

Write Angles



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BERKELEY BRANCH OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

President's Message

Taking Inventory

– Tanya Grove

January—a time for resolutions, goal setting, self-examination. Some renew intentions to go to the gym more. Others vow to stop smoking. Many a writer promises to practice BIC (Butt in Chair) as a way to be more disciplined and productive. It's a chance to step back, take in the larger view, and gain perspective with an eye toward organizing responsibilities and commitments so there is still time and energy for what nourishes our souls.



It's a time to take inventory: am I just keeping those spinning plates in the air, or does the sum of my parts mean something?

I'm lucky. My day job as a copyeditor/proofreader allows me to do what comes naturally—correcting spelling and grammar—and get paid for it. (When I correct my daughter's grammar, I'm just annoying.) As a bonus, my work lets me practice writing skills. I'm also fortunate to have a great boss who is flexible about my hours. (He's also my husband.)

Verdict on job? I'll keep it.

On Thursday mornings I volunteer at my local middle school as a writer coach. (After teaching for 24 years, I couldn't give up the classroom completely.) I enjoy the luxury of working with one student at a time. Plus, I don't have to write report cards or go to faculty meetings.

Would I give up coaching to have more time? No way.

I also belong to the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, an international organization with a local chapter in the Bay Area. SCBWI hosts conferences and speaker events valuable to us in kid lit.

Do these benefits justify being a member in *two* different writing clubs? Absolutely.

The Berkeley Broadway Singers is a choral group I've sung with for years. Having taken on the position of club president in addition to being editor of *Write Angles*, I took off last season, worried about time constraints.

But I've missed the camaraderie and harmonizing, so once again I shall set aside Thursday nights for BBS.

My most *important* job is being a mother, which is, of course, a lifetime appointment. But as my daughter gets older and needs me less—she's almost 20—that job is becoming much more part-time.

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January 2013

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Upcoming Events

1/15/13 – Fifth-Grade Story Contest opens

1/16/13 – Jack London's Birthday

1/20/13 – Meeting: David Mitroff "Leveraging New Technology"

2/2 – Workshop: Dave Sawle "Developing Publishing Platforms"

The Berkeley Branch meets on the third Sunday of each month (except July, August, and December) at 2:00 p.m. in the Bradley C. Walters Community Room of the Main Library in Oakland at 125 14th Street (wheelchair accessible). ([View Map](#)). Enter on Madison Street. Free street parking is available, and it is a short walk from the Lake Merritt BART station.

(continued from page 1)

And I'm a writer. I've composed articles, short stories, songs, plays, text for picture books, early chapter books, poems for all occasions, one middle-grade novel, and over 200 blog posts. (See [For Words](#)) I don't write as *much* as I'd like to, but I practice BIC several times a week.

I could go on listing my various "jobs." I'm also a wife, a sister, a colleague, a neighbor, a cat-dish filler, and more. And each of those positions requires at least a little energy.

Because none of us is one-dimensional, we all struggle to find that critical balance, the sweet spot where we accomplish what is necessary, do what brings us joy, and find deeper satisfaction that gives meaning to our lives.

So after taking inventory, what's my plan? I think all my endeavors are worthwhile and, with some careful organizing, completely doable. So I may be spinning plates, but they're *my* plates. What are yours?

January Speaker

Leveraging New Technology

—David Baker

Rejection letters piling up? Maybe it's time for a different approach, one guided by a new perception. Yes, you're a writer, but you're also a business. Think brand awareness, networking, and social media. Who better to guide us along these lines than David Mitroff, our featured speaker for the January 20 meeting.



Mitroff, founder of Piedmont Avenue

Consulting, is a business consultant, keynote speaker, social media expert, and relationship manager with more than fifteen years experience in the technology, business, legal, financial, retail, government, academic, and healthcare environments. His educational background includes a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and coursework in Business Administration, Legal Studies, and Marketing.

According to Mitroff's website, one of his specialties is "leveraging new technology" to improve marketing. Of your novel, for example. He advises us to use social media, including our own customized outlet. "You can join ranks with legions of companies that have created an entire website on WordPress, with a custom home page and your blog as one of the sub-pages." How is this helpful?

"WordPress drives traffic to your blog. Just include tags with your posts and they'll automatically add them to their global tag system and tag surfer, so people who are interested in the topics you cover will easily be able to search for your content."

After you've set up your blog, how should you proceed? Start by studying Mitroff's "Seven Tips for Writing a Successful Blog Post." One suggestion: "Use keywords"—mystery, thriller, romance?—"to increase Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for your blog or website. Keep your readers focused on the main point of your post." This list is for you.

For many of us, leveraging new tech seems complicated and generates a flood of questions. So much the better. We'll bring them with us to the January meeting.

NorCal News

- Kathleen Orosco

The December NorCal meeting proved to be a gathering of bold planners and excellent problem solvers on a number of issues. The representatives discussed ways the branches could work together toward a successful outcome at the San Francisco Writers Conference. In addition to sending two volunteers to cover one of the four-hour shifts at the conference, the Berkeley branch will lend its banner to attach to the CWC table.

The group also came up with clear-cut strategies to promote "Branch Best Practices," (which involves protocol at meetings), how to sustain a NorCal website, and most important, how we are going to save Publishing Pathways.

The news from the Berkeley branch that I shared with the other NorCal representatives included my account of James Dalessandro's exceptional presentation at our November meeting. I also reported on my visits to the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley, which have been valuable. The staff at Bancroft provided an index to all of CWC-BB's records archived and stored there.

Mt. Diablo Hosts Workshop on Creative Use of Language

Author and writing teacher Connie Hale will present a workshop on "Creative Use of Language in Fiction and Non-Fiction" at the next meeting of the Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club (CWC) on Saturday, January 12, 2013, at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

Ms. Hale will explain "sin and syntax," how she views writing style, how to approach grammar with confidence, and how to write dialect. Participants are asked to bring paper and pen for exercises.

The author of three books on writing style, Ms. Hale focuses on the use of language. Her books are: *Wired Style*, *Sin and Syntax*, and *Vex, Hex, Smash, Smooch*.



Sign-in is from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., full breakfast from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., and the workshop is from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Registration is \$35 for CWC members, \$40 for guests.

Reservations are required and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, January 9, 2013. Contact Jeannie Georgakopoulos at jeaniepops@comcast.net, or by phone at [\(925\) 934-5677](tel:925-934-5677). Expect confirmation only if you e-mail your reservation.

The CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB is a 501(c) (3) educational nonprofit, dedicated to educating members and the public-at-large in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

Be sure to check our website: www.cwc-berkeley.org

Poetry Page**FEATURED POET: ROBERT FROST**

—Alysa Chadow

Editor's note: Because of the presidential inauguration (January 20), we are featuring Robert Frost.

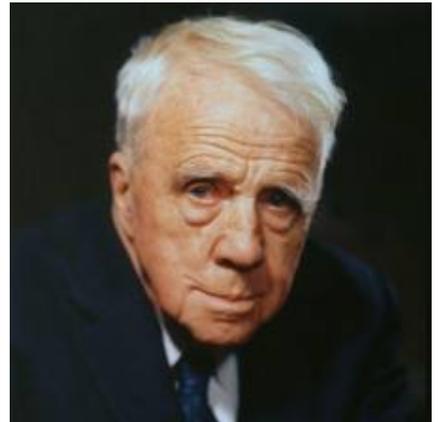
Robert Frost (1874-1963) is one of the most popular and critically acclaimed American poets of the 20th century. His numerous works are so well known and so often quoted that parts of them have made their way into everyday language.

Frost was born in San Francisco and moved to Massachusetts when he was nine years old, following the death of his father. After briefly attending Dartmouth College, he tried his hand at farming, but eventually devoted himself full-time to poetry. He spent a year in England prior to World War I, but he lived his adult life on farms in New England and Michigan. One of these in Derry, New Hampshire, is now a poetry center (www.frostplace.org).

Frost was the first poet to read his own work at a presidential inauguration. In 1963, he wrote "The Gift Outright" for John F. Kennedy.

The Gift Outright

The land was ours before we were the land's.
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.
Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become.





Left to right: Anne Fox, Liz Flynn, Caroline Ahlswede, and Jing Li.



Tanya Grove and hostess/emcee Lucille Bellucci

Holiday Luncheon a Crowd Pleaser

-Tanya Grove

About thirty Berkeley Branch members descended upon Spenger's Grotto in Berkeley in early December for our annual holiday luncheon. Longtime member Lucille Bellucci acted as hostess and emcee and definitely succeeded in providing a fun-filled event.

Although holiday music was playing in the background to set a festive mood, all the lively conversation drowned out the tunes. Between courses, members entertained the group: Ruby Long read a Christmas-themed excerpt from her memoir; Helene Knox recited one of her poems; Kymberlie Ingalls shared a wistful personal essay on Christmas; I read my poem "Holiday Submission Blues"; and Lucille regaled us with songs and jokes throughout.



Francine Howard and Ruby Long

The afternoon ended with a writing contest. To inspire us, Lucille read several prize-winning entries from the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, based on the classically infamous first line: "It was a dark and stormy night..." For fifteen minutes, we crafted paragraphs of our best *awful* writing. And now some poor soul will have to read them all to judge which one wins the prize (to be awarded at the January meeting).

Those of you who missed this year's luncheon will have to be content looking at the photos taken that day.

Thanks, Lucille, for a great holiday party!



At right, Therese Pipe, Shereen Rahman, Deb Frisch, and Kathleen Orosco
All photos courtesy of Kymberlie Ingalls.

Monthly Writers' Contest

The theme for February: **love**. Entries should be no more than 450 words and can be any genre. Please send to Lynne at writeangles@gmail.com with "WA Writers' Contest" in the subject line. Entries are due no later than **January 15**.

Congratulations this month go to Mary Luersen for her winning entry.

The Cliff

President Obama undid his seat belt and headed to the plane's bar. "Joe, stay sober till we land."

The Vice-President laughed. "Loosen up, Mr. President. We're giving these bastards a trip of a lifetime."

The President watched as Grover Norquist approached. "Sparkling water, Coke, Grover?"

"Are you mocking me, Mr. President?"

"Not at all, Grover. I want you stone sober when you change your mind."

"Only happen over my dead body, Mr. President."

Fat-cat fart, the President thought as Norquist waddled back to his seat. "Let's break the news, Joe."

Barrack Obama faced the men who'd made his first term in the White House a living hell.

"Good evening. I trust that you've enjoyed Michelle's White House vegetable garden casserole and kumquat and oats tart for dinner. The Vice-President and I are delighted you accepted our invitation for this trip to resolve our differences over my budget proposals."

"The Secret Service confiscated our smart phones, shoved us into vans, drove us to Andrews Air Force Base and herded us onto your plane," Congressman Paul Ryan snarled. "Hardly a chance to refuse your invitation, Mr. President."

"Kill the rhetoric, Paul. It killed you in the debates," the Vice-President quipped and headed back for another beer.

The President surveyed the men who continued to bust his chops: Paul Ryan, House Speaker Boehner, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senator Jim DeMint, the Koch brothers, tax pledger Norquist, and the Tea Party leaders.

"Where are your Democrats? Where the hell are we going?" a Tea Partier bellowed.

"This is a motivational trip for the uncommitted," the President replied. "A *Come to Jesus* moment,"

The intercom interrupted: "Please fasten your seat belts. We'll be touching down in Caracas in five minutes."

"Caracas!" a Koch brother yelled. "Are you shitting us, Mr. President?"

President Obama flashed his campaign smile. "I want you to meet my good friend."

The plane braked to a smooth landing. "Remain seated. We have a visitor boarding."

The Congressional Republican leadership gasped as President Hugo Chavez entered.

"Amigos, bienvenidos," he said.

"Damn! Trump was right," Paul Ryan shouted. "You're a commie, Mr. President!"

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Hugo Chavez stepped in front of President Obama. "Welcome to Venezuela," he said, "where only the rich pay taxes. My friend, El Presidente, told me of your desire to go over a cliff. My soldiers will drive you to Angel Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in the world. I have taken many political enemies to visit it. Please take a pair of water wings as you disembark."

"Thanks, Hugo," the President said. "Let's be sure these guys want to go over the cliff." He turned back to Biden. "Joe, I think these fellows could use a stiff drink now!"

Member News

Berkeley Branch members are encouraged to send us writing-related news. Please write "Member News" in the subject line and send to Anne at writefox@aol.com no later than the 15th of the month.

Carol Newman-Weaver will be reading from her memoir, *Radical Feminist in a Topless Band*, along with two other writers, at Book Passage, 51 Tamal Vista Blvd., Corte Madera, on Sunday, January 13. Live music performed by her and another person starts at 7:00 p.m. Readings and slides start at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments.

Risa Nye's Craft contribution to *Hippocampus Magazine's* December issue—"All's Well if It Ends Well"—tackles the challenging part of memoir—the ending.

Lucille Bellucci's story "Cicadas" has been proposed by pixelhose.com to *Pushcart Prize* for consideration.

Anne Fox's piece, "Home Fires Burning," appeared in the December issue of *Hippocampus Magazine*.

Marketplace

Berkeley Branch members are welcome to advertise their writing-related services. Please write "Marketplace" in the subject line and send to Anne at writefox@aol.com no later than the 15th of the month.

Thomas Burchfield offers editing and proofreading services for fiction and nonfiction books by CWC-Berkeley members. For details, visit his webpage, e-mail him at tbdeluxe@sbcglobal.net, or call 510-817-4432.

Charlotte Cook offers story editing, preublishing services, and workshops for writers of fiction, creative nonfiction, and screenplays. Also available is office/retreat space for classes and meetings. www.adaptingsideways.com or charlotte@adaptingsideways.com.

Tatjana Greiner offers developmental editing for all genres of fiction and nonfiction. Email her at workshop@mac.com. More information at: <http://tatjanagreinerwordshop.com>.

Anne Fox, *Write Angles* copyeditor, offers copyediting services for all levels of fiction and nonfiction. References available. writefox@aol.com

Write Angles

<u>Editor</u>	<u>Tanya Grove</u>
<u>Monthly Writers Contest</u>	<u>N L Fix</u>
<u>Copyeditor/Member News</u>	<u>Anne Fox</u>
<u>Speaker Profile</u>	<u>David Baker</u>
<u>Poetry Page Editor</u>	<u>Alysa Chadow</u>
<u>Contributor</u>	<u>Kathleen Orosco</u>

Developing PUBLISHING PLATFORMS with Help from the Four-Step Method

A CWC Mini-Workshop with
DAVE SAWLE

**Saturday, February 2, 2012
1 – 4 p.m.**

Clubhouse 1425 Oregon Street, Berkeley 94702



This workshop, "Developing Publishing Platforms with Help from the Four-Step Method," is designed to develop a publishing platform for writers to assist in book publishing, promotion, and sales. Website design, possible methods of increasing website traffic, and methods of predicting website traffic and book sales are discussed.

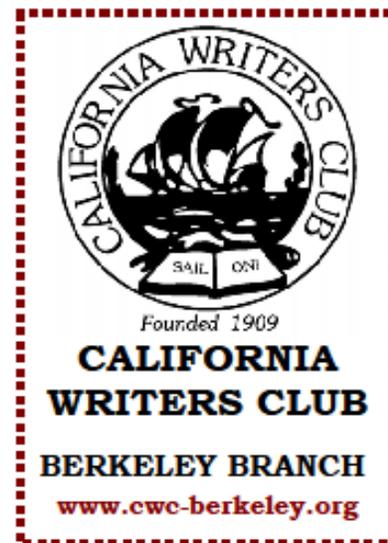
Other issues to be discussed include foresight and the subconscious and their impact on forecasting web traffic, book sales, and the importance of a website. Peter Drucker and his article *Managing Oneself* as well as the Four-Step Method of prediction will be included. Examples such as the site ForesightImprovement.com and other possible scenarios will be discussed.

Brought up on a Wisconsin dairy farm, Dave developed an early interest in planning for the future. An engineering degree from the University of Wisconsin, a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, and an MBA from Pepperdine University, as well as strategic planning at several companies (Aerojet General, MB Associates, and the Pentagon) helped reinforce the interest.

Sign up Today!

*Complimentary coffee,
tea, and cookies.*

To Register: Pay at door or send a check (\$9 for members, \$29 for nonmembers). Please include your e-mail address so we can confirm your reservation. Make check to CWC-BB and send to Attn: Workshops, 1425 Oregon Street, Berkeley, CA 94702. Call Shereen Rahman 510-845-3425 with questions.



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Founded 1909

CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

BERKELEY BRANCH

**Sunday,
January 20, 2012**

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**Bradley C. Walters
Community Room
Oakland Public Library
125 14th Street (94612)**

*Entrance also on Madison St.,
between 13th and 14th Streets.
wheelchair accessible*

Our monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Each month we typically feature a speaker and an author event.

*Find out more about our
contests,
workshops, writing groups,
and more at*

www.cwc-berkeley.org

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Leveraging New Technology

with

DAVID MITROFF

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David Mitroff, the founder of Piedmont Avenue Consulting, is a business consultant, keynote speaker, social media expert, and relationship manager with more than fifteen years experience in the technology, business, legal, financial, retail, government, academic, and healthcare environments. His educational background includes a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and coursework in Business Administration, Legal Studies, and Marketing.



Learn more at

www.PiedmontAve.com

Meeting Schedule:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1:00 p.m. | Library doors open, Marketing Group Meets, Meeting Set-up |
| 2:00 p.m. | Refreshments & Networking |
| 2:30 p.m. | Business & Announcements |
| 2:45 p.m. | CWC Featured Author |
| 3:00 p.m. | Featured Speaker |

Come write with us!"