

The Association for Women in Communications, Santa Barbara Chapter

From Ink to Internet: Honoring Visionaries in Communication

The 5th Annual Women of Achievement Awards Luncheon

By **Elizabeth Ann Robinson, RN, CNS, PhD**
Special to CASA

BOTH TALL AND GRACIOUS, Starshine Roshell and Lynda Weinman participated in a press conference and luncheon at Hotel Mar Monte recently when the dynamic pair were honored by The Association for Women in Communications, Santa Barbara Chapter (AWC-SB) for their contributions to the community. Both, candid and open in their responses, set the tone for an energetic and authentic mid-day celebration.

The only chapter in California, of this 100 year old national organization, AWC-SB was lead by Kathleen Barry, President in putting on an extraordinary sold out event with over the top raffle items and silent auction items generously donated by local businesses.

“The board of directors collaborates on the women of importance in Santa Barbara who have made a difference in women’s lives in the diverse fields

of communication. We had a long list of wonderful women and Starshine and Lynda raised to the top quickly,” shared Dr. Barry of how the honorees were selected.

In addition to awards from AWC-SB the two honorees received recognition from a representative of U.S. Congresswoman Lois Capps, from Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider, and from First District Supervisor Salud Carbajal.

Starshine Roshell moved to Santa Barbara in 1995 and spent ten years at the News Press before “the meltdown and mass exodus,” as Roshell describes it. With parents

involved in show business she grew up on the set of *General Hospital* and *American Bandstand*, which was balanced by visiting her grandparents on a farm.

Named for a song in the Musical *Hair* (Starshine’s father was in the 1960s national tour of the musical *Hair* and she was born on that tour) she writes a nationally syndicated column about suburban life in the 21st century, finding power in telling the truth. She loves, even craves, the blunt and audacious person that says things that make other people feel uncomfortable. She claims that when someone says something out of

line at a party she will follow that person around all night until they ask her to leave them alone. This type of audacious bluntness is also how she woos readers. Since she grew up in what she learned was “manipulative and phony Hollywood” she is not enamored with fiction.

Roshell’s greatest inspirations came at age ten when she began reading Erma Bombeck and watching Charles

Osgood as he exposed behind the scenes of the nightly news. She connected to the greater world through them and enjoyed their snarky musings. She began to realize early on in life that we are all more alike than not, and that “real and true is the truly heroic.” Her self described vocation is to investigate fact and to be a storyteller.

Her main message is, “Be clear, be fearless, and be heard (and be funny when you can).”

“Find and tell a good story,” she explained...Real feelings connect with the reader and make them feel more understood and less alone.

“I was blown away to be honored,” she

shared of her feelings about the award. She had attended three or four of these events in the past. “This award is anything but humbling—it is the opposite of that.”

“My family gives me cart blanche to go forth and be funny,” she shared. “My circle of friends has gotten smaller to only those that can handle being written about. I have had women say they would like to hang out with me but

won’t because they are afraid I will write about them and reveal something embarrassing - and I tell them they are right.”

Lynda Weinman a successful local entrepreneur shared that she started out with a retail business that failed. She claims that a good part of her success can be attributed to being willing to be bad at something and willing to fail in order to learn.... And to be courageous and kind.

When asked if she ran into any difficulties early on in a male dominated high tech world she claims that being a female actually helped her. She explained that most instructions were written by male engineers and she brought the desire to help, connect, be gentle, and make people feel empowered with computers. In 1982 she got her first computer and there were no books then. Her instructions are non-threatening, knowing people feel insecure with computers in general. She finds a way to calm fears and be supportive from an instinctual and feminine, gentle place.

Fourteen years ago, Lynda and her spouse and partner Bruce Heavin started the first school of web design. They charged \$25/month for all access to their courses. Now, with 1000 courses available, they have never raised their rates. Currently there are 5 million visits per month and half of those are from outside the country, which is

remarkable since they have not done any marketing or been anywhere outside of the US to promote Lynda.com. Their content experts/instructors get paid royalties based on their popularity and many make most of their income from Lynda.com.

When asked how



Honorees **Starshine Roshell** and **Lynda Weinman** with AWC-SB President **Kathleen Barry** (center)

Photo by R.S. Thurston Photography

she feels about this award Lynda said, “My company has been in business for 14 years and we never received any attention or any awards until we moved to the Santa Barbara

area. I like to bring local awareness to the community. It is a group effort - women supporting each other and networking and the field of communication that is going through so many changes. I am honored to be a part of it.” There are over 1 million subscribers this year. 200 local employees, 61 hired



Deborah Hutchinson, Lynda Weinman, and Bruce Heavin

this year with 70 new job openings now. “We are just scratching the surface and in the infancy of internet age. We have instructional videos we publish on line and members have access to everything. There are individual members, corporate, and academic members. Our campus-wide product has been adopted at USC, UCLA,

California community colleges, UC campuses, MIT, Harvard, and Yale. The service is used in education by teachers to brush up on topics themselves.”

Lynda does not worry about competitors but aims to be the best, most trusted in the field. She says the success of Lynda.com is because it is a great value and fills a great need. Subscription is the cost of less than one book. “When you give people value far beyond expectation they are grateful.”



Charlotte Brownlee, Mari Mitchell, and Joan Siegel



Loretta Redd, Terrance Ryken, and Dee Dee Barrett



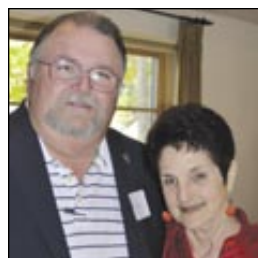
Front: **Kate Schwab, Jerry Roberts, Marianne Partridge**. Back: **Marcia Meier, Starshine Roshell, and Ann Louise Bardach**



Cindy Swain and Laura Jansma



Kristine Jacquin; Linda Branch; Richard Meyers, President Fielding Graduate Univ.; and Gloria Willingham, Provost, Fielding Graduate Univ.



Steve Jones and Barbara Mintzer, Hospitality Chair



Judy Tamkin and Wendy Letrak



Helene Schneider and Kristina Eriksen



Sharon Siegel and Phyllis de Picciotto

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