



THE SITTING ROOM A COMMUNITY LIBRARY

SPRING 2009

170 EAST COTATI AVENUE COTATI, CALIFORNIA 94931

SPECIAL EVENTS

NOTE: These events are free and open to all unless otherwise noted; some are at The Sitting Room proper, 170 E. Cotati Ave., and some are at J.J. Wilson's house at 2025 Curtis Drive, just off Petaluma Hill Rd. south of E. Cotati Blvd near Sonoma State University. Do make note of the venue when you SAVE THE DATES.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2P.M., AT THE SITTING ROOM **“When We were Colored: A Mother’s Story” by Eva Rutland**

A very Special Event indeed! Eva Rutland, accompanied by her daughter and granddaughter, will help us celebrate Black History Month with readings from her recently reprinted 1960s memoir, still relevant to us all. Aside from living in apartheid Atlanta and only apparently integrated Sacramento, Ms Rutland’s book is about raising a house full of kids – mind you, prize winning kids but they were perhaps better at talking than listening to their mama....The book is surprisingly funny and yes, that overused word, inspiring. Two copies are at the Sitting Room for those who want to sneak a peak – you’ll read it all the way through as I did.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2P.M.

MAHONEY LIBRARY, SRJC PETALUMA CAMPUS

Women, Land, Identity: Contemporary Aboriginal Painting

In honor of the traditional owners of the land, curator Virginia May will lecture on women’s identity with the land in contemporary Australian Aboriginal painting in a special presentation for Sitting Room guests. Aboriginal art has been called the most important art movement since abstract expressionism. The brilliant color, bold strokes, fine patterns, and complex symbolic expression of a 40,000 year old civilization penetrate the soul and soothe the spirit. Following Virginia’s lecture, Karen Petersen will guide us on a tour of the new Mahoney Library. Carpooling available at the Sitting Room, 1:30 p.m. or meet us at the Mahoney Library, 680 Sonoma Mountain Parkway, Petaluma. Info: 778-3972 or kpetersen@santarosa.edu

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2 P.M. AT THE SITTING ROOM

Travels with tea, a talk and pictures by Barbara Shatto

Barbara will tell us about her recent trip to Myanmar (Burma), a trip prolonged by the airport in neighboring Bangkok being occupied by demonstrators. “‘Why does it have two names?’ you might wonder. I’d like to explain this and other curiosities to you.”. Being Barbara, she also brought back some tea so special that it is not exported ; she will share this with us along with her experiences and readings on the subject of this little known area of the world.

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2 TO 5 AT J.J. WILSON’S HOUSE

Sitting Room 28th Birthday Party!!

Celebration of the Sitting Room’s 28th birthday and also of our 2009 publication, “Far From Home: Lessons Learned,” edited by that indefatigable traveler AND editor, Rosemary Manchester. Our entertainment will be readings by the authors in our new book. Refreshments will be one or two of Barbara Shatto’s world class cakes and the innocuous but traditional Sitting Room punch. No

need to call to reserve your place – just show up with bells on and if you wish, a present for the Sitting Room (anything on paper, from poem to book to check – and some practical people even bring her toilet paper!) Kids are welcome, by the way – last year they seemed to be having more fun than anybody else. Let’s all have fun and make wishes for the Sitting Room’s future while enjoying some memories from the past. Old friends and new ones, the best combination.

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 7 TO 9 PM. AT THE SITTING ROOM **Memorial Readings**

Our usual, but every year different, Memorial Readings of women writers who have recently died, done by all of us present. This year we should begin with some recordings of Eartha Kitt. The obituaries said she wrote three memoirs too. Does anyone have copies? If so, bring them. Heck, let’s read from some of the Studs Terkel books in our Collection. Karen Petersen will also show part of an astonishing documentary “Forever,” filmed in the famous French cemetery, Pere La Chaise. All are welcome to attend, whether or not they have a writer they want to memorialize by a reading. For more info, call J.J. at 795-9028. closer to the event, o.k.?

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 10 A.M. AT THE DI ROSA PRESERVE

“Women See Women” Members Free/\$15 General.

Space is limited, reservations required (707)226-5991x25.

Karen Petersen and Kris Montgomery lead a special tour of the di Rosa Preserve that focuses on depictions of women by women artists from the 1970s through 1990s. Eclectic images range from the familiar to the fantastic, as the artists explore what it means to be female, using dreams, private visions, and public and personal mythologies. Discussion will include paintings, prints, sculpture, and photography by Ruth Bernhard, Joan Brown, Squeak Carnwath, Imogen Cunningham, Judy Dater, Jay De Feo, Viola Frey, and Mildred Howard. Weather permitting, tour includes Sculpture Meadow, so please wear comfortable shoes.

ABOUT THE DI ROSA PRESERVE: ART AND NATURE:

The most significant collection of Bay Area art in the world, the di Rosa Preserve: Art and Nature provides opportunities for creative enrichment and enjoyment of art and the environment year-round. The Preserve houses about 2,200 works of art by more than 900 artists and offers rotating exhibitions of contemporary Bay Area art, education and public programs for all ages.

The Gatehouse Gallery is open Tues. – Fri. 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM. Guided tours allow visitors to experience the full di Rosa Preserve grounds and galleries beyond the Gatehouse, Tues. – Sat.. For reservations or information, 707-226-5991 or www.dirosapreserve.org

“Travel writing is always about a specific moment in time. The writer imbues that moment with everything that he or she has experienced, observed, read, lived, bringing all of his or her talent to bear on it. When focused on that one moment, great travel writing can teach us something about the world that no other genre can.”

– Jason Wilson, Series Editor,
The Best American Travel Writing (2000 edition)

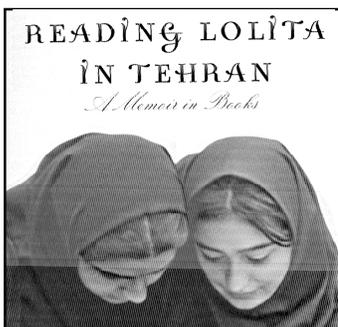
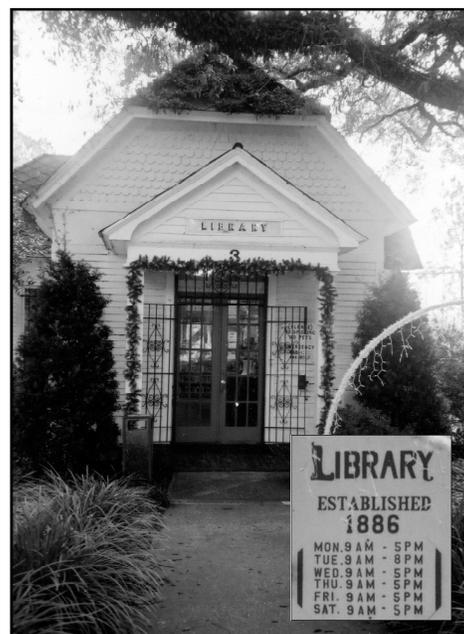
THE SITTING ROOM PUBLICATION 2009 *Far from Home: Lessons Learned*

Sometimes we have to leave home to find ourselves. Perhaps you have had this experience, surprised yourself with what you can – or cannot – do. You are far from home, or maybe not so far. Something happens: you meet an attractive stranger – you lose your passport – you miss your plane/train/rickshaw. Now what? Tell us about it, in 400 words or less. Challenge yourself, tell the tale on one page, make your editor happy. This publication is not a contest or a juried show; it’s an opportunity to see your work in print and be invited to a swell party to read your work and meet other brave travelers. Please send your piece, camera-ready, by regular mail to The Sitting Room, ATTN: Rosemary Manchester, Editor, Publication Project, 170 E. Cotati Ave., Cotati, CA 94931. Deadline is February 14, but the editor has agreed to accept manuscripts until March 1, so get going. You may send prose, poetry, art, a photograph, as long as it meets the criteria. Make it camera-ready, with generous margins. Include a title for the piece, your name and contact information, and instruct us on what information you wish included on the printed page. Please include a note listing some of your favorite travel books; we will compile a list to include when the book is published in the Spring. Questions? Phone and/or email Rosemary: 707 823-3477; r_Manchester@comcast.net. Spread the word, encourage your friends to tell us their stories!

THAT MAGIC THRESHOLD

by J.J. Wilson

President Obama got my vote when I read what he said about libraries: “At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better.” Driving across the country, I have seen a library with an open fireplace for cozy reading; I have seen a library battered by Katrina but still, or even more, serving the community; this year, I got to visit the oldest operating public library in the state of Florida at De Funiak Springs (see photo). Closer to home, I have been impressed by the two new Santa Rosa Junior College library buildings, the Doyle in Santa Rosa and the Mahoney in Petaluma – both thrilling buildings designed to serve their students’ quest to “change their lives forever.” Rhonda Matheny sent me a story about an amazing woman named Judy Vaughn who found that the town in Tennessee where she had moved had, gasp!, NO library – so she created one in the old schoolhouse; and is seeking funding now for adult reading classes, after-school story hours for children, even access to the Internet. Imagine that! And did I mention that Judy suffers from fibromyalgia... These terrific stories buoyed me up but then someone forwarded me a story from the International Herald Tribune (21 Oct 2008) which made me think I had been over-emphasizing the need for a library building. In La Gloria, Colombia, a primary school teacher named Luis Soriano (may his name be written up in lights!) loads up his two donkeys, Alfa and Beto!, every Saturday with guess what? lots of books. His BIBLIOBURRO (of course) is eagerly awaited by children and adults who live up in the mountains. Now that is a library!



READERS NEEDED

The Sitting Room Book Discussion Group is on-going, but welcomes new people and perspectives on the wide variety of books, old, new, under-read, classics, funny, sad, etc. (lots of etc.) we end up reading and discussing. The meetings are held every third Wednesday, except for the month of December from 2 to 4 in the afternoons at the Sitting Room, with tea and more etc. And no fee is charged, of course. On January 21, we discussed the novels of Pat Barker. February 18 will focus on the Iranian writer Azar Nafisi, with a choice of her recent memoir, *Things I've been Silent About* or her earlier work, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. On March 18, another writer from the Middle East, Qanta Ahmed, M.D.: *In the Land of Invisible Women: a Female Doctor's Journey in the Saudi Kingdom*. To be updated on what books are coming up, email Joanne Page at jpage@sonic.net or telephone Rosemary Manchester at 707.823.3477.

THE SITTING ROOM THANKS...First, Don Emblen and his Clamshell Press for setting up and printing Szymborska’s witty poem about statistics, and for no charge! Thanks, dear Don. Second, to Rayne Wolfe for her Nov 16, 2008 Press Democrat article describing the “poorly kept secret” of The Sitting Room so perceptively that it, and Mark Aronoff’s wide angle lens photograph, brought many new friends to the library. As does the on-going expert work by our webmistress, Clarice Stasz. And as always thanks to Bob and his staff at Copy, Mail and More in Cotati for his expert and inexpensive help with our copying needs, such as our books and this newsletter. Cathy Balach gave us some lovely needlework paintings, which you will see placed strategically around. Chairs keep turning up mysteriously and of course, books are donated, we are not always sure by whom. Here are some of the names we have found: Lucy Whitworth, Pat Hatten, Amy Trussell and Lucy Forrest. June Farver is helping hold the fort in J.J.’s absence and Donna O’Brien cleans regularly --everybody has noticed the difference she has made. Thanks to the too numerous to mention volunteers at the Book Festival last Fall -- it was fun, wasn’t it?

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LITERARY WEDNESDAYS ON KRCB

Robin Pressman, Program Director at KRCB, has introduced the Wednesday Evening Literary Hour on KRCB Public Radio (90.9 and 91.1 fm). She coordinates a weekly presentation of literary events every Wednesday evening at seven o'clock. You can also check out their podcasts on www.krcb.org

First Wednesday: Word by Word
Second Wednesday: A Novel Idea
Third Wednesday: Word Temple
Fourth Wednesday: Page on Stage

WORDTEMPLE

The WordTemple Poetry Series at Copperfield's Books is Santa Rosa's first long-term, ongoing poetry reading series. Founded and hosted by poet Katherine Hastings, WordTemple readings are held on the first Friday of the month. The complete schedule for Spring 2008 is listed at www.WordTemple.com.

SSU CENTER FOR CULTURE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

hosts lectures, films, conferences and performances. For a complete program and location information, call 664-2710 or visit the CCGS web site, www.sonoma.edu/ccgs/

SSU JEAN & CHARLES SCHULZ INFORMATION CENTER UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ART GALLERY

The semester begins with *Hidden Treasures: Selections from the SSU Art Gallery Permanent Collection* - in the University Library Art Gallery. *Hidden Treasures* includes artwork by such luminaries as Picasso, Miro, Kandinsky, Calder, and Bay Area artists William Morehouse and Shane Weare

In the middle of the semester we will exhibit, in conjunction with the SSU Department of Criminal Justice and Administration, Rickie Solinger's exhibit, *Interrupted Life*, which explores the issues related to motherhood, incarceration, reproductive and welfare policy, and politics in the United States. The semester ends with a collaboration between the SSU Museum and Gallery Methods class and Art Quest in exhibiting *Zone of Focus* the annual juried photography exhibit of high school student photographers. For a complete schedule of dates, lectures, exhibits and special events, call 664-4240 or visit the library website, www.libweb.sonoma.edu

SSU HOLOCAUST LECTURE SERIES

From Ashes To Life: My Memories Of The Holocaust

Lucille Eichengreen

Tuesday, February 24, Warren Auditorium, Ives Hall, 4-5:40

The Minsk Ghetto 1941-1943: Jewish Resistance And Soviet Internationalism

Barbara Epstein, Ph.D

Tuesday March 24, Warren Auditorium, Ives Hall, 4-5:40

Dedication Of The Erna & Arthur Salm

Holocaust And Memorial Grove Project

Sunday, March 29, 3 P.M., SSU Lakes

SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE ARTS & LECTURES

For complete information on this series, call Community Education, 527-4372 or check their website www.santarosa.edu/communityed (All events are FREE and open to the public. Campus parking is \$3.00).

Isadora Duncan's Dance and Legacy

Lois Ann Flood and Joanna Harris

Friday, March 20, 2009, 7pm Newman Auditorium, Santa Rosa Campus

Four Decades of Writing, Reading and Teaching

Adam David Miller

Monday, April 6, 2009, 12:15pm Newman Auditorium, Santa Rosa Campus

WOMEN, LAND, IDENTITY:

CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL PAINTING

January 12—March 21, 2009

Mahoney Library, SRJC Petaluma Campus 680 Sonoma Mtn. Pky, Petaluma

Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 8 a.m. - 9 p.m., Fri. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Sat. 10 p.m. - 3 p.m.

WOW! WOMEN ON WRITING CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 7, Skyline College, San Bruno

Featured authors include Julia Whitty, Nona Caspers, Micheline Aharonian Marcom and Yiyun Li. WOW! admission is \$60 before January 30, \$100 at the door, and \$25 for students. Register by calling 650-738-4324 or by downloading a form from the WOW! website: www.skylinecollege.edu (select Women on Writing). For more on the conference, call 650-738-4324.

COPPERFIELD'S BOOKS

For complete information on author events at Copperfield's, check their website, www.copperfieldsbooks.com

NORTH LIGHT BOOKS/CAFE

550 E. Cotati Avenue, Cotati. For updates of this independent bookseller's programs, visit their website, www.nothlightbook.net or call the bookstore at 792-4300.

READERS BOOKS

130 E. Napa St., Sonoma, a literary gathering place where you'll find good books, good talk, lots of events, and opinions, jokes, and music in abundance. <http://www.readersbooks.com/> 939-1779.

RIVER READER

16355 Main Street, Guerneville, Owner Susan Ryan, specializes in children's books. She also broadcasts a monthly cook book review on KGGV FM "The Bridge" 95.1 www.kggvfm.org 869-2240 or riverreader@gmail.com.

BAY AREA MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS THIS SPRING/SUMMER

Here is a sampling of some the exhibitions of particular interest coming up in the Bay Area. A group tour of the Georgia O'Keeffe show will be arranged this summer, so if you are interested in participating, please email Karen Petersen, kpetersen@santarosa.edu, and ask to be informed of date and time.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, www.sfmoma.org

Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities

May 30 - September 07, 2009

Museum of the African Diaspora, <http://www.moadsf.org>

Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits

March 21, 2009 - June 14, 2009

The Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco, www.theejm.org

Chagall and the Artists of the Russian Jewish Theater, 1919-1949

April 23, 2009 - September 7, 2009

Oakland Museum of California, www.museumca.org

Squeak Carnwath: Painting Is No Ordinary Object

April 25-August 23, 2009

THE LIVING ROOM BENEFIT & BEYOND....

Our November Harvest dinner was, according to Sarah Baker who ought to know, the best Sitting Room party ever! And as fun as the evening itself was (how did we manage to seat 29 people to eat soups? And how did we end up singing "I've been working on the railroad"?), the most fun was loading all those contributions (with the help of my neighbors Sue and Emily Daly) into the car and delivering them like some latter day Santa Claus to The Living Room. There my euphoria collapsed because as much stuff as we had (even a beautiful red sleeping bag, brand new), it was clear that it was not enough, not enough for all those people with so many needs. That moment was when I really understood that the economic collapse was hurting real people, women and children. Once a year is not enough! Please if you can, help the Living Room all year round with dollar donations, with portable foods, diapers, etc., and/or as volunteers at the site. Have a look at their website or telephone 579-0142. Tell them The Sitting Room sent you....



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For those of you who may feel guilty about reading lighter books, take comfort in these words of Zora Neale Hurston: "I do not regret the trash. It has harmed me in no way. It was a help, because acquiring the reading habit early is the essential thing. Taste and natural development will take care of the rest later on." Thanks to Jonah Raskin for sending this quote on to us.

WORKSHOPS, ON-GOING & NEW

Some free, some for fee, telephone/email organizers for details and to reserve a place; all workshops open to women AND men, unless otherwise specified

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS with Terry Ehret

THE POETRY OF W.B. YEATS

Mondays 9 AM to noon: Feb. 9 and 23; March 2,9,16,23,30; April 6.

These workshops give those who enjoy reading and writing poetry a chance to gather with like-minded people to celebrate the many pleasures of the word. This spring's focus will be on Yeats' poetry, plays, visionary philosophy, and life in West Ireland

THE PROSE POEM

Fridays 9 AM to noon: Feb 20, 27; March 6, 13, 20, 27; April 3, 10.

This spring's workshop will focus on the prose poems of Anne Sexton and the Mexican Nobel Laureate Octavia Paz in the first four weeks, reading, discussing, and writing together, using their work as inspiration. The 2nd four weeks, participants will bring in their own prose poems for workshop.

Cost: \$180 for 8 week session, +\$20 donation to The Sitting Room. Workshops open to all writers, prose and poetry, beginning and experienced

NOTE: Spring workshops are currently filled. If you'd like to be placed on the wait list, or would like to learn about future workshops, contact tehret99@comcast.net

THE COLOR OF WORDS? YES! with Jane Riley

Saturday, March 7, 10 to noon

Not enough color in your life? Well, let Jane lead you, as she did with last Spring's Scribble session, gently and firmly into the clarifying choice of colors that can serve to speak and listen for you. In her own theory and practice, she finds color a dynamic way to invite the written word. Join her to try out her easy exercises to see if it works for you.

Jane charges no fee for these exploratory and experimental events, though you may make a donation to the Sitting Room itself after attending, if you wish. To reserve your space, email Jane at rileyuk@sbcglobal.net, but you are welcome also to just turn up on the day itself.

BUFF AND POLISH WRITING WORKSHOP with Robin Beeman

Saturday, March 28, 9:30 to 4:30

A one-day writing event for those who have a story, essay, or memoir piece that is almost ready to send to a periodical or contest, but, somehow, does not have the impact you know it should and could. The workshop will be limited to SIX participants so there will be plenty of time for useful feedback and publishing suggestions. *The fee is \$75. A \$35.00 deposit is needed to hold your place. To sign up or for more info, email robinbee@comcast.net or call me at 707.874.2091.*

CHILDREN'S WRITERS CRITIQUE GROUP with Lisa Shulman

Wednesday nights, 7 to 9; Feb. 18, March 4, 18, April 1, 15, 29

Join other children's writers in discussing and critiquing your picture book manuscripts, easy readers, chapter books and novels for young people. This is a useful and supportive group for all levels of experience.

For more info and/or to reserve a space, email lisa@lisschulman.com

LIGHTING OUR OWN FLAMES –

WRITING THAT FREES OUR GENIUS with Gwynn O'Gara

Tuesday nights, 7 to 9, March 17 through April 21.

6 week workshop for poets and prose writers too.

"Genius is the power for lighting your own flame," Emerson said, and the Romans before him recognized genius as an inborn power and believed that by laboring in its service, people can give their genius the freedom and life it longs for. By reading six poets – Hopkins, Roethke, Stafford, Levertov, Oliver, Hirshfield – geniuses all, we'll write our own poems and prose and learn how to keep our own flames burning.

All levels, genders, and ages welcome, \$15 a class or \$75 for all six. For more info and/or to register, contact Gwynn O'Gara at gwynn@sonic.net or call 707.823.2993.