

Write Angles



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

President's Message

Can I Rise from the Ashes of Despair to Write Again?

-Tanya Grove

Okay, maybe that headline is a bit dramatic. But that's how I feel.

I am in a pool of fifty playwrights given a monthly writing prompt and four days to write a one-act play. The best six get staged at the Berkeley Rep as part of PlayGround's Monday Night Performance series. Our season opener was a tribute to local theater legend, Barbara Oliver.

In preparation, I had attended two workshops, one led by casting director Annie Stuart, and the other by artistic director Jim Kleinmann. I took copious notes on a presentation that covered the lives of both Barbara Oliver and her favorite playwright, **Thornton Wilder**, arguably Berkeley High's most famous graduate. We read some of Wilder's letters and discussed his plays.

Later that night I pulled out my laptop and started writing. I pored over my notes, basically reread the script of *Our Town* (Wilder's most-performed work), and crafted what I felt was the perfect one-act play—*A Wilder Woman*—in less than two days. Poignant, funny, and dark—it captured both Oliver's and Wilder's spirits in a mere nine pages. Not only was I sure my play would get chosen, I was imagining teary heartfelt words of thanks from Barbara Oliver's family and a congratulatory note from the Wilder estate. I was practically penning the acceptance speech for my first Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award.

All the following week I was laid low with a severe chest cold, but I knew that on Friday I would get the jolt of energy I needed because that was when the list of selected plays would be posted.

When I double-clicked on the email from Jim at PlayGround, my whole being was pounding with an anticipatory beat. I scanned the short list, knowing my name would be there. But it wasn't. The judges had spoken: my masterpiece was not deemed worthy of production.

So I still have five more shots at getting a play chosen. The question is, can I do this again in November? And what if I don't get selected then? Do I keep repeating this process every month until I either make it to the stage or...I don't?

And of course the answer is *yes*. Because that is what writers do. We pour our hearts and souls into every project, submit it to the powers that be, and 99 times out of 100, we get rejected. That is a writer's life. But we keep writing. Even if it's just a piece for our club newsletter on the agony of being rejected.



November 2013

Contents

President's Message	1
November Speaker	2
Call for Submissions	2
JM Park News	3
Poetry Page	4
LitCake Serves Up Good Time	5
Member News	6
Marketplace	6
Mt. Diablo Workshop	6

Upcoming Events

11/17 Meeting Speaker: **Fritjof Capra**

12/14 **Holiday Luncheon**

1/19/14 Meeting Speaker: **Kymerlie Ingalls**

Did you know that *Write Angles* is now up on our website? www.cwc-berkeley.org

And if you've missed past issues, you can find them on Scribd at this link:
<http://www.scribd.com/search?query=cwc.berkeley+Write+Angles>

Announcement:

Lindsay Wildlife Museum Wild About Writers has been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

Capra Shares Leonardo's Holistic Vision of Reality



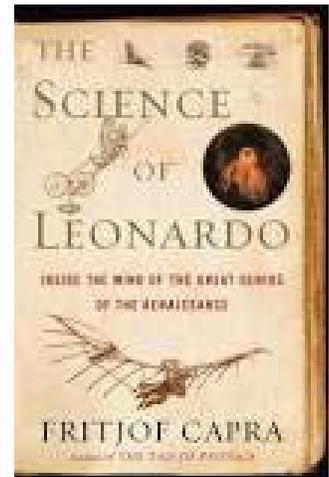
—David Baker

Pollution, climate change, extinction of species—including our own? What's happening to us? Scientists, though expert at dissecting the components of components and skilled at separating what we know into myriad disciplines, don't have the answer. Because the whole, argues Fritjof Capra, is much more than the sum of its parts. Capra, our featured speaker for the November 17 meeting, seeks, in place of isolated, mechanistic formulations, a "theory of living systems that will serve as a conceptual foundation for the ecological vision of reality."

A Ph.D. physicist, systems theorist, and author of several international bestsellers, including the classic *The Tao of Physics*, Capra has long admired the work of organismic biologists who introduced connectedness, relationship, and context as important scientific concepts in the first half of the twentieth century. But the first systems thinker did not appear among them. That honor, he discovered, belongs to Leonardo da Vinci, the genius of the Renaissance.

After a decade-long study of the drawings and commentary in Leonardo's notebooks, Capra authored *Learning from Leonardo*. The book reveals a man who not only introduced the scientific method but used it to better understand what he was painting. When he saw water flowing, he also saw patterns of turbulence that he applied to other liquids, to the flow of air over a bird's wing and to the process by which landscapes are transformed over time. Applying concepts derived from the study of one natural form to the study of others and noting the relationships that emerged, Leonardo laid the groundwork for something new.

"We need a science," Capra said in a lecture at Schumacher College, "that honors and respects the unity of all life, that recognizes the fundamental interdependence of all natural phenomena, and that reconnects us with the living earth. This is what Leonardo anticipated 500 years ago." So discard your linear, left-vs.-right-brain paradigms, put on your Renaissance caps, and come to the November meeting with questions. This is an opportunity not to be missed.



Calling for Submissions!

Write Angles is the Berkeley branch's newsletter, but it is also a way for members to get published. We're always looking for book reviews, articles about the publishing industry, and humorous or serious pieces that relate in some way to writing. This fall we're expanding our submissions to include poetry.

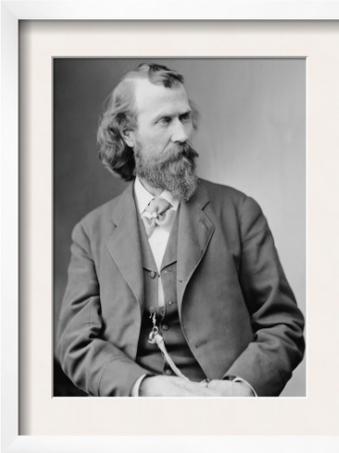
Editor will select pieces based on perceived interest to readership and quality of writing. Please proofread before you submit. Piece may be edited for space.

Submissions guidelines for *Write Angles*:

- send as an attached word document (doc, not docx)
- must be no longer than 425 words
- submit no later than the 15th of the month
- should be in 12-point type, any easy-to-read font (can be single or double-spaced)
- write "submission" in subject line and send to writeangles@gmail.com

Why Joaquin Miller Is Important to the California Writers Club

– Linda Brown



Dear Readers, many of you know I am enchanted with Joaquin Miller Park, especially its historical connection to the California Writers Club.

Last month (October), I had the opportunity to learn more about the man at the three-day *A Man and the Mountain, Joaquin Miller's Shasta Years* symposium at the Mt. Shasta Sisson Museum.

Scholars, historians, and others inspired by Miller shared their understanding of his experiences living in Mt. Shasta, Yreka, and along the McCloud River (on the east side of Mt. Shasta) during the tumultuous Gold Rush years. After his arrival in 1853, the teenaged Miller worked as a cook in a mining camp, lived with the Indians and later fought against them. He married Sutatot, the daughter of the Wintu chief, and took an arrow through the neck at the Battle of Castle Crags.

Presenters celebrated Miller as the first national figure to “describe the atrocities, and champion the rights of Native Americans...,” as an early conservationist, and as the prolific writer he was (see sidebar). His foibles were not overlooked, with one session titled *Overview of Joaquin Miller—a Rogue and a Writer*.

According to Jean Nels, museum executive director,¹ Miller “...was one of the first writers to write with sympathy about what happened to Native Americans.” What happened is that our government paid white people, I presume men, to kill the Indians. Indian scalps provided proof of the kill.

The lecture program addressed far more than the turmoil of Miller’s years in northern California in the 1850s. Today’s issues—Native American efforts to bring back the salmon, the decision to not develop Mt. Shasta above the tree line, and Miller’s likely post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from his Indian-fighting days—follow in Joaquin’s footsteps.

¹ Jean volunteers for this position.

Two filmmakers I met shared ideas on how I can parlay into a film version the ideas I’ve developed for the nonfiction book I am now pitching.

“As lone as God, and white as a winter moon...”

–Miller on Mt. Shasta

Musicians for the “world music” program on Saturday night sang songs from the mid-1800s and played instruments like those the miners brought with them from France and other places to the headwaters of the Sacramento River.

On Sunday we hiked to places believed to be Miller’s cabin sites depicted in his book, *Life Amongst the Modocs, Unwritten History*. (Apparently the book is about Miller’s life with the Wintu. The name of the tribe was changed by the publisher in order to capitalize on a war with the Modocs at the time and thus generate more sales.) We viewed Caste Crags, where Miller took that arrow through his neck.

I arrived to see Mt. Shasta with snow framed by the green fir trees. When I left, I felt a mystical connection to the place. I believe I have a better understanding of Miller and all his contradictions and his vision for an artistic retreat at the “Hights” (his spelling) in the Oakland hills.

Facts from the Symposium

Miller wrote 30 books and over 400 articles and a diary.

Dancing Salmon Home explains the importance of salmon to the Native Americans and how the Mt. Shasta dam destroyed the salmon runs. *Community Stories from Mt. Shasta CA*, a film by Mark Oliver, features views on Joaquin Miller of local historians and the citizenry.

To learn more about the history of Joaquin Miller, Joaquin Miller Park, and the CWC connection, go to www.norcalwriters.org/localhistory.

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.



Poetry Page

Note: Read this poem from the bottom up.

up
fill me
your eyes
without touch
filling fine
rising more
violet light
glowing
falling
holding
leaping
safe
dizzy
muted
quicken
pulse
simmering simmering
softly
rising
slowly
seeping
UP

– Dirk Wales

November

Rain slides from the roof
to fall on white camellias,
staining their hearts brown

– Anne Fox

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 ([View Map](#)). Enter on Madison Street.

Free street parking is available, and it is a short walk from the Lake Merritt BART station.



LitCake Serves Up a Good Time

The Berkeley branch of the California Writers Club celebrated the tenth anniversary of California Writers Week at our first annual LitCake party. Members and guests voted on their favorite entries based on the literary concept represented in the form of baked desserts.

Third place was awarded to Liz Wagele for her rebus riddle of a tear + ram + monsieur (tiramisu). Second prize was a copy of *French Feast: A Traveler's Literary Companion*, which was awarded to Central Board representative Linda Brown for her cake decorated with apes, representing the book *A Primate's Memoir*. And the first place (a Pegasus Books gift certificate) went to Tanya Grove and her husband, Dave Peattie, for pumpkin cupcakes sporting dunce caps in honor of the classic *A Confederacy of Dunces*.



From left: Tanya Grove, Dave Peattie, Liz Wagele, Linda Brown, and Barbara Ruffner



Stan Dodson, of La Farine bakery, was the celebrity judge. He sampled the desserts and awarded the Epicurean Prize to the best-tasting entry...and thus Linda Brown also got to take home a \$25 gift certificate to La Farine for her delicious chocolate cake!

While we ate cake, members read sweet and savory passages that featured food from all around the world. Kristen Caven read selections from a cookbook of a bygone era. Gurnam Brard educated us on the lore of ghee in pre-industrial India. Lucille Bellucci described several encounters with fruit in Brazil that almost killed her. Liz Wagele shared a perspective on Pellegrino water. Tanya Grove read a passage from Debby Frisch's memoir describing the best way to eat mango. (First, take off your clothes!)

Davie Simmons entertained us with his original piece on hunting for haggis and offered tastes to those brave enough to try it. And new member John Putnam regaled us with a tale closer to home about flapjacks during the gold rush days of California.

Special guest William Rodarmor read a story he'd translated from French, Phillippe Claudel's "Acacia Flowers" from *French Feast: A Traveler's Literary Companion*, a volume he'd edited for Whereabouts Press.

Many thanks to our sponsors—La Farine, Pegasus Books, and Whereabouts Press—for donating prizes for our LitCake contest. We hope to make this a delicious literary tradition!



Special guest reader William Rodarmor

Did You Know?

Jack London became an honorary founding member of the CWC in 1913, when he exchanged his short story, "The Son of the Wolf," for publication in the first *West Winds*—the CWC anthology—for that title. London died on November 22, 1916.

Do you have member news for the website calendar? Use this form to let other members know about your upcoming book readings, launches, and events:

<http://cwcbbboard.wordpress.com/committees/tech-team/web-editor/add-news-to-calendar/>

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.

Risa Nye's poignant short essay "[Early Departure](#)," from *Tiny Lights*, was referred to in a colleague's blog post about college writing. <http://suzannefarrellsmith.wordpress.com/2013/10/04/this-week-in-college-writing/>

Risa's Craft piece in the October *Hippocampus Magazine* enriches our understanding of the great Elmore Leonard's ten guiding principles of writing and includes the link to his longer version.

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.

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

Mt. Diablo Hosts Talk on Publishing Law

Rick Acker will present a workshop on "The Legal Aspects of Writing and Publishing" at the next luncheon meeting of the Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club (CWC) on Saturday, November 9, 2013 at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

Based on his seminar, "Author Law 101," Mr. Acker will explain the legalities for a book's cover art and how to use real people. He will give further information and tell about photos in memoirs or fiction, indie publishing, traditional contracts, and copyright laws.

Mr. Acker is a Deputy Attorney General in the California Department of Justice, and a writer. His Kindle #1 best-selling novel is *When the Devil Whistles*, and he is also a contributing author on several treatises published by the American Bar Association.

<http://www.hippocampusmagazine.com/2013/10/cr-aft-wweld-by-rise-nye/>

Patricia Morin's short story, "Murder Interrupted Me," has been chosen for the *Sacramento Capitol Crimes 2013* anthology and has won the *Mill Valley Literary Review* e-zine summer contest, with the e-zine highlighting other stories in Pat's third short-story collection, *Confetti*. www.millvalleylit.com (Literary Latte, Humor, and Gallery sections)

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In Memoriam: Caryl Hansen, who died this past September, was a lifetime member of CWC, Berkeley Branch president from 1970-72, and a Jack London Award Winner in 1991.

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

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

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.

Check-in is from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The workshop is from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., with luncheon following the workshop. The cost is \$45 for CWC members, \$55 for guests.

Reservations are required and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, November 6. Contact Robin Gigoux at ragig@aol.com, or phone [925-933-9670](tel:925-933-9670). Expect confirmation only if you e-mail your reservation. The California Writers Club Mt. Diablo Branch web address is: <http://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com/>

Write Angles

Editor	Tanya Grove
Copyeditor/Member News	Anne Fox
Speaker Profile	David Baker
Contributor:	Linda Brown



South Bay Writers Present

WRITERS WORKSHOP

Craft Powerful Stories One Scene at a Time

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2013

9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Three Flames Restaurant, 1547 Meridian Avenue, San Jose, CA 95125

California Writers Club-South Bay Branch (South Bay Writers) hosts author **Jordan E. Rosenfeld** during its Winter Writers' Workshop. Rosenfeld takes writers through the fundamentals:

- **Strong scene construction**
- **Essential fiction-writing techniques**
- **How character, plot, and dramatic tension must function within the framework of individual scenes to provide substance and structure to the overall story**



About Jordan E. Rosenfeld

Rosenfeld is a writing coach, editor, freelance journalist, and novelist. She earned her MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars and is the author of the novel *Forged in Grace*, and writing books, *Make A Scene: Crafting a Powerful Story One Scene at a Time* (Writer's Digest Books) and *Write Free! Attracting the Creative Life* with Rebecca Lawton (BeijaFlor Books). Rosenfeld's essays and articles have appeared in publications such as *AlterNet.org*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The St. Petersburg Times*, *The Writer* and *Writer's Digest* magazine. Her book commentaries have appeared on KQED radio's *The California Report*.

Early Bird Price (by 11.13)	
• SBW member	\$49
• Non-member	\$57
Sleepy Bird Price (after 11.13 and At Door)	
• SBW member	\$59
• Non-member	\$67
Students, with ID, anytime	\$29

AGENDA	
09:30 am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
10:00 am	Workshop begins
12:00 pm	Lunch
03:30 pm	Workshop ends

Mail this portion to: South Bay Writers, PO Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055

Check payable to: South Bay Writers

Name: _____ Member's Branch Name _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____

_____ Early Bird (by 11.13) _____ Sleepy Bird (after 11.13) _____ Student Registration (any time)

ONLINE RSVP & pay via PAYPAL: www.southbaywriters.com

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