



NLAPW APRIL 2016 BIENNIAL REPORT

Submitted By: **Candace Long**
NLAPW President
April 29, 2014

Overview of Accomplishments from May, 2014 – April, 2016

General Management of the League & Its Branches

- The President is responsible for: management of the activity flow of the office, establishing and maintaining effective office processes, maintaining our dues cycle smoothly, making sure all taxes are paid and audits completed on time, emails answered, board and member challenges and needs addressed, and facing each day's challenges under the advisement of her board.
- A key part of managerial monitoring is our financial wellbeing. I am happy to report that during this administration we have received a \$10,000 matching grant, \$5,262 from the Marie Nielson Trust, \$500 from the Edna Carpenter Booker Trust, \$100,000 from the Marion Ferri Dean Trust and just recently, \$65,671 from the Myrtle Nord Trust earmarked for the Pen Arts Building, Maintenance and Scholarship Funds. This totals \$181,433 in bequests but does not include many donations from outside fundraising by Dupont Circle citizens and members donating to our Commemorative Endowment Fund. We were able to restore our CEF to surpass the \$100,000 minimum balance. Though we had to expend quite a bit in maintaining and repairing Pen Arts as needs arose, we have been able to pay all our financial obligations, thanks to our superb treasurer, Dr. Evelyn Wofford, and long-time accountant, Wanda Wachter. Over the 2 years, I have met with interested real estate brokers, architects, building consultants, zoning attorneys, neighborhood commissions and DC officials regarding our zoning, certificate of occupancy and appealed to the tax and revenue department in an attempt to lower our \$38,000/year property tax burden.
- The President is responsible for the care of Pen Arts: managing the cleaning and care of the building, guests coming in and out, snow removal services for the entire block, maintaining the landscaping, and overseeing all maintenances.
- In overseeing branches, I was responsible to: collect dues, help them deal with IRS and 990 issues, answer questions and solve problems. With the League's non-existent travel budget, a President still needs to visit as many as possible. My travels took me to the Florida State Convention, Santa Clara, Pikes Peak, Central Ohio, and Central New York branches, and I was also warmly hosted by the DC and Alexandria branches closer to home.
- During this administration, we have lost 10 branches, mostly due to old age and lack of members willing to lead: Gainesville, FL, Boston, Emerald Valley in Oregon, Carroll County, Anne Arundel, Athens, St. Louis, Valley of Virginia, Memphis, and Black Hills, SD. Two days ago, Napa Valley requested instructions to disband. Many of the members transferred to MAL status. To balance our losses, we've added 196 new members. Currently, we have 81 branches and 1,642 members.

- The President is responsible for the leadership of the BOD. This includes overseeing all board meetings and activities, the Bylaws amendments process, nominations, elections, timely publishing of the *Pen Woman Magazine* and Biennial preparations – all in accordance with our governing documents. Special emphasis was made to develop sound strategies in long-range planning. Incoming 1st Vice President Lorna Jean Hagstrom has done a superb job in helming that initiative.
- To improve branding the League, I donated time to designing and producing new letterhead, business cards, brochure, note cards, Pen Arts flyer and Biennial graphics.
- Having been in business for over 40 years with an MBA, I can discern when a financial foundation is shaky. Ours was and is. That's when we began exploring the options regarding Pen Arts. We desperately needed to look at our financial picture and flesh out our options to continue.
- Whether to stay or sell Pen Arts upset some board and non-board members to such a degree that the discussion became disruptive. The rumor spread that all I wanted to do was get in office and ramrod the sale of Pen Arts. That was untrue. The truth is we lose some \$20,000 – \$30,000 every year and are obligated for \$38,000/year in property taxes with a decreasing membership dues base. The handwriting on the wall could not be any plainer. Despite protests, we conducted a thorough building inspection and produced financial projections on the options. I asked for members' feedback on whether to SELL Pen Arts and downsize...or STAY and develop new income streams. We received overwhelming feedback from members. The majority favored selling the building and downsizing. However, we did not have 2/3 of the board in favor of selling, and thus could not bring the vote to our membership.

PenWomen Online

- In 2010 I developed *PenWomen Online* as a new revenue stream. This term, I administrated 8 webinars of online professional development. Between 29 and 37% of members were interested in seeing what webinars we were offering and 123 members and non-members participated, netting the League \$1,413. Our 3 most viewed webinars: *Writing For Film* (we sold out with 29 participants)...*Writing Historical Fiction* (23) and *Wired for Creativity* (22). We now have 21 webinars stored in our online digital archives.
- In general, our members respond most to emails concerning dues, competitions, and Pen Arts updates, reaching 45 – 60% or between 450 and 600 members. This tells me that we still have a long way to go to increase our online training initiative.
- Where the League goes with webinars initiative is uncertain. New leadership is needed to continue this initiative. The potential is still there. If we reached 25 people each month, we will bring in \$2,500 over an 8-month period.

Constant Contact Report

- Constant Contact is our official online communication organ. We have several database lists: Members, MALs, Branch Presidents, Board Members, and General Webinar List.

- During this administration, several members used our national databases and sent out email campaigns that were not approved by National. This created much confusion among members – and spread misinformation and distrust for national officers who serve at their own expense.
- This has been very destructive to the League.
- It is imperative for our members to hear regularly from their nationally elected officers and to ignore email campaigns whose intent is to foment distrust and confusion.

Looking Ahead

As I step down as President, I appreciate so much the encouragement I have received from so many of you. I have learned a great deal these last two years. I have been asked many times, “*Did you know the difficulties you would face when you came to the Presidency?*” My answer is yes. I was so certain of my personal calling to this position – and that helped me stay the course during the hard times.

In business, disruption is sometimes necessary to break through old mindsets to discover the new path. I believe our long-range efforts helped us discover our relevance again in today’s troubled culture.

I am very excited about the prospects of a proposed Pen Arts Institute (working title only) as a full-fledged educational arm of the League, housed at Pen Arts. I believe it can produce several new income streams: event registrations, lodging at Pen Arts, commissions from product sales and rental fees to outside groups. I have reviewed proposals from 15 members who want to teach on a national level. I received proposals from 5 Pen Women Interior designers as well as building consultants who want to help create a quality multi-purpose space on our lower level. I have been asked to work with the incoming board to apply for a Facilities and Building Grant from the DC Commission on Arts & Humanities, for up to \$200,000.

I thank you for the privilege of being your President these last two years.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Candace Long". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'C'.