

## Rancho Mirage Writer's Festival: Woodstock For The Mind

Dale Gribow Special to The Desert Sun  
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Jamie Kabler, Tom Hanks, Helene Galen, and Harold Matzner Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

Swaddle next year's award for "best event of the season" and send it now to **Jamie Kabler**, founder of the Rancho Mirage Writers Festival, aptly applauded the best in the country. The 6th Season was celebrated at the RM Library for 3 days with Executive Producer **Debbie Green**, Director of **Programing Deborah Dejah** assisting Kabler and Library Executive Director Aaron Espinosa, as they and the City of RM plan two years in advance.

**Albert Einstein**, if alive, would have attended and joined the 43 authors, celebrities and 1000 guests, eager to soak up the knowledge to be shared. While sitting with columnist **Hank Plante**, he commented it was "Woodstock for the Mind"...though I had also considered the name "Coachella for the Literate".

The festival attracted not only CV's finest, but the best and brightest from throughout the world who were attracted to the sport of the day...learning. The festival allows authors to meet readers and vice versa as people with divergent viewpoints calmly discuss issues.

The opening night's dinner and panel was one small thread in an amazing tapestry that was the RM Writers Festival. **Susan Eisenhower** suggested the theme of World War II and the 75th Anniversary of D Day, which attracted a plethora of historians, professors, acclaimed authors and nationally known speakers to the Omni for the Author's dinner. At the same time 450 major supporters of the festival dined on a sumptuous meal catered by Spencer's at the newly named City of Rancho Mirage Dining Room at the Annenberg Health Science building of Eisenhower Hospital. **Terri Ketover** chaired the beautifully executed event.

Some of us were still chuckling over a recent remark made by Ketover when someone sought her advice by asking for her opinion "as a psychiatrist." Ketover jokingly replied, "I'm no longer a psychiatrist, I'm a full time party planner."



Jan Salta and Suzy Leprino Bruce Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

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All of the guests adjourned to the newly refurbished Galen Auditorium at Eisenhower where NY Times journalist **Maureen Dowd** interviewed **Tom Hanks**. A panel discussion followed with **Douglas Brinkley**, **Jon Meacham**, **Karl Rove** and **Bret Stephens**. On the ensuing days, every forty five minutes there were 5 presentations as diverse as:

- Rick Atkinson**, **Sir Antony Beevor** and **Douglas Brinkley** discussing D Day;
- H.W. Brands** and **Meacham** discussing Andrew Jackson;
- Anne Applebaum**, **Dowd** and **Karl Rove** on The World Today;
- Garry Kasparov**, **Meacham** and **Applebaum** on Fight for Liberty or **Stephens**, **Applebaum**, **Lord Mandelson** and **Roz Rothstein** on Anti-Semitism.



L-R Deanie Stein, Stewart Boxer, Barbara Boxer, Terri Ketover, Karl Rove, Berry Stein, Jay Stein, and Bart Ketover. Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Marjorie Kulp, Anne Sebba, and Madeline Redstone. Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

These world renowned speakers were complimented by our own:

- Dr. Joe Scherger** of Eisenhower 365 author of Lean and Fit ,
- Hal Gershowitz** on his novel Cry Eden,
- Dr. Khoi Le** interviewing Geoff Dyer and Dennis Lehane.

The rush to see your favorite presentation evoked memories of rushing for classes at USC and UCLA.

### EXPERT INFORMATION

My tablemate, **Professor Brands**, and I discussed the Gentrification of History, where the winner of the battle often writes the history. Pulitzer Prize author Atkinson later profoundly commented "History is often something that never happened, written by someone who was not there."

In addition to the colorful tables and umbrellas, the décor included a Patton Museum's WWII Tank, courtesy of Platinum Angel **Harold Matzner**. And Eisenhower's **Michael Landes** rounded that out by supplying a Jeep.

Former California Governor **Gray Davis** and former **US Senator Barbara Boxer** were moderated by conservative **Van Gordon Sauter**, husband of Former Gov. Brown's sister, to discuss "The State of the State" issues. These included medical coverage, homelessness, earthquakes and wildfires. They shared that since the 80's, wages rose 5% but education and housing rose 100% and health care 60%.



L-R: Richard DeBeikes, Bryn DeBeikes, David Wilson, Margaruite Wilson, Jessica and Gary Grace Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Sally Field and Jamie Kabler Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

If there was one word to describe the festival it would be Organized. Founder **Kabler** prepared the best printed program I have ever seen, both in content and quality. **Kabler**, with a whistle around his neck, was like an experienced Circus Master of Ceremonies who had thought of everything to entertain his guests in each tent.

A Mariachi Band played adjacent to the Red Carpet guests would traverse as volunteers greeted and handed out programs. Water bottles were everywhere to wash down the provided pastry and when the day concluded, a table laden with assorted candies awaited the attendees, all departing with smiling faces. The weather cooperated and, though cloudy, it was sunny inside each room as all were enlightened by the shared information.

The event pulsed with inspiring speeches and panel presentations on a vast array of topics. Our CV is currently awash with some of the finest speaker's series in the country ...and yet almost any of these 35 daily break-out sessions would equal or surpass them.

"Angel" is a Greek word for messenger and everyone that attended will for sure tell a friend. The event would not have been possible without Angel sponsor donations of \$5,000-\$50,000 which underwrites 80% of the budget. The event sells out within three hours of the tickets going on sale.



Rancho Mirage City Council members and spouses L-R: Dana and Vicki Hobart, Thom and Iris Smotrich, Becky and Richard Kite, Ted and Ginny Weil Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Harold Matzner , Lori and Aubrey Serfling Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

### CERTIFIED ANGELS

Mr. and Mrs. Charity, **Matzner** and **Helene Galen** are again making 2020 possible with donations of \$50k each. Joining them are GOLDEN ANGELS: Eisenhower Health, **Lucyann Carlton**, **Jerry Carlton**, **Renee Katz**, **Marion Rosenthal**, **Robert Rosenthal** and **Jan Salta**. SILVER ANGELS are: Auen Foundation, **Sherrie Auen**, **Ron Auen**, **Lynn Booth**, **Phil Bornkamp**, **Edye Broad**, **Eli Broad**, **Dan Clivner**, **Steven Cochran**, **Senator John C. Danforth**, **Sally Danforth**, **Eunice David**, **Bryn DeBeikes**, **Richard DeBeikes**, **Joyce Frank**, **Hal Frank**, **Jeannette Galante**, **Raymond Galante**, **Wendy Goodfriend** **Robert Goodfriend**, **Patti Grundhofer**, **Jack Grundhofer**, **Linda Hart**, **Mitch Hart**, **Cathy Hirschmann**, **Rick Hirschmann**, **H.N. & Frances C. Berger Foundation**, **Anne Holland**, **Suz Hunt**, **Lonnie Israel**, **Robert Uhl**, **Peggy Jacobs**, **Bob Howard**, **Sandra Krause**, **William B. Fitzgerald**, **Marjorie Kulp**, **Stephen Kulp**, **Robert Land**, **Samie Lang**, **Suzy Leprino**, **Mike Leprino**, **Connie Lurie**, **Bob Lurie**, **Lori Milken**, **Michael Milken**, **Patty Newman**, **Arthur Newman**, **Madeline Redstone**, **Catharine Reed**, **Karen Rishwain**, **Robert Rishwain**, **Ambassador Rockwell Schnabel**, **Marna Schnabel**, **Arlene Schnitzer**, **Jordan Schnitzer**, **Berry Stein**, **Deanie Stein**, **Jay Stein**, **Lonna Wais**, **Jack Mettler**, **Marguerite Wilson**, **David Wilson**, **Senator Francis A. Won** and **Mary-Ann Won**. Of course, the entire City of Rancho Mirage including the City Council: **Ted Weill**, **Iris Smotrich**, **Richard Kite**, **Charles Townsend**, **Dana Hobart**, City Attorney **Steve Quintanilla**, Library Executive Director **Aaron Espinosa** and RM City Manager **Isaiah Hagerman** helped to make the festival successful.



Patton's Tank Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun



Catherine Reed and Mary-Ann Wong Lani Garfield/Special To The Desert Sun

Seen leaving with smiling faces, after learning from the masters were: Rabbi **Richard Zionts**, **Vicky Reynolds**, **Murray Pepper**, **Landes**, **Stehanie Landes**, **Patty Newman**, **Aubrey Serfling**, **Lori Serfling**, **Bob Spivak**, **Justice Douglas Miller**, **Robert Burns** and **Frank Jones**,

Some of the comments overheard: **Dr. Barry Hackshaw** "my highlight of the year"; **Sherrie Auen** "It's fabulous that the festival was brought to the desert"; **Carol Scherger** "I look forward to this every year" and "The Best Ever" by many departing guests.

### GET READY

Next year January 28-31, 2020 James Patterson, who donated 75 Million to Libraries, will be the keynote speaker with distinguished personalities discussing Americans and Presidential Elections. How appropriate will be in January of an election year. Some announced presenters are **Doris Kearns Goodwin**, **James Carville**, **Patterson**, **Anna Quindlen**, **Max Boot** and **Dennis Prager** and a focus on fiction speakers.