

On the Town

The art of SBMA Women's Board

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art Women's Board members were the portrait of invigoration. First of all, they were holding their annual membership tea at the Santa Barbara Club. At this event, it is their custom to welcome and introduce new members; **Leisa Cosentino** and **Roberta Miller** were presented. Then, long-term members were acknowledged and honored, such as **Barbara Wallace**, who joined 49 years ago (her daughter, **Marjorie Robertson**, is also a member!). **Sunni Thomas** has been a member for 27 years, **Grace Yoon** for 24 years and **Marion Stewart** for 32 years.



Erin Graffy

Other longtimers include **Julia Blair**, **Melanie Brewer**, **Susan Case**, **Marlena Handler**, **Lynn Kirst**, **Dolores Manclark**, **Deanna Major** and **Gwineth Clarkson**.

They all support the mission of the Women's Board, which is to raise funds for and awareness of the programs and exhibits at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

But the other reason for the excitement was the Museum of Art's upcoming exhibit.

Helene Segal, the bubbly president of the Women's Board, presented a \$30,000 check from the board to **Larry Feinberg**, director and CEO of the Museum of Art, for the upcoming exhibit "David Wiesner & The Art of Wordless Storytelling." Mr. Feinberg pointed out that their contribution made the Women's Board the lead sponsor for the exhibit.

"I think you are going to be really proud to be associated with **David Wiesner's** show," Mr. Feinberg predicted. "It's going to

be very popular. Social media is already lighting up."

So the ensuing opening-night reception brought in an enthusiastic crowd starting with Women's Board members such as **Carolyn Williams**, **Lynn Brown** and **Fran Morrow**, who were looking pleased at the reaction to the wildly imaginative artwork of illustrator **David Wiesner**.

The opening drew in **Dana Hansen**, **Mandy Starr**, **Starr Siegele**, **Victoria Brown**, **Mimi Michaelis**, **Kathy Becker**, patrons **Bob** and **Christine Emmons**, **Jody Ireland** and **Chris Baker**, and **Zora** and **Les Charles** (who underwrote the exhibition catalog). **Eik Kahng**, SBMA assistant director and chief curator (and curator of this exhibition); **John Bishop**, SBMA board of trustees chair; and **Jill Bishop** also attended.

Mr. Wiesner told me that he — unlike many artists — had total support from his parents in pursuing his career. He was the youngest of five kids, including two older sisters, engaged with voice and music. His parents saw what the children were interested in and supported them wholeheartedly. "It was when I went to art school that I saw kids who actually had to fight tooth and nail to pursue the arts ..."

Seventy pieces of his art (which will charm children and intrigue adults) will be up through May 14. Mr. Wiesner said his inspiration comes from constantly absorbing information and impressions. While there are certain motifs that he returns to, his practice of "writing in pictures" and even the act of drawing and sketching things can trigger other ideas.

"Inspiration is for amateurs," Mr. Wiesner said, quoting from photographer **Chuck Close**. "The rest of us just show up and get to work."



ERIN GRAFFY / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

From left, **Carolyn Williams**, SBMA Women's Board vice president-membership; new members **Leisa Cosentino** and **Roberta Miller**; and **Helene Segal**, SBMA Women's Board president.



From left, **Fran Morrow**, SBMA donor and member of the Women's Board, which was the largest funder of the new exhibit featuring the illustrations of **David Wiesner**; **Larry Feinberg**, executive director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; and **Carolyn Williams**, vice president-membership for the Women's Board.