



THE D.C. AREA PHI BETA KAPPA ASSOCIATION

Founded on December 6, 1913

www.dcpbk.org

NEWSLETTER

suggestions@dcpbk.org

December 2017-January 2018

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Upcoming Events

Kennedy Center Tour Sunday, January 21, 2018 12:00 noon

All Phi Betes and friends are invited to join DCBPK for a guided tour of the Kennedy Center! The tour will highlight the historic events that led up to the establishment of the national cultural center that is also our nation's living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, and will include an interactive exhibit on his life and presidency. We will also learn about the artworks given to the center, such as Robert Berks' bust of President Kennedy, Willy Weber's *Apollo X*, and the stunning Israeli Lounge. The visit will end with a breathtaking 360-degree view of the nation's capital from the building's Roof Terrace.

We will meet at the main entrance hall at 11:45 a.m., and the tour will begin *promptly* at noon. Getting there is easiest if you use the free Kennedy Center bus from the Foggy Bottom Metro station; see more details on our website.

To RSVP please visit: <http://www.dcpbk.org/Events/390>

Tour of the National Museum of Women in the Arts

We've submitted a request for a February group tour of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and will let you know all the details as soon as the plans are complete.

A Unique Foray into Ancient History (a winter 2018 special!)

For the coming year, we're exploring a presentation that should be highly intriguing: a speech by GWU Professor Joel Blecher on **Ancient Muslim Manuscripts Recently Unearthed**. This will probably be scheduled for spring, 2018, and we'll know more later, but this looks like a "don't miss" event.

Young Professionals (YP) Network

The Young Professionals Network will be sponsoring several more events this Spring, so please continue to check the newsletter and the website for more information.

Feedback is always welcome. If you have suggestions or ideas for future events, please email Dan Rosenberg, YP Network Coordinator, at dmberg8@gmail.com.

Book Club Meetings

Our next meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 30 at Nagomi Izakaya, when we'll discuss ***Draft No. 4: On the Writing Process*** by John McPhee (Nonfiction, 208 pages). The rest of the spring schedule is below, after the November meeting review.

Book Club Meeting—December

On Wednesday, January 3 (postponed because of the holidays), the Book Club met to discuss the classic, Nobel prize-winning novel ***Love in the Time of Cholera***, by Gabriel Garcia Marques. After catching up on holiday happenings among the 13 attendees, the group delved into a spirited discussion of the book. We debated first the author's many depictions of love, and the ways in which a 2017 reader's modern filter for the elements that comprise healthy relationships informs their experience of this text. All found the novel to be beautifully written, and reveled in the sweeping progression of history woven throughout, from the telegraph to the airplane. The march of time also reveals themes of decay, both of the body and the land surrounding the Colombia port town setting. The book turned out to be rather polarizing for our group, but all agreed that Marquez created exquisitely drawn characters populating an atmospheric and visceral town on the Caribbean Sea.

Book Club Meeting--November

On Tuesday, November 28, the Book Club met at PBK Headquarters in Dupont Circle to discuss the memoir ***Hillbilly Elegy*** by J.D. Vance. With a record 20 attendees, we divided into two discussion groups so everyone could have the opportunity to share their thoughts. Much-discussed in DC in relation to voters' motivations in the 2016 election, *Elegy* covers Vance's experiences both within his own family, and within the context of a larger Appalachian, white, working-class culture.

Our discussion focused on Vance's diagnoses and prescriptions for the detrimental behavior he catalogues in the communities in which he was raised. As a group we debated the institutions and attitudes that engender "learned helplessness" in America, and how political history has played to this psychology. Economic changes of the late 20th century undergird Vance's narrative, but he does not offer such factors as a tidy explanation for cultural malaise. The issues that plague his hometown are inextricably linked in the author's estimation to workers' individual opinion of their own agency, intelligence, and worldview, defying simple policy change.



During the November meeting cycle, we also voted on book selections for the Spring 2018 DC PBK Book Club series. We had a wonderful set of recommendations from our regular attendees, and have voted in a characteristically varied and fascinating schedule for the New Year:

February: *Snow* by Orhan Pamuk (Fiction, 463 pages)

March: *American Nations: A Cultural History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* by Colin Woodard (Nonfiction, 371 pages)

April: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcom X as told by Alex Haley (Classic, 466 pages)

May: *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro (Fiction, 288 pages)

June: *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie (Classic, 561 pages)

At all meetings, attendees are encouraged to bring any books they're looking to clean out, to see if we can find them new homes with our members.

Please contact **Kate Hannon** at bookclub@dcpbk.org with your comments or questions.

Recent Events

Annual Holiday Party

On Saturday, December 2, some 40+ Phi Betes and guests ushered in the holiday season at the historic Phi Beta Kappa Society headquarters, sharing favorite dishes and good company. The event was a fine opportunity to meet new people and reconnect with old friends. Whether talking Keats over quiche or recounting weekend plans, a good time was had by all. And the PBK Society building made a lovely venue, with festive decorations set amid cozy couches and antique rugs.

One Life: Sylvia Plath Exhibition, plus "I am Vertical" Dance

On December 10, 2017, about 18 Phi Betes and their guests joined the Diplomats of Dance Society on a tour of the One Life: Sylvia Plath exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery, led by the exhibition curator, Dorothy Moss. The intimate space contained a multitude of treasures from Plath's life, from her childhood ponytail and Girl Scout uniform to portraits, collages, and poems about her children. Many of us only know and revere Plath for her writing, so it was a treat to see her talent for the visual arts as well.

As Dorothy walked us through the many photos of Plath—on a bike, as platinum blonde on the beach, as a brunette academic—we observed how keenly aware she was of the expression of her image, and how she performed her identity visually, through fashion and photography.

The tour was followed by a stunning Plath-inspired dance performance, titled I Am Vertical, that was created by renowned Washington choreographer Dana Tai Soon Burgess. The dance was emotional and moving, embodying some of the passion and volatility of Ted Hughes and Plath's relationship. The dance was especially meaningful for the PBK crew, as it featured DC PBK's Membership Coordinator—and exceptionally talented dancer--**Christin Arthur** (pictured). Many thanks to Christin for facilitating such a special event.

Announcements

Open Volunteer Positions

Fundraising Committee Members

In order to implement a new fundraising strategy, the DCPBK Association is looking for the following four roles to be filled (one person may fill more than one role, as appropriate):

- Individual who reaches out to donating members and posts/sends out perks as part of “perk-based member showcase campaign”
- One who can identify which LinkedIn features to employ for building “member exchange and networking platform”
- One who can identify which is the best highly-visible platform for presenting “large” donors, be it on the LinkedIn group, a separate email outlet, of the website’s main page (or a combination)
- Web designer to implement web features needed for the above steps.

Applicants should be members of DCPBK in good standing, and should have experience in outreach to community members, community engagement, utilization of social media platforms for outreach, and web-designing skills. If you are interested in any of these positions, please visit our website at <http://www.dcpbk.org/volunteer-positions> or send an email to volunteer@dcpbk.org.

Events & Communications Coordinator, DC PBK Mentorship Network

The Mentorship Network team is seeking an **Events & Communications Coordinator**. The Coordinator is responsible for designing a monthly newsletter for program participants and planning up to four networking events per year. This position is perfect for someone who wants to gain experience in external communications (and it’s a lot of fun!). To learn more or apply, please send your resume and a statement of interest to Erica Hwang (kyuryung@gmail.com).

Mentorship Network Updates

Thank you very much to all those who participated in the mentorship program from July to December, 2017! We'll start accepting applications for a new mentorship cycle in late January or early February. We are still looking for a mentorship newsletter editor. If interested, please contact Erica Hwang at mentorship@dcpbk.org for inquiries.

Executive Board Meetings

The quarterly meetings of the DC PBK Executive Board are open to all members in good standing. The winter meeting was held on Saturday, April 14, 2018 from 2:00-5:00 p.m. at the PBK Society headquarters, 1606 New Hampshire Avenue. All PBK members are welcome to attend.

Find Us on Social Media!

Please be sure to “Like” the DC Area Phi Beta Kappa Association page on Facebook to follow our updates! You can also find us on LinkedIn, and follow us on our Twitter page at [@DCPhiBetaKappa](https://twitter.com/DCPhiBetaKappa)!

DC Area Phi Beta Kappa Association Board

2017-2018 Officers

PRESIDENT: Nina Kuo (Duke University, 2012)
1ST VICE-PRESIDENT: Paul Lubliner (University of Oregon, 2006)
2ND VICE-PRESIDENT/PROGRAM COORDINATOR:
Sallie Dehler (University of Florida, 2011)
SECRETARY: Dan Rosenberg, (George Washington University, 2014)
TREASURER: Pat Cascio (Denison University, 1969)

Executive Committee Members

Carol Bontempo (University of Connecticut, 1962)—Newsletter Editor
David MacDonald (University of Chicago, 2009)—Past President
Elizabeth Marshall (Lawrence University, 2009)—Immediate Past President
Kate Hannon (Boston University, 2010)—Book Club Coordinator
Erica Hwang (University of Hawaii, 2009)—Mentorship Program Manager

Advisory Council

Deirdre LaPin (Agnes Scott College, 1967)—Past Vice-President
Christel G. McDonald (George Washington University, 1986)—Past President
Andy Steigman (Princeton University, 1954)—Past President