

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL 12/12/75

## Postage, Patience, And Skill Are Veteran Author's Keys

By BARBARA BURKLO

Sentinel Staff Writer

"Postage and patience" are the three words of advice which veteran writer Alice Marie Dodge gives to aspiring young writers.

The 88-year-old author has just seen her twelfth book, *DARE TO DREAM*, published, and will be honored at an autograph party Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Casa Del Rey Retirement Hotel, where she resides.

Santa Cruz County Branch, National League of American Pen Women, is giving the party, and invites the public to attend.

It has taken far more than patience and postage to bring Alice her many successes in fiction writing.

As we sat in the living room of her comfortable suite, Alice outlined for me the disciplines she put herself through to achieve quality in her work.

Alice has been writing for 50 years. Before she turned to writing books, she sold more than 100 magazine stories — mostly of the light romance or true confession type.

"I had the urge to write from childhood," she says. "I remember sitting up in an acacia tree when I was 7 or 8 years old, writing little stories."

She says she had only a grammar school education in Davis, where she was born. There was no high school there then. She later went to Sacramento, put herself through business college and got a job as clerk of the justice court.

"I had always wanted to write, but the job took too much time," she says. After I got married, I immediately went to high school! And I then took a correspondence course in fiction writing from Columbia University. It was very helpful — and I started writing."

Alice found that she did her best work first thing in the morning.

"I didn't do any housework at all in the morning. I wrote until 11, then got my husband's lunch. I always wanted him to come home for lunch, because we wanted to have as much time together as possible. "I did all my housework in the afternoon. This worked out very well for me."

Alice says that when she was starting out, she studied light romance stories in the magazines, and even copied them on her typewriter to get the feel of that kind of writing.

In the '30s, she won first prize for a movie script, "On To The Diggin's", which was produced by a Sacramento motion picture company. Alice had prepared herself — she had taken a course in movie script writing.

She was a charter member of the Sacramento branch of the Pen Women organization, and also served as state president.

With the onset of television, many magazines evaporated, and it was then that Alice turned to writing books.

They're all of the young romance flavor, and some have gone into paperback.

"I only write clean books," Alice says. "And my publisher, Thomas Bouregy and Company of New York, does not publish any books of violence or sex."



*"Effort is always rewarded,"  
says 88-year-old author, Alice  
Marie Dodge. Her twelfth book is just  
off the press, and she will  
be honored Saturday at an autograph  
party at the Casa Del Rey.*

*DARE TO DREAM* is the story of a young girl who takes care of her widowed brother's children, while living in an old ranch house and writing the history of her family. Her struggles and romances, as well as her efforts to aid her community's economy, are woven through the plot.

"Maud Black, who years ago was a columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, once told me, 'If you do stories where people in a whole community are involved, you'll be more successful,'" Alice says.

She had an agent for her magazine work, but sold all her books, herself. One has been published in England; another, in Italy.