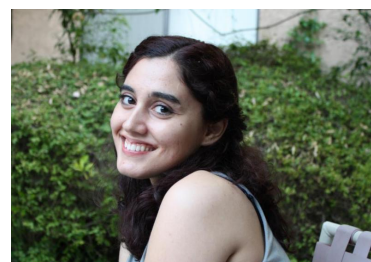


May 2020

Dear Friend of the WNBA,

I can't believe I'm writing my last letter as president. And I can't believe I'm writing it under these crazy circumstances.



Despite not being able to celebrate in person this year, I am so thrilled to announce that our new slate of officers for 2020-2022 is:

Natalie Obando, President
Andrea Panzeca, Vice President
NC Weil, Vice President
Karen Holly, Treasurer
Linda Rosen, Secretary

I will remain on the board as Immediate Past President. Many thanks to Bebe Brechner, Jane Kinney-Denning, and Christine Sikule who will be ending their terms in June but who have spent many years dedicated to WNBA.

Looking back on the last two years, I will always remember our annual meeting in DC, where I met many of our passionate volunteers. Our meetings are always the highlight of my year, and I'm so grateful we had the chance to deepen our relationships and reinvigorate our commitment to WNBA.

I will always be grateful to Natalie Obando for her vision and belief in WNBA's ability to affect positive change in our communities. Her dedication to diversity and inclusion is much needed and key for the future success of our organization. As we have spent more and more time together over the last few years, I have grown more and more confident in her as a leader and friend. WNBA is in great hands with Natalie.

Thank you to everyone who has been so supportive and encouraging the last two years — your presence in my life has been vital. And a deep thank you to

our members, who make all of this work worth it.

I'm so excited and honored to turn over the board to these wonderful women, and I'm looking forward to what the future holds for WNBA.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Yousuf (Los Angeles)

President, Women's National Book Association (WNBA)

president@wnba-books.org

Introducing the New National Board

President — Natalie Obando (WNBA-LA)

Natalie Obando is the founder of [Do Good Public Relations Group](#) and the author of [How to Get Publicity for Your Book](#).

Her passion for pitching and writing has most recently led her to option her own pilot for a television series and attain representation for her writing. She has been a panelist and speaker at some of the most well-regarded literary conferences in the industry and also a judge for several book awards.

Natalie is the immediate past president of the Women's National Book Association's Los Angeles chapter and serves as the WNBA's national vice president. She is the founder and co-host of the podcast, [Women of Color Writers](#). Natalie is passionate about writing, the literary landscape, media and making a difference by amplifying marginalized voices through writing.



Co-Vice President — Andrea Panzeca (WNBA-New Orleans)

Andrea Panzeca, a teaching artist, earned her MFA at UNO, where she was the associate nonfiction editor of [Bayou Magazine](#).

Panzeca has published memoir, scholarship on Zora Neale Hurston, and two poetry chapbooks: "[Rusted Bells and Daisy Baskets](#)", and "Weird... Joe Pesci." She's president of the WNBA's New Orleans chapter. You can read more about her [on her website](#).



Co-Vice President — NC Weil (WNBA-DC)

NC Weil writes fiction and verse, and reviews books and films at her blog, [Aesthetic Point](#).

Her short stories have appeared in several publications, and she has published two novels, [Karmafornia](#) and its



sequel [Superball](#). Advocating for the Women's National Book Association, she serves as the WNBA Award Chair, National Website Co-Chair, and Washington DC Chapter Newsletter editor. Learn more about NC [on her website](#).

Treasurer — Karen Holly (WNBA-LA)

Karen Holly practiced law with two firms in San Francisco and Los Angeles before starting her own practice. She later became vice president of [MovieMaker Magazine](#) and published articles related to the entertainment industry, including "What Producers Want" and "How To Write Great Comedy."



She wrote and produced two short comedy films and also scripted a feature film, which received recognition from the American Screenwriter's Association.

Her first love has always been books. She published her first novel in 2013 and is at work on her second novel. Karen serves on the Los Angeles Chapter board as secretary.

Secretary — Linda Rosen (WNBA-South Florida)

Linda Rosen, writer and fitness professional, lives with her husband splitting their time between New Jersey and Florida.

Her novel, [The Disharmony of Silence](#), was published by Black Rose Writing in March 2020.



Rosen was a contributor to [Women in the Literary Landscape: A WNBA Centennial Publication](#) for the Women's National Book Association and has had stories published in both print and online literary magazines. She is a member of the [Women's Fiction Writers Association](#) and the WNBA.

For the WNBA, she serves as the National Recording Secretary and Selections Coordinator of the Great Group Reads committee, which chooses books for [National Reading Group Month](#).

[Her website](#) links to her blog, "The Literary Leotard."

A Year In Review from Our Chapters

[San Francisco](#)

by Brenda Knight, Chapter President

Our San Francisco Bay Area chapter is a lively group, and we strive to have a lot of get-togethers, events, and programs. A real highlight of last year was an author lunch at the venerable Mechanic's Institute, a lovely Beaux Arts building in downtown San Francisco.

The event was called [A Novel Plan](#) and featured Mary Mackey, Sherul Bize

Boutte, and me. We had a crowd of 75 writers in attendance. We followed it with a mixer held in conjunction with the [Bay Area Writers Guild](#) and had a crowd of over 100.

Every writer formed a circle to talk about what they are working on, and we had catered treats and drinks. Not only was it a fantastic showcase of our chapter and what we offer, but it was a real gathering of the literary community resulting in several new members. It was a day to remember!



Stairwell at The Mechanics Institute

[Greater Philadelphia](#)

by Pat D'Innocenzo, Chapter Vice President

Outside of [NRGM](#), our biggest event was the wine tasting we held in early February. Our supporting bookstore, [Towne Book Center](#), has a wine bar. The new owner, Drew, was happy to lead us through three dessert wines since we were close to Valentine's Day.

There were romantic readings to accompany the wines and food, ranging from humorous to non-fiction to poetry and fiction. There were door prizes. We had to ask people to leave when the bookstore was closing!

But the biggest part was our attendees came from various sources. We had members, friends of members, people who saw us on MeetUp, and people who saw the event on the bookstore website. Using every advertising venue available to us was the key. We had the right combination at the right time.

[Nashville](#)

by Susan Lentz, Chapter Bookwoman Correspondent

WNBA-Nashville prides itself on offering a variety of interesting programs and outreach opportunities for our members and our community. But it's the vital role we play in the annual [Southern Festival of Books](#) that best defines our chapter. We run errands, escort guests, direct workers, and introduce speakers at author programs held throughout festival grounds.

WNBA's signature event, "Coffee With Authors," is a highlight of the festival

and introduces many booklovers to our organization. We man a booth throughout the festival, signing up new members, and selling book-related items to raise money for one of our favorite causes: scholarships to the [Tennessee Young Writers' Workshop](#).

A seven-day residential workshop on the campus of a local university, the Tennessee Young Writers' Workshop enables attendees to work with professional writers to develop their budding talents. This wonderful opportunity is cost-prohibitive for many talented teens, so we take pride in offering scholarships.

This year, in addition to the money raised through booth sales, we received contributions in memory of two beloved chapter members: former Nashville and National President, Carolyn Wilson, one of the founders of the Festival, and former Nashville President Ginna Cannon. These additional scholarships will offer still more teens the opportunity to learn and grow in a program former participants refer to as "a life-changing experience."



WNBA Volunteers at the Southern Festival of Books

[South Florida](#)

by Benita Goldstein, Chapter Communication Chair

One of the highlights at the end of 2019 was our "So Florida" WNBA holiday party and fundraiser for the [Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County](#).

What made the event so successful was having it against the backdrop of a board member's historic home. The lush landscape was a storybook setting and clearly provided additional incentive to join the organization, a requirement for attendance.

With top-notch donations from both local and national businesses, our raffle soared, and, most importantly, allowed us to give back in fundraising for such a worthy cause.

[Boston](#)

by Annie Stone, Chapter President

During the past year, WNBA-Boston found new energy and enthusiasm due to our reorganization during the summer of 2019.

Previous treasurer, Morgan Hillman, provided continuity by agreeing to stay on as the treasurer. She worked closely with our new president, Annie Stone, and new programming chairwoman, Lauren Tiedemann. These three initial board members were soon joined by Deborah Milstein, Jan Krause Greene, and Nicole Angeloro, who have each also been instrumental in reviving our chapter.

Between September and the initiation of restrictions caused by COVID-19, the newly reformed Boston Chapter held four public events — a kick-off event in September, an author event in celebration of [NRGM](#) in October, another author event in November, and a New Year Kick-off networking event.

During the coronavirus crisis, we have continued our online presence, and we look forward with optimism to resuming public events when it is safe to meet in groups again.

New Orleans

by Andrea Panzeca, Chapter President

Picking just one event that took place over the last year to highlight was pretty challenging for the New Orleans chapter. Should we choose one of our National Reading Group Month events, and if so, the fabulous book launch in a grand old church, or the panel discussion in the hip coworking space that featured an out-of-town guest, the Great Group Reads committee chair, Kristen Knox? What about our *Little Women* screening and discussion, tour of the [Amistad Research Center](#), or even our most recent event, the launch of our [Virtual Reading Series](#)? Not to mention our annual [Pinckley Prize](#) celebration or our winter chapter party.

Of all these worthy candidates, we decided to go with our visit to [Paper Machine](#), the printing wing of the New Orleans arts and literary organization, [Antenna](#). Jessica Peterson and Yuka Petz gave us a tour of the facility, showed us a curated selection of their collection of art books, and led us on a collaborative printing adventure. Together, we brainstormed a phrase ("Read Women!"), chose a two-color scheme (orange and red), and printed a limited run of cards. The absolute highlight of the event for me, though, was watching the facial expressions change, from curiosity to delight, as each attendee felt the surprise weight of one of the art books as we passed it around. Even though we knew that the book looked heavy but was really light, none of us could help but smile as we felt it for ourselves.



The exterior of Paper Machine

Washington D.C.

by Tabitha Whissemore, Chapter President

The Washington, DC chapter of the WNBA had plenty of great programming in the last year, but certainly the event that topped all others was hosting the WNBA National Meeting in June 2019.

Being able to welcome members from across the country to our city was an honor. Honoring Lisa Lucas with the [WNBA Award](#) at the [National Press Club](#), touring the [Library of Congress](#), and even getting caught in the Pride Parade crowd were certainly memorable experiences.

Anytime members gather and share ideas, we become closer as people and stronger as an association. The DC chapter was thrilled to facilitate that.

Metro Atlanta

by Sarah Denham, Chapter President

The Metro Atlanta Chapter had a fantastic relaunch year. We started a book club, grew our membership, and started having fun events.

Our favorite event, [Historical Gossip](#), happened on May 3rd, 2020. We hosted an online author panel featuring Abigail DeWitt, Donne Everhart, Jessica Handler, Diane McPhail, and Tamsin Silver.

We had people from all over the country log on to hear these amazing authors discuss the fun, scandalous, personal, and so forth that they discovered while researching their novels. We recorded the panel, so others can see it if they missed it live. Just visit [our Facebook page](#). We have more planned for the 2020-21 year and are so excited about what's to come!

New York City

by Laurel Stokes, Chapter President

WNBA-NYC co-hosted a Holiday Book Drive & Gift Wrapping Party with the [Children's Book Council \(CBC\)](#).

Children's books were donated by local publishers, the CBC, and WNBA-NYC members to be wrapped and donated to the [Goddard Riverside Community Center](#). The WNBA-NYC has worked with the CBC and the [Young to Publishing Group](#) to hold this event for the past 4 years, and partnered with different nonprofit organizations to donate hundreds of YA and Children's books to those in need. We were even [featured in Publisher's Weekly \(PW\)](#)!

Executive Board

by Linda Rosen, National Recording Secretary

As Recording Secretary, the highlight of my year was when I visited the [Rare Books Room](#) at Columbia University and actually held scrapbooks filled with our history in my hands.

The yellowed typewritten pages of executive board minutes, correspondence, treasurer's reports, and programs were captivating. I felt as if I was in the room with Madge Jennison and the other women who founded our great organization. Plus, I was thankful that we no longer use stenography and report each and every word uttered, at every meeting, verbatim!

I was awed at the work our founders did and fascinated at our history and how we persevered, especially through the Great Depression. Time did not allow me to read past the 1930s. When I go again in September to bring our "papers" (as long as COVID-19 doesn't prevent me), I will sit with more scrapbooks, engross myself in the WNBA's history, and again feel so proud to be part of this incredible organization of outstanding women. Come join me!

The New Membership Year Starts June 1

The end of the membership year is upon us! Our 2019/2020 membership year ends May 31, 2020 and the new year starts June 1, 2020.

If you join now, you'll get the rest of May free, and your membership will be valid through May 31, 2021.

Members, renew your membership now, so that you can continue to take part in all of our programming, such as the Bookwoman Book Club, webinars, and author events.

[Join or Renew Now!](#)

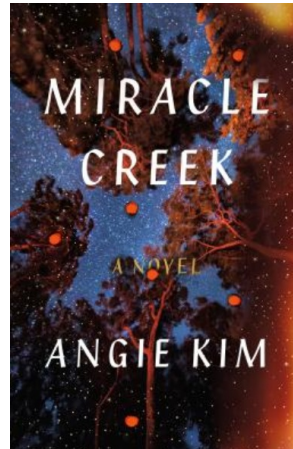
A Recap of WNBA-DC's Virtual Author Chat

By Carin Siegfried (New York City)

On April 21, I attended a virtual WNBA event with the DC chapter while I sat in my apartment in Montclair, New Jersey! It was hosted by Tabitha Whissemore, the chapter president, who chatted with the owner of [Loyalty Bookshop](#), Hannah Oliver Depp, and author Angie Kim ([Miracle Creek](#)).



Not surprisingly, the conversation immediately went to the virus and whether people can concentrate enough to read at all (Tabitha is missing her morning commute), if people are reading dystopian novels (Hannah is!), and other timely comments. Then, Angie read a small excerpt from her novel.



I honestly wasn't really sure what to expect of an online author event, but it was fun, even if Tabitha's WiFi wasn't stable (mine either, I sympathize.) It was nice to be able to make comments in the chat as the conversation went along, which is impossible to do at a live event, and so this felt more accessible and like I was more a part of the conversation rather than being talked at, which is ironic considering that I wasn't capable of audibly speaking with them.



Hannah and Tabitha in discussion

Angie shouted out some new book releases, as they're publishing in a really horrible time. All three women made a lot of suggestions. Hannah talked about the differences of an independent bookstore to chain stores, including the ability to champion author backlists years later, to curating their own inventory, to promoting the work of underrepresented groups. She shouted out some fellow local bookstores, like [Mahogany Books](#).

Some of the new books recommended were:

[How Much of These Hills is Gold](#) by C Pam Zhang
[Upright Women Wanted](#) by Sarah Gailey
[Severance](#) by Ling Ma
[Pretty Things](#) by Janelle Brown
[Little Secrets](#) by Jennifer Hillier
[Take Me Apart](#) by Sara Sligar
[Red White & Royal Blue](#) by Casey McQuiston
[The Calculating Stars](#) by Mary Robinette Kowal
[Annihilation](#) by Jeff VanderMeer

Even though we can't meet up in person, it's wonderful to still be able to connect and discuss books through our virtual programming!

Disclosure: Some of the links in this email are affiliate links. If you click on them and make a purchase, the WNBA will earn a small commission.

Bookwoman Book Club

By Julie L. Frey (Greater Philly)

Going forward, in order to receive Bookwoman Book Club email announcements, which contain upcoming book selections, discussions recordings, event reminders, and giveaways, you must be a member of the Bookwoman Book Club.



To join the book club (which has over 100 members!), you must be a member of the WNBA in good standing.

[Join the Bookwoman Book Club](#)

Coronavirus Poem by Harriet Shenkman

Spring

The goldfinch chirps outside my window,
oblivious to doom,
and I am locked inside my memories
of jostling with strangers at Grand Central
standing in line at Shake Shack
hugging good-bye after Sunday brunch

Life may never be the same,
but dogwoods still bloom and songbirds
continue to arrive.

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Harriet Shenkman is a Professor Emerita at [The City](#)

University of New York. Her awards include the Women's National Book Association Annual Writing Contest in Poetry, the Women Who Write International Poetry and Short Prose Contest, and Raynes Poetry Competition finalist. Her poetry has appeared in national and international journals. About her first chapbook, "Teetering", the poet Jennifer Franklin wrote, "these poems mine painful and weighty topics – abandonment, the Holocaust, divorce, disability, dementia-- with great sentiment, without being sentimental." Her new chapbook, "The Present Abandoned," can be found at [Finishing Line Press](#). Connect with her: hshenkman@aol.com.

THE PRESENT ABANDONED



Harriet Shenkman

Giveaway

Enter to win a matted 12x16 literary print from Litographs!

The winner can choose one the prints below or any from [Litographs' poster collection](#).

Each design is created using the book's actual text. It's literature and artwork all in one!

Litographs is committed to promoting literacy and has donated over 200,000 books to the International Book Bank. Make sure to check out Litographs' complete collection, including shirts, totes, and decor!

The giveaway beings May 19, 2020 at 6:00 am ET and ends May 25, 2020 at 11:59 pm PT.



[Enter the Giveaway](#)

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