



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.

March Membership Meeting
Tuesday, March 16, 2010
“FotoFest”

Gathering Time: 5:45 PM
Meeting Time: 6:00
Winter Street Studios
2101 Winter Street

Come join us as we celebrate and explore Houston’s own **FotoFest 2010 Biennial**, the festival of photography. This internationally renowned organization brings photographers, gallery owners, museum curators, book publishers, collectors and a myriad others to see and learn about the photographic experience. WiVLA will have a special tour of *Road to Nowhere* at Winter Street Studios, 2101 Winter Street (off of Sawyer, a few blocks north of Washington Avenue). This exhibition was curated by Natasha Egan, associate director and curator of the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College, Chicago. Jennifer Ward, Exhibitions Coordinator at FotoFest, will tour us through the exhibition and explain all about the phenomenon called FotoFest. Meeting time is 6:00 PM – please note we are meeting a little earlier than usual.

For those of you unsure of the area, we suggest meeting at 5:45 at The Museum of Printing History to carpool or caravan to Winter Street Studios (WSS) (Maps will be provided also). It is approximately 2.36 miles and 7 minutes of drive time to WSS. Google Winter Street Studios for a map.

Check out the FotoFest 2010 Biennial at www.fotofest.org, Facebook: [FotoFest International](https://www.facebook.com/FotoFestInternational) and Twitter: [@FotoFest Intl](https://twitter.com/FotoFest Intl). Also, see the 2/28 article, "Snapshots of American life," by Douglas Britt at www.chron.com.

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

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

By Jeanne Haner

Greetings WiVLA members and friends! It still feels like winter but from all reports spring is around the corner. I for one am ready for a change!

The bi-annual “Circle of Five” meeting in February was reaffirmed as a member favorite! It is a special time that allows WiVLA members to get to know each other a little bit better and share their work.

The Membership Tea, which was held at “The Path of Tea” on February 28, was well attended. This year there were two sittings - Sue Donaldson and Lucia Bettler each won a prize from drawings at the tea. Thia is a most gracious hostess. Thank you, Thia. – *continued*

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Deadline for April 2010 Newsletter: March 26, 2010;
submit to newsletter@wivla.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – *continued*

FotoFest 2010 Biennial - March 12 – April 25 is almost here! The March program will revolve around this time honored Houston event.

WiVLA has a rich history that has been built and maintained by strong, determined and creative women. This month come celebrate WiVLA's 15th Anniversary at a member party that will be held, Saturday, March 27th, at Archway Gallery.

WiVLA has an elected Board of Directors. The new Board will be elected at the March meeting. I want to thank Jane Mulholland and Shirly Ricetti for their help with the nominations for the next Board. Changing of the guard will take place in April.

I thank the current Board for their co-operative and collaborative participation in making the past year of WiVLA a success and welcome the new Board for their dedication to WiVLA and its members.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. Thank you.

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

The juried Pfaff "art embroidery" exhibition, with the theme of Travel, will be shown at the Bibliotheque Forney in Paris March 15 to June 19. From the works in this exhibition the mayor of Paris selected **Cindy Hickok's** car piece titled "See the USA" for the publicity. It is used on the cover of the invitations, on a huge banner that will hang on the front of the building, and on--yes!--440 large (120 x 176 cm.) posters that will hang inside glass cases of bus shelters all over Paris between April 21 and May 4. (If we have any members who will be visiting Paris during those times and who see the posters in use, Cindy would be forever grateful if she could get a photo of the setting!)

Rona Lesser is having a one person show at Circle S Vineyards in Sugarland. Opening Reception: March 6 from 5 – 8 PM. The work will hang until May 11. Drop by any day but Monday, 9920 HWY 90 at Dairy Ashford.

Dodie Meeks has paintings and **Jane Mulholland** has photographs in a two woman show at Emerson Unitarian Church, 1900 Bering Drive in the main building. Best time to visit is Sundays between 9 AM and 12:30 PM. Show will be up through April.

SALLY STUBBS will exhibit her newest work in a group photography show during FotoFest. Opening Reception: March 12 from 7 PM – Midnight; followed by continuous showing on March 13 from noon until 7 PM. Two additional viewings: March 27 noon until 7 PM; and April 8 from 5 PM – 9 PM. This body of work focuses on the gentle, graceful beauty found in nature. She also has three photos in an exhibit at the Rotunda Gallery, St. Luke's Methodist Church (on Westheimer) from March 7 - March 28.

J-Coby Wayne will be exhibiting a multimedia work, "Year Window," at Yuanfen New Media Gallery in Beijing as part of its "Secret Language of Women" show, which celebrates the International Year of the Woman. "Year Window" is a multi-sensory, contemplative experience to access a new understanding of the nature of time through poetry, visual art and music. Visit www.yuanfenart.com for more information.

Cookie Wells will be in a group watercolor show curated by MFAH's Glassell School teacher and well respected watercolor artist, Arthur Turner. Canal Street Gallery
Opening Reception: March 5, 6:30-9:30 PM.

LITERARY CELEBRATIONS

Gerald Lee Ratliff selected **Stella Alexander's** piece "Girls, Stop the Hatin" to be in his *The Theatre Audition Book 2*, which was published fall 2009. It's on page 52. This non-dramatic piece is a plaintive call for reconciliation, and evokes the potential power

of young women to bond as sisters as they embrace each others differences rather than being competitive or jealous. There is a call-to-arms here to stake a personal claim on life and to show compassion for those who, although different, cry out just as loudly for understanding in the face of unspeakable rejection that erodes the heart and the soul.

NEW WiVLA BOARD TO BE ELECTED AT MARCH MEETING

The following people have volunteered to be on the WiVLA Board, April 2010 – March 2011:

President – Jeanne Haner

Vice President – Lane Devereux

Secretary – Connie Buchanan

Treasurer – Diana Meade

Visual Co-Chairs – Jean Caslin and Anna Phillips

Literary Co-Chair – Elizabeth Earle

Membership – Cary Reeder

Newsletter – Jennifer Watson

Programs – Diane Griffin Gregory

Public Relations – Rebecca Kveton

Historian – Open

At-large – Madilyn Stein

PAST PRESIDENT – MARIAN SZCZEPANSKI

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.

“Well,” Marian said when we met to discuss her term as WIVLA President (April 2006 - March 2008), “my first thought when you wanted to interview me, was, we didn’t do anything unusual when I was president. But then as I thought about it I realized we had accomplished a lot.”

“At our first board retreat the board decided that our major thrust would be to focus on our members and do things to benefit and involve the membership. I have to say that I had the most incredible board - everyone did their part and everyone stayed on the same page, focused on the organization and what was good for the membership. When I told my husband Adam I was considering being WiVLA President he said, ‘Leading those strong-minded, creative women will be like herding cats.’ Actually it was just the opposite. Everyone was into making WiVLA better. The experience did far more for me than I did for WiVLA. It was the first leadership position I had taken as an adult, except for Girl Scouts, and as the mother of teen-agers I was used to being a dictator. I learned how to delegate. When I was in the hospital the board pitched in, and we never missed a beat. Our board bonded, and we got a tremendous amount done, became friends, and had a lot of fun. We even had a reunion a year after we stopped being a board.”

As we talked, Marian recounted a variety of things we did during her board’s term: had the first member retreat at Blackwood Land Institute; several literary workshops; were on the program for the Open Stage at Poetryfest; initiated the first member tea (now an annual event); invited the Scholastic Scholarship winners to speak at WiVLA (now an annual event); helped founding president Karleen Koen initiate the Advisory Board; collaborated with the board of the University of Houston’s Friends of Women’s Studies in a benefit for the Women’s Archives at the Anderson Library (“Hats Off to Herstory” gala); had the “Five Course Love” show at Stages Repertory Theatre, a new venue for WiVLA; involved writers for the first

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time in “Earth Visions,” the annual Print Show at the Museum of Printing History; and, thanks to web designer and former board member Melinda Taylor, took the website to a new level, giving us an ‘artsy’ presence online that included photos and newsletters capturing the essence of the organization.

The groundwork for many of these activities was laid during previous president Kellye Sanford’s tenure, Marian noted. “Kellye was a terrific role model for me. I learned so much about leadership serving on her board.”

“I joined WiVLA shortly after moving to Houston to find community. Here I found women involved in creative pursuits, some beginning to think about it and an amazing number of women who were doing both art and writing - some influenced to do so as a result of being involved in WiVLA.

“As a writer, I felt personally invested in the monthly ‘President’s Message’ in the newsletter. I felt it was the best way to personally connect with our two hundred members. It was a challenge to make it relevant to artists and writers. Each month after I finished writing, I would begin thinking about what to do the next month. It was very gratifying to get personal feedback from members. Every month I received e-mails from different members thanking me or telling me I had said something they needed to hear at just that moment.”

Marian’s daughter Emily is getting married in June, “Thank God I sew,” Marian sighed. She has set her writing aside and has been cutting 30 inch ribbons to trim 45 yards’ worth of table runners, “ a new element of creativity.” She is still marketing her latest novel about the effect on the lives of the women during the coal strikes in Fayette County, Pennsylvania in 1933.

“I swore I’d never do another historical novel,” she told me. But her muse has other plans for her. She is now exploring the lives of women in 16th Century Italy and, as she rests from sewing, is busy reading *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy*. “I’m always looking for the real feminist hidden on the fringe of an unlikely place in society.”

GOOD PLACES TO WRITE AND DRAW

By Cary Reeder

Glenwood Cemetery, 2525 Washington Avenue

While I love coffee as much as the next gal, this month I decided to expand my horizons in search of a good place to write and draw. I needed a break from the shirr of the espresso machine and the incessant yammering of my fellow café goers. I needed a reprieve from the ordinary, something new and fresh. Still, you ask, a *cemetery*? Isn’t that a place where people usually go unwillingly? Well, this cemetery is different. As I told my husband, if you have to die and be buried, Glenwood would be a pretty sweet final resting place.

When I first visited Glenwood as part of Brian Portman’s landscape drawing class at Glassell, I was taken aback by the breathtaking beauty of this cemetery. Set near the banks of Buffalo Bayou, Glenwood is lush and wooded, and has a surprisingly hilly terrain. There is a great variety of scenery just begging to be drawn or painted and an atmosphere highly conducive to the introspection most writers crave.

General Atmosphere: As you might expect, Glenwood is a pretty quiet place. It has a large number of inhabitants but they just aren’t very talkative. And fortunately, unlike those found in the cemeteries of horror movies, the people here seem to be at peace so you probably won’t experience any gnarled, clawing hands coming out of the ground to grab you as you write and sketch. If you are in search of solitude, you will find it here. The only other visitors here today are a woman walking her dog and a few people visiting the graves of loved ones. It’s a wonderful escape from the sounds of cell phone conversations, leaf blowers, car horns, and other daily noise pollution.

Features: Glenwood is one of Houston’s many hidden gems. Situated between Washington Avenue and Memorial Drive, it is a true oasis in the middle of the city. The showstopper of the grounds is the massive Cemetery Oak, a live oak tree thought to be around 130 years old which was recently featured in an article by the Houston Chronicle’s Lisa Gray. There are benches and other places to sit with your sketchpad or notebook throughout the grounds. On this cool, sunny day, I am sitting on a bench thinking about my mom who passed away ten years ago. She would have loved WiVLA but thought that it was creepy that I was hanging out at a cemetery on a perfectly good day like today.

Coffee and Comestibles: Glenwood is another BYOC&C establishment. Catalina Coffee is down the street if you need a caffeine fix and there is a discount bread store nearby if you need to carbo-load before your visit. While Glenwood has a park-like atmosphere, a picnic might not be the best idea.

When to Go: Glenwood Cemetery is open daily from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office is open during the week and a security guard patrols the grounds by car. Anytime during the day is good to visit.

Have you found a Good Place to Write or Draw in your neighborhood? Tell us about it as a guest columnist!



GLENWOOD CEMETERY, 2525 WASHINGTON AVENUE

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our membership year runs from March 1-February 28. The membership form on our web site. Please fill out the form even if your information hasn’t changed so we know we are current with you.

The new WiVLA Membership Directory is in the works and this year will include photos of members. Please email a .jpeg file of your photo to: membership@wivla.org by March 19. The photo needs to be cropped to 2” x 3” and 144-288 dpi or the “best” setting on your digital camera. Thanks!

The *Creating* Life

By Jennifer Watson

I celebrated the final days of Black History Month attending a lecture by Catherine Straight, Senior National Editor for *USA Today* held at the Menil Collection. She gave a riveting talk about her journey through journalism that was more eventful than we expected: the person introducing her accidentally broke a glass as she made her way to the podium, and midway through her speech she grew faint and had to take a seat before continuing. Despite the interruptions (towards the end of her talk, she began to lose her voice), she maintained her composure

gracefully, proving to us that even in the most dangerous situations, including the threat of losing consciousness, the story must go on. And what a wonderful story she told us about her love of writing – the excitement of fact checking and delivering news as it unfolds; the pleasure of listening to other people’s stories about tragedy and triumph; the daunting task of conveying those stories in the most accurate and fastest way possible before competing outlets have their way with them.

Her experience as both a recipient of mentorship and a mentor to aspiring editors was testament to why we do what we do. Writers are storytellers, yet at times, unexpected circumstances happen that give us pause until, eventually, we return to the story and write the last line. I have many unfinished stories in my notebook, some of which I have abandoned, a few of which I will finish. I hope I can be as determined and courageous as Ms. Straight to say what I have to say no matter what unexpected challenge I face.

Plan to attend the Houston Indie Book Festival April 3 at the Menil. In their third year as co-sponsors, Nano Fiction and Gulf Coast bring together the best local independent book sellers, authors, publishers, and literary enthusiasts the Bayou City

has to offer. For information: indiebookfest.org.

2010 Spring Writers Conference “Follow the Yellow Brick Road” sponsored by the Houston Writers Guild, April 10, 8:30 – 4 PM, at the Holiday Inn Southwest. Conference Fee: until March 30, \$150; after March 30 and at the door - \$160. Fee Includes: 2010 membership (\$40 value), conference breakfast coffee/donuts, buffet lunch, conference workshops, agent/editor interview. Information: www.houstonwritersguild.org.

If you are interested in contributing to “The Creating Life” or writing this column please contact newsletter@wivla.org.

LETTER TO EDITOR

Well, my two year adventure abroad in Thailand is coming to a close. My new friends, textile knowledge, cultural infusion and travel to Bali, Laos, India and Cambodia have filled my creative coffers. I return to Houston and WIVLA in March. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you. Thanks for keeping in touch with the newsletter. **Donna Durbin**

Archway Readings

For the past twelve and one half years, Archway Gallery has offered a place for Houston Area writers to read their work. These readings are held every month on the 2nd Thursday, except November, The Archway Readers have read in other venues besides the gallery. Several years ago **WivLA** began organizing readings in March, June and September. However, this March 11th will be a regular reading of The Archway Readers. Everyone is welcomed to read at these reading. If you want to read, Contact: Donna E Perkins at donnaeperkins@att.net. There will be approximately 13 readers. The first to notify Donna will be placed on the list. All original writings are welcomed. The only constraint is time. Three minutes is fine. Five minutes is the max. Bringing a snack to share is appreciated. Audience is appreciated. Archway Gallery, 2305 Dunlavy. We begin at 6:30 and go to about 8:30.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ann Bell's class schedule is available at <http://www.annbell.net/classes.htm>. Fun one-day classes to get your creative juices flowing. Call Ann at 281-330-3827 or email artist@annbell.net

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

“Sharing Our Stories” from folks who have been homeless and their allies: Come hear experiences of life on the streets of Houston from a panel of people who have been there. March 16, 7 PM, Live Oak Friends Meetinghouse, 1318 West 26th St. (inside North Loop

between Durham & Ella) and on March 19, 7:30 PM, Houston Institute for Culture, 708 Telephone Road at Lockwood (inside the Tlaquepaque Market, next to Bohemeos)

The Understanding Poverty Project is a long-term art and reporting undertaking by photographer Ben

Tecumseh DeSoto and writer Ann Walton Sieber — with the inspired assistance of the UPP Collective — a humanistic inquiry into the life stories of the homeless and the conditions in society that produce homelessness, documenting the effects of trauma on the street as well as the effects of understanding, help, and hope in

changing all our lives. Made possible with a grant from the Houston Arts Alliance. Co-sponsored by SEARCH, Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston and the Live Oak Friends Meeting.

WIVLA – CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

March 9: Board meeting, Archway Gallery, 6 PM

March 16: Member meeting, Winter Street Studios

March 27: WiVLA 15th Anniversary Party, Archway Gallery

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

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

MEMBER MEETINGS 2010:

March 16
April 20

May 18
June 15

July 20
August 17

September 21
October 19

November 16
Dec: no mtg.

