



APRIL 2010

women in the visual and literary arts

WiVLA's Mission: to provide an inspiring forum for women to explore and advance their creative development, to promote their work in the marketplace, and to infuse the community with their spirit of cooperation and invention.

APRIL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

ECO AWARD WINNERS:

MADILYN STEIN AND JERE PFISTER

Please join us as Madilyn and Jere share the results of their creative activities since receiving the ECO Award funds.

Gathering Time: 6 PM
Meeting Time: 6:15 – 7:15
Museum of Printing History
1324 West Clay Street,
Houston, Texas 77019

Join us for dinner following the meeting at Café Express on West Gray

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jeanne Haner

Greetings WiVLA members and friends! March has been a very eventful month.

Our "FotoFest" general meeting at Winter Street Studios was very well attended. We actually ran out of seating room.

We celebrated our 15th Anniversary Saturday, March 27th at Archway Gallery. We had a lovely party honoring our founding mothers and past presidents. Erica DelGardo made specially designed WiVLA pins that were presented to our founding mothers, Karleen Koen, Martha Skow and Janean Thompson. Karleen will see that Janean gets her pin; she was the only past president that was unable to attend the party. The turnout was exceptional - several highlights of the evening included the presentation of the redesigned WiVLA logo, "What's Up Cupcake" cupcakes, historical PowerPoint presentation, a beautiful six tier paper cake made by Laurie Pearson, blinky lights, balloons, champagne, strawberries and a commemorative booklet.

Thanks to the Board, Anniversary Party Committee and all the thoughtful helping hands that made the party an event to be remembered. I especially want to thank Nancy Michon for the elegant redesign of the WiVLA logo and Linda Allen for the wonderful power point presentation. For those who are interested, the PowerPoint presentation CD can be ordered for \$5 at the April meeting.

As we change the guard, I reflect on the last WiVLA Board of Directors fondly. Together we made things happen. It was a good year. My personal thanks go out to each of you.

The new WiVLA board will assume their responsibilities this month. I welcome our new and returning board members. I applaud their decision to serve you.

I hope to see you at the next meeting. Thank you for your continued support.

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PAST PRESIDENTS
honored at WiVLA's
15th Anniversary
Celebration on
March 27 at
Archway Gallery,
shown left to right:
Kellye Sanford,
Marian Szczepanski,
Sue Liska, Kay
Sarver, Founding
Mother Martha
Skow, Karleen Koen,
Jeanne Haner, and
Lillian Warren. Not
pictured: Lynn
Weeks.

A Note From Karleen Koen

Jeanne and WiVLA board and members at large,

The anniversary party was beautiful on so many levels. Visually....as always, nobody does it like WiVLA, the art space itself, the paper cake, the light sprays, the food. People, everyone so friendly and so interesting, so talented, so giving.

I always get more credit than I deserve. I may have had the idea, but so many others took it and ran further than I could imagine with it, including each and every Wivla president and board. It's like having a series of ever talented daughters, granddaughters, and great granddaughters.

I treasure the pin that was gifted to me and Martha and Janean last night. I thank you, and I admire you all.

Karleen

The Road to Nowhere? is at Winter Street

By Jennifer Watson

Does the *Road to Nowhere?* lead its travelers to the scenic plains of Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Atlanta suburbs of the African American middle-class, war-torn Iraq, or an inner-city neighborhood burdened with dilapidated buildings covered in provocative graffiti? Natasha Egan, curator of the FotoFest 2010 Biennial exhibition held at Winter Street Studios, sought to tackle the question without literally answering it. Instead, she allowed eighteen artists to provide their critical perspectives of America's social landscape through the lenses of their cameras in a way that would leave viewers wondering if the country is headed in the right direction.

"Is the goal in driving down the road to go or to collapse?" Egan said in attempt to summarize the show's

title. "The question mark at the end of the title asks if where we are headed is better."

To kickoff FotoFest 2010, WiVLA members gathered at Winter Street Studios for their March meeting where they previewed the show and learned about other sponsored events being held from March 12 – April 25. This year's theme, Contemporary U.S. Photography, commissioned five curators to bring together works from 45 U.S. artists to display at principal exhibitions throughout Houston.

Egan, who serves as the deputy director of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, found the theme challenging, not because of the subject matter, but due to FotoFest curatorial guidelines.

“FotoFest asked me to only pick American artists, and I’m used to showing the American perspective from international angles,” Egan said. “But the show is not lacking because it does not have that voice. [The show is] a critique of contemporary America, but I think the artists are also critiquing themselves.”

Greta Pratt picked a number of day laborers to photograph in her series, “Liberty.” The subjects in her work were employed by Liberty Tax Services and had to dress up in full Lady Liberty attire to advertise the business.

Pratt found various American businesses’ loose usage of the word “freedom” in their names ironic and took the opportunity to portray “underemployed” men and

women as American citizens rather than walking billboards.

“It’s not about taxes. Liberty applies to all,” Pratt said. “If you look closely, you’ll see people who may be down on their luck. I wanted them to be lit beautifully, so I photographed at an angle. [The images] say ‘you’re not an employee; this is a portrait of you as an American.’”

Egan admits *Road to Nowhere?* shows America in a negative connotation, realizing now is “not the time to celebrate America. The message is...to show the state of the union. I like the idea that photographers are focusing on human situations.”

To find out more about *Road to Nowhere?* and other FotoFest programs, visit www.fotofest.org.

MEMBER NEWS

This column is for members to report their news: getting published, having a show, receiving an award – recognizing any of their work. Please submit your news to share with other WIVLA members.

VISUAL ART CELEBRATIONS

Sue Donaldson will be part of two invitational exhibitions in May:

Sat. May 1, 3-9 p.m. *5th Annual Inner Corridor Tour for Private and Warehouse Artist Studios* located at Winter Street Studios Gallery 2nd floor, which is part of the Washington Avenue Corridor. Take a tour on that day and stop by and say, “Hi!” www.innercorridortour.org

Thurs., May 6, 4-7 p.m. Opening Reception: *Mother & Child Art Walk* benefiting The Door Women’s Shelter (a place for abused women & their children to be safe from their abusers). Located at Dr. Melissa Young’s Face It Skin Therapy upstairs gallery, 21 N. Main Street in Kingwood Town Center. www.FaceItSkinTherapy.com.

Luisa Duarte-Green is having a show, *New Borders Sat., March 13 – May 1* at Live Oak Art Center, 1014 Milam, Columbus, TX. Gallery hours from 10 am to 2 pm.

Ann Bell and the Midtown Visions Cultural Arts Tour invites WIVLA members, friends & guests to her Open Studio, **Sat. April 10**, noon

until 5 pm located at 2711 Main #114, on the ground floor at Art Supply on Main. For directions, please call Ann at 281-330-3827 or see the map on her web site, www.annbell.net/OpenStudio.htm.

Donna E Perkins has a show, *Stealing Lines*, on view until April 22 at Lone Star College – Tomball, 30555 State Highway 249, Tomball, TX 77375; 281-351-3300. The art gallery is located across from the Black Box Theater. Open from 9-5:00 M-F. Campus Security can unlock the gallery at other times. Donna’s abstractions are based on lines collected from the figure.

Nelda Gilliam invites you **May 6**, to her exhibition of paintings at Koelsch Gallery, 6pm. 703 Yale Street, Houston, Texas 77007.

Sharon Worley’s exhibition, *Global Currents*, on view **May 1 - May 30**, Houston Public Library, 500 McKinney, Houston, TX 77002. Based on a series of seascapes, **Worley’s** paintings stimulate creative thought about the crises caused by the depletion of the ozone layer and

chemical and nuclear pollutants. www.sharonworleypaintings.com).

Michelle O’Michael’s sculpture, *Prairie Fire*, was selected as one of 7 from 117 sculptures to be in the year-long Henderson Art Project: www.hendersonartproject.com. There is a People’s Choice Vote: HELP! I would GREATLY appreciate your vote. You can vote three times per computer. Help me keep a smile on my face to share with you. Please Vote!

LITERARY CELEBRATIONS

Karleen Koen has been awarded an artist’s residency at the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation Retreat in New Mexico. It is one of the oldest artists’ residencies in the country, and Karleen will be there for three months. And Crown Publishing has purchased her fourth novel, *Before Versailles*, about four months in the life of a young and handsome Louis XIV. Politics, romance, and a boy in an iron mask make up the plot. *Before Versailles* will come out in **May 2011**.

PAST PRESIDENT – KAY SARVER

As Told to Jane Mulholland

In honor of WiVLA's fifteenth anniversary the newsletter will profile one of our eight past presidents each month. We will complete these profiles with our current president Jeanne Haner.

The rainy afternoon I met Kay, she was working at Archway Gallery where she is a member artist. She began by talking about WiVLA and the impact it has had on her life. "WiVLA completely changed my life. As I got involved in WiVLA I felt as if I was coming out of a cocoon. I'd been doing art on my own and my two sons – one just out of college, the other out of high school – needed me less so I was trying to become more clear about what I wanted to do. Teresa Byrne-Dodge, the editor of *My Table Magazine* gave me Cookie Wells' name and phone number. I called Cookie and she said, 'How did you get this number?' Cookie, of course, connected me to WiVLA.

"In 2002 I had work in the "Seeds of Healing – A Garden of Hope" Exhibit and had my work featured in an article by the *Houston Chronicle*. I can't begin to tell you how thrilling that was.

"WiVLA is a bridge that lifts you to a higher calling realizing your goals in less time. Before WiVLA I never wrote and I am now getting more comfortable putting words into my painting. The support and encouragement cannot be undervalued when your inner critic has been beating you on the head for years. When I first came to WiVLA I could barely say my own name. Lillian Warren was the greeter my first night and introduced herself and made me feel almost comfortable! When I came I never would have thought of being on the Board, much less being President! The confidence I have gained by being a member and shaking off my imagined inadequacies has given me the artistic life I have always wanted to have.

"The programs always inspire me. I think, 'If she can do it – so can I.' At the first 'Circle of Five' I attended, Jo

Zider was chairing and made me feel good about my work which encouraged me to do more.

"As President I wasn't always sure of what I was doing – a fumbling idiot doing the best I could at times. But I remembered how it felt when I was first on the Board as Visual Co-chair and how much better it got the second year. So I really enjoyed being President and felt it was an honor to serve and give something back to WiVLA since it has done so much for me. I left the presidency because I had to... my four years were up on the board. Even though I really needed to get to my work a bit more, I would have fulfilled my part to complete the two years as president if it were not for this 4-year rule.

"I feel that WiVLA needs to stay small so our members don't slip through the cracks and become involved. Membership is the most important task on the Board and the most difficult. By staying small we can communicate with each other, get to know each other better and gain confidence as women and as artists. My communication skills have improved enough that I could speak to any group today!"

During her year as President the Board was pretty focused on internal communications. They brought back the paper newsletter and did a member directory, along with keeping the organization doing the things it has always done such as the member meetings and the show at the Museum of Printing History. She also perfected NING and is sorry it no longer is being used.

"Women artists and writers are some of the most savvy, sharp people. They do see things differently and are more in tune with their senses and more compassionate. Leading this group is like herding cats – but then, I love cats!"

GOOD PLACES TO WRITE AND DRAW

By Cary Reeder

Agora, 1712 Westheimer, (713) 526-7212.

This month, I returned to the tattoo-bar-tattoo-vintage clothing-tattoo-bar-tattoo district to investigate yet another cool café. There's just something about rundown buildings enshrouded in vines and foliage that sets my heart aflutter. Agora fits the bill on all counts. It takes some effort to find, but once you do, a curious little world awaits you.

I was a bit concerned as I entered Agora because it seemed that I had walked in on a group of men having a knockdown, drag out fight. They were wildly gesticulating with raised voices and I was sure punches would soon fly. The language

they were speaking was Greek to me, but I was pretty sure by their intonation that they were arguing. Then they started smiling and shaking hands and I realized that these old Greek men were much like the Cubans I have come to know and love during my 28 years with my husband Jose. These men weren't arguing, they were saying *hello*.

When we were first dating, I couldn't get over how angry Jose's fellow *Cubanos* seemed to be. At family gatherings, I was surrounded by loud, rapid fire confrontations in Spanish between his family members. The same thing happened at Cuban restaurants. I thought it might have something to do with Fidel Castro or a lack of decent *café con leche*, but no, they were not angry. They were having a casual conversation. When I visit his family today, I am still tempted to ask him what everyone is arguing about but I know in my heart of hearts that they are probably just asking when the *arroz con pollo* is going to be ready.



General Atmosphere: Kooky is the first word that pops into my mind in describing Agora. On this cold, overcast day, it is dark inside and feels much like a rabbit warren. The atmosphere is one of funkiness and good-natured clutter. There are tables and seating areas, comfy couches, and a piano. Interesting reading materials are scattered around including books on different artists, *The New York Times*, and that uplifting, happy tome *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen. Students are studying, people are reading, friends are chitchatting, and one annoying guy is making business calls. Fear not, he is the exception not the rule.

Features: Agora has lots of quirky features including seating areas both downstairs and upstairs. It also has the world's steepest staircase with the most microscopic steps. Hold tight to your cappuccino as you make your way upstairs or you'll soon be wearing it! The upstairs picture window provides a great view of Westheimer and the rooftops of neighboring businesses. There is a nice big patio out front and a new upstairs deck. Agora appears to be *the* hangout for Houston's Greek community which gives it that Old World charm I love so much.

Coffee and Comestibles: Agora is heavy on the coffee, low on the comestibles. They have several coffee drinks including the most delicious cappuccino I have had in a while, and other beverages. They offer a few pastries and snacks but nothing substantial, so don't go on an empty stomach or your muse will be interrupted by a grumbling tummy.

When to Go: I have a feeling that Agora leads a double life. I am here on a Tuesday morning and it's nice and peaceful but I've also noticed that there are lots of wine and liquor bottles lined up behind the counter. According to their website, they now offer "Fat Bastard." I'm not even going to ask what that is. I'm guessing that after 5 p.m. Agora becomes less a place of quiet contemplation and more of a center for hoot and hollerin' boisterousness. The good thing is that you have all day to enjoy the quiet before the partying ensues.

The Verdict: What I love about Agora is that even if you are a dabbler or an absolute beginner, you feel like a "real" writer and/or artist here. You may even want to don that black beret you've been too embarrassed to wear in public. Here you will fit in nicely and won't be judged. And that old Greek man who is yelling at you? Don't worry, he's just saying hello.

Have you found a Good Place to Write or Draw in your neighborhood? Want a chance to write for the best newsletter ever? Be a guest columnist!

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

Brittany Kelly, brittkellyphoto@gmail.com; Photography and ceramics.

She heard about WiVLA from a card at a coffee shop. She joined WiVLA to network and be inspired by other women artists.

"I'm a photographer from Northern California and have relocated to Texas with my husband for his job. I love art and being around artists which I've been lucky to do my whole life. I photograph people and landscapes as I travel around the world. My business has mainly focused on

weddings and portraits but I am moving into doing more fine art portraits and work to help non profits and community organizations. I recently got into ceramics to balance out my digital life. I find working with clay and heat/fire to be very therapeutic as well as having to slow down to work with my hands and learn how to work with another medium."

Sandra Nelson, sandra@pacifireflex.com; Writing articles, published in magazines such as the *Sedona Journal of Emergence*. I also enjoy creating altars. She heard about WiVLA through Cathy Ingham of *The Earth Sanctuary*. She joined WiVLA to meet other creative women and be inspired to breathe life back into that part of me. "As a mother and grandmother, my life has evolved from a seasoned business woman, civic leader, and elected official to a published author, certified reflexologist and SoulCollage® facilitator. Even though I no longer live near the forests and mountains of the Pacific Northwest, I keep my love for nature alive by growing unusual trees and plants in containers."

Robin Barrett, robinL@peoplepc.com; Photography-wildlife-landscape She heard about WiVLA through a friend She joined WiVLA to be able to network and find a mentor. "I am learning about photography, and want to learn more and find out how others can see my work."

Name: Romy Kelly, RomyBKelly@yahoo.com; Acrylic, Gouache, Watercolor

She heard about WiVLA online She joined WIVLA to meet other artists, and grow artistic in the experience.

"I am, essentially, an Expressionist painter, although I try to practice all forms of artistic expression open to me. I have a degree in Visual Communications and a long background in artistic endeavors. Painting is the avenue I've chosen for therapeutic-self-expression as it is my most constant joy. It is the only language I understand how to employ in order to communicate my unfiltered thoughts and unaltered experiences."

Michele A. Zacks, mazacks@gmail.com; Quilting, Clay Arts

She heard about WiVLA through Jennifer Watson She joined WiVLA because I was impressed by the meeting I attended: Mylène Dressler was an interesting speaker; this was a dynamic friendly group of women working in diverse media (writers and artists).

"Quilt obsessed...building stash and skills...stay tuned!"

Carrie Gane, carriegane04@yahoo.com; A- Oil painting, photography, mixed media; W- Poetry

She hear about WiVLA through an online search for women artists in Houston She joined WiVLA due to the creative inspiration from being around fellow artists and writers, friendship and artistic feedback.

"I've loved art since I was little. I've spent the last several years working with printing, video production and graphic design, but now I'm refocused on painting with a renewed passion to explore art in new ways."

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW WIVLA BOARD

The following people will serve on the WiVLA Board April 2010 – March 2011:

Jeanne Haner
wivla.jhaner@gmail.com
President

Lane Devereux
lanedev@comcast.net
Vice President

Connie Buchanan
ccbuchanan@sbcglobal.net
Secretary

Diana Meade
dianameade@comcast.net
Treasurer

Jean Caslin
jeancaslin@gmail.com
Visual Co-Chair

Anna Phillips
freehandart@btinternet.com
Visual Co-Chair

Corry Austin
corry@sbcglobal.net
Literary Co-Chair

Elizabeth Earle
eaearle@hotmail.com
Literary Co-Chair

Cary Reeder
cs_reeder@sbcglobal.net
Membership

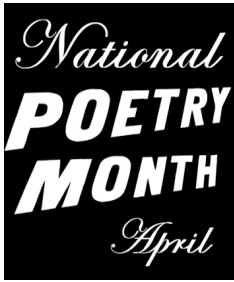
Jennifer Watson
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Newsletter

Diane Griffin Gregory
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Programs

Rebecca Kveton
gigglesrk@aol.com
Public Relations

Terry Tomkins-Walsh
tomkinwalsh@uh.edu
Historian

Madilyn Stein
madsteinart@gmail.com
At-large



The Creating Life

By Jennifer Watson

*"If we had no Winter, the spring would not be so pleasant;
If we did not sometimes taste the adversity,
prosperity would not be so welcome." Anne Bradstreet*

As we celebrate National Poetry Month, let's not forget legendary female poets like **Anne Bradstreet**, considered the first American poet, as well as contemporary U.S. Poet Laureates such as **Rita Dove** (who spoke in Houston March 10th) and **Kay Ryan**. There are many of ways to recognize NPM – here are just a few examples:

- Visit the official website for poets: www.poets.org.
- Research poetry archives at the Library of Congress's poetry webpage: www.loc.gov/poetry/.
- Honor a local poet by purchasing her work.
- Attend a local reading or workshop: In honor of NPM, Brazos Bookstore will feature poet **Edward Hirsch** (4/6) and **Amiri Baraka** will read at the Rothko Chapel on 4/8. Inprint will feature award winning poets **Dorianne Laux** and **Patricia Smith** as part of its Brown Reading Series (4/12). **Traci Matlock** and **Chris Stevens** will read selected works at Nano Fiction's Reading Series. Archway Gallery will host its second Thursdays reading 4/8 (contact **Donna Perkins**, donnaeperkins@att.net). **Sandi Stromberg** will teach poetry form at her workshop *The Value of Imitation* (4/10). See *Announcements and Contests*. For a list of Houston poetry spots, visit www.houstonpoetryslam.org.
- Attend the *Intro to Letterpress Printing* class at the Museum of Printing History (4/17). Learn traditional press techniques and print a poem on a card to frame later.
- Join the online poet forum Read Write Poem: www.readwritepoem.com.
- Get your poetry fix at www.witshouston.org. Subscribe to A Poem a Day.
- Submit to a contest listed in this publication. See *Announcements and Contests*.

Submit ideas to this column at newsletter@WiVLA.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & CONTESTS

When Mad Men Ruled: Advertising's Golden Age is the title of a four-week course offered at the Women's Institute of Houston, with **Gretchen Havens** as instructor. Travel back to the 1960s for a close-up look at the most vibrant, fertile time in American advertising. Viewing print ads, TV commercials and other media, you'll examine the work of advertising legends such as Bernbach, Burnett and Ogilvy; explore the best and brightest campaigns, from Volkswagen to Virginia Slims, and discover the strategies and inside stories behind their creation. Class starts April 14. Details at www.wih.org

Sandi Stromberg invites you to take a look at *The Value of Imitation* **Saturday, April 10**, 10:30 am at Barnes & Noble, Webster. Through the use of poetry by established

poets, followed by her own responses, she will show how studying the mechanisms of good poetry and implementing them can help us explore new forms for our content.

Last viewing of **Sally Stubbs'** FotoFest exhibit will be **Thursday, April 8** from 5pm until 9pm. Don't miss this one! Hardy & Nance Street Studios, 902 Hardy Street (corner of Hardy and Nance), just off the Route 10 McKee-Hardy-Nance exit. Street parking is available.

Kathleen Merritt and Scriptwriters/Houston invites you their 3rd annual play production **April 16-17** and **April 23-24** at The Museum of Printing History, 1324 W Clay, Houston, TX 77019. The new plays were winners in a judged competition and will constitute a

two-act show. The plays, all with photography themes, coincide with the Museum's two photography exhibits that will be part of the Houston FotoFest 2010 Biennial. Join them for some really great entertainment!

Grumbacher paint is looking to hire acrylic painters to teach two hours workshops at a major retailer in locations across the United States and Canada. Artists must be capable of demonstrating a still life, landscape, seascape, and floral. Compensation is \$100 per workshop, and teaching materials will be provided to the artist at no cost. Email **Katie Blanchard** at kblanchard@chartpak.com with examples of your work in acrylics, along with a resume and contact information.

Wordsmyth Theater Company in collaboration with **Actor's Gym** presents the 2010 American Playwriting Reading Series featuring a reading of *Welcome to San Pesto* by Philip Kaplan. **Mon., April 12** at 7pm at Main Street Theater - Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd, Houston, TX 77006. Free event.

Agha Shahid Ali Prize in Poetry: Deadline April 15. A prize of \$1,000, publication by University of Utah Press, and an all-expenses-paid trip to give a reading in the Guest Writers Series at the University of Utah is given annually for a poetry collection. Submit a manuscript of 48

to 64 pages with a \$25 entry fee. Visit the Web site for complete guidelines: www.uofupress.com.

DIAGRAM, Chapbook Contest: Deadline April 30. A prize of \$1,000, publication by New Michigan Press, and 25 author copies is given annually for a chapbook of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or mixed-genre work. Visit the Web site for complete guidelines: nmp@thediagram.com.

Graceful Envelope Contest: Deadline April 30. Calligraphers and artists from around the world are invited to participate in the 16th

annual Graceful Envelope Contest, conducted by the Washington (DC) Calligraphers Guild under the sponsorship of the National Association of Letter Carriers. **No entry fee.** 2010 Theme: A Stream of Letters. Design an envelope that celebrates letters or lakes, books or brooks, alphabets or aqua, words or water conservation, the mailstream or a mountain spring, or any idea that flows from our theme and your creativity. Address it artistically to: The Graceful Envelope Contest; Washington Calligraphers Guild; P.O. Box 3688; Merrifield, VA 22116.

WIVLA – CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

April 12: Board Meeting at HPL – Heights Branch

May exact date TBA: Board Retreat

Westheimer. 10% of Proceeds donated to Betty's Haven

Boulevard

April 20: Member Meeting: ECO Fund Recipients' Presentations

May 16: "Dress for Success" Charity Event at SOMA on

July exact date TBA: Exhibit at Waldo's Coffee House, Heights

August 4-25: Annual WivLA Print Show, Museum of Printing History

WivLA meets **the third Tuesday of every month** excluding December at The Museum of Printing History, 1324 W Clay Houston 77019

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P.O. Box 130406

Houston, Texas 77219-0416

<http://www.wivla.org>