing is won. Likewise, toppling the Christmas tree with a barrage of overpackaged glimmer and glitter cannot be the answer either. Instead, do a little here and there, and you'll see how much it adds up.



For example, when giving presents to your children, why not get creative and try for greener gifts and reusable wrapping? As for the adult members of your family, and friends, some might very well do without a shiny box, and enjoy a present that's a donation made in their name to charity or some other non-profit organization or group of their interest. Or you might consider consumable gifts. You can also give back to the environment in the way you plan Christmas festivities. Buy local foods, use creative, natural decorations, and fair-trade ingredients in making cookies and sweets. Last but not least, you can give the greatest gift of all: your time.

In short, striking a healthy balance between environmental awareness and cherished tradition will not only keep your holiday spirit burning brightly, but it will also help you reevaluate some of your holiday traditions, and let go of those that are not rooted in what Christmas should be all about: to find fulfillment and joy in the gift of being with your loved ones.

Below are some ideas to get you started on greening tradition:

Greener gifts for your kids

1. Books that support a green/good cause:

- WriteGirl's most recent anthology, *Lines of Velocity*, is a great book and life guide for any teenage girl, struggling through the joys and pains of teenage hood.
- A number of publishers have started to print books on recycled paper. Raincoast Books, for example, has printed *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* on 100 percent recycled paper, saving an estimated 39,320 trees, 17 million gallons of water and 1,885 pounds of solid waste (National Geographic Green Guide, November 2008). So watch out for green books when you're on the hunt.
- There are plenty of great children's and young adult books that educate our next generation about environmental issues and concerns, and do so in an entertaining way.



2. Recharge and Educate: Battery-operated items present a popular mainstay on Santa's list. So why not make rechargeable batteries or a solar recharger part of your gift giving and explain to your child how and why to use it.

3. Buy Green: Over the last years, the number of affordable green toys, games, and clothing for kids has exploded--especially when shopping online. Choose from recyclable playhouses and dolls, rocking horses, made of sustainable wood with nontoxic paints, skateboards from renewable cork oak and bamboo, to 100 percent certified organic cotton sateen fleeces and pants, warm hats and mittens--you name it!

- **[The Dream Project](#)**: Founded by our WNBA/LA president Kelly Sullivan Walden, the Dream Project is a grade 6-12 educational program that empowers students to discover and invent solutions to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. There are a number of ways to donate and get involved with the Dream Project. Please contact Kelly Sullivan Walden for more information or click [HERE](#).
- **[WriteGirl](#)**: WriteGirl's mission is to empower high school girls to express themselves through writing. One Hundred percent of girls who have gone through this program have graduated from high school and enrolled in college. Donate your time and become a mentor for a girl, or make a donation. Click [HERE](#) for more info.
- **[Womentowomen.org](#)**: This organization helps women who are victims of war all over the world, to deal with problems such as hunger, water, medicine and other bare necessities. For only \$27 a month, you can sponsor a woman survivor of war. Click [HERE](#) for more info.

2. Consumable Gifts: Fair-trade coffee, tea, and chocolate, fruits and nuts, and environment-friendly soap and cosmetics--all these gifts are sure to be consumed, instead of creating waste, and being stashed away in the closet. Also included in this category are movie and theater tickets, certificates for spa, pedicure/manicure or hair appointments, restaurants, favorite stores, etc.

3. Better Used: Sometimes flea markets, vintage or second-hand shops carry quality goods you can afford, and then re-make as a new gift by fixing wear and tear with a paint job, personal decoration, or note. Your friend will enjoy the product for a long time, which will balance out the materials expended in the making of it.

Greening Christmas Festivities



1. Buy Local Foods: Any imported product you buy has traveled a long way to get to you, and in the process cost fuel, time and packaging. Reduce the stress on the environment by buying local products at your local farmers market. You can ask for a seasonal menu of products, which also holds information about the source of the various products.
2. Decorate with Nature: Use natural decorations such as live plants and freshly cut local flowers, and hang your tree with things made of natural material that can either be used again, eaten, or composted.
3. Biodegradable Tableware: Disposable tableware is very convenient, especially if you're entertaining a lot of guests, but it creates a great deal of waste. So try some of the new green disposable tableware alternatives. Made from crop waste such as bagasse, a by-product of sugar cane, they are microwave and freezer safe, sturdy and strong, and offer any of the benefits of normal disposable tableware.

The Ultimate Gift of Time

The best gift only you can give to your children, family and friends, is time. Make a promise to make cookies, play, or read to your children at a specific time and date; give your partner a gift certificate for a personal massage; promise your friends to baby-sit or invite them to a home-cooked meal or shared potluck dinner; get together for a coffee with a friend you haven't spend quality time with. Give the gift of time, which really is the gift of love.

So that's it for December!

Thank you for your submissions and please feel free to contact me with any suggestions on how to make this newsletter better.

Happy Holidays!

Julia Drake
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