

# Write Angles

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



®

*President's Message*

## Make the Leap with Us

– *Kymerlie Ingalls*

It takes a lot to admit to being wrong. It usually means finding the courage to speak out or take risks first. Failure can be more difficult than most think because those of us who are afraid to fail take longer to make the leap.

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**I often think we should have tattooed on the back of whatever hand we use to shoot or to write, "I might be wrong."**

– *author Louise Penny*

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There are many changes in store for the CWC Berkeley Branch this year. You'll learn of them at the upcoming meetings, beginning in September. We'll be rolling out some announcements we think may please you. The most important thing we ask is that you stay with us through this trial and error. We may make mistakes, but keep in mind that we're doing our best to get it right, and we're taking the chance of failure because we want so much to succeed. Take the steps with us, especially if you haven't been around in a while. Come on back, hear what we've been up to. We've put an awful lot of thought into each and every thing.

You won't be seeing our Vice President for a little while. Francine's had some setbacks, but she's a trooper. Please keep her in your thoughts, maybe send her a note. She'd like that. We can't wait to have her back, and she's got good things in mind for us too.

Our speaker this month is Kevin Smokler. Yesterday one of our board members expressed her excitement in saying "I'm impressed. He's kind of a big name. Okay, a really big name!" So come see what that's about. I can't wait to see myself. Thanks go out to Lucille for lining up great people to come speak to us in the coming months.



*CWC-BB's upcoming speaker,  
Kevin Smokler*

There will be one very important goal this season for our club: fundraising. We're not asking for your checks, but we will be asking for your time. We want to show people what a great organization we are with such a splendid history. We have lots of new volunteers who are bringing us life again. We will need help with some marketing, enthusiasm, and spreading the word. Drop us into your conversation, participate whenever you can.

Greatness finds strength in numbers. So let's do it. Let's be great.



## September 2015

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### Upcoming Events

- 9/8** Joaquin Miller's birthday
- 9/19** 5-Page Group meets
- 9/20** Meeting: Kevin Smokler
- 9/30** Last Day to renew CWC membership!

Be sure to check our website:  
[www.cwc-berkeley.org](http://www.cwc-berkeley.org)

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.

## What Do You Want to Read in *Write Angles*?

September—the time of year when school starts, Hollywood begins rolling out the serious films, and CWC membership fees are due. It's also when I ask readers to give me feedback, input, maybe even some bona fide content.

Club newsletters have come a long way since the days they were created on typewriters, photocopied, and sent by snail mail. (Or does anyone remember the old ditto machines that left users' hands purple?)

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### Write Angles needs contributors, and luckily, we are a club of writers!

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Now of course we're digital and delivered electronically to your inbox. And more than just its physical form has evolved. Although *Write Angles* always informed and (I hope) entertained, its contents have shifted, depending on the editors and contributors. In the six years I've been at the head, *Write Angles* has highlighted California authors, sponsored contests, put out surveys, published book reviews, featured poets, carried articles on craft, and covered industry issues.

As long as I've belonged to CWC, member David Baker has written a piece for *Write Angles* to let Berkeley Branch members know about our upcoming speakers. It's been the backbone of our newsletter. A few years ago, David tried to pass along that responsibility, but I begged him to continue. Now I have to accept that he's really moving on. He deserves a break. A Jack London award recipient, David is also a co-facilitator for the

writing support group that meets monthly at the Rockridge Library. So it's not as if David won't still be active in the branch. (When you see him, be sure to thank him for his many years of service in this capacity.)

However, that leaves a hole on page two. So what should fill its place? Is someone else out there willing to write up a piece on upcoming speakers? Are there members who would like the chance to pen a regular column on publishing issues? Is there a teacher among us who might tackle the craft side of writing on a monthly basis? Any of these topics could be addressed.

This is your newsletter. What do *you* want to read? Would you be interested in specific aspects of various writing genres? Our membership includes a diverse range of writers—from mystery to business, children's books to poetry, nonfiction to sci-fi. *Write Angles* needs contributors, and luckily, we are a club of *writers*!

So send me your craft articles, book reviews, thoughts on current publishing topics, ideas for a series you'd like to read, or your offer to cover upcoming speakers. All submissions must be 450 words or fewer and sent to [writeangles@gmail.com](mailto:writeangles@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. I will appreciate any accompanying photos or images. (Please include photo credit info.)

I'll be here, ready to fill the hole.

- Tanya Grove, editor

### Write Angles

Editor Tanya Grove

Copyeditors Anne Fox & Lynn Fraley

Poetry Page Alysa Chadow

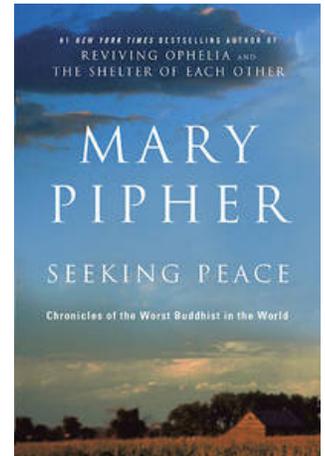
Contributors: Linda Brown, John Q. McDonald, Lucille Bellucci



## Author Forges Path toward Peace

*Reviewed by John Q. McDonald*

Author and therapist Mary Pipher is best known for her book *Reviving Ophelia*, which told the story of how teenaged girls react and respond to the cultural pressures of early adolescence. That book made her a best-selling author and launched her on an arc of fame that placed intense demands on her and her family. After years of trying to satisfy the demands of her notoriety, Pipher had what she calls a "meltdown" during which she realizes that something has to change in her life, something must happen to reduce the stress and strain of her successes.



### Seeking Peace: Chronicles of the Worst Buddhist in the World

By Mary Pipher

From that moment, and after years of helping others find peace, Pipher set out on a journey to help herself, to attain some practice or habit that reduces her stress, allows her to live in the moment, and brings her to a mindful awareness of life in the present. This book begins with a long history of Pipher's family, which sprung from the heartland

during decades of challenges and privation. Pipher, who knows a lot about how culture and history mold our character, details a history of strong personalities in difficult times and the long shadow that their challenges cast on their children and grandchildren. Pipher is a gifted teller of tales, and her look back over her family history is compelling reading. From them, she inherited her drive and her need to please as many people as much of the time as possible.

Pipher also confesses to self-critical thoughts that border on the self-destructive. And the remainder of the book chronicles her need to come to terms with her history and to learn to live with the stresses and challenges of her character and the pressures of her life. Pipher has resources to draw upon, of course--her training in psychology and her decades of therapeutic practice. She delves into meditation and tells a gentle personal tale of discovering how to slow down, pay attention to breath, and let the mind drift where it may. And she remakes her connection to the joys of living in the present, to her family, and to nature. We all experience the stress of modern life. As we grow older, the time we need to accomplish our everyday tasks grows ever shorter, and those tasks crowd out our opportunities to obtain the calm mental health that is one possible core of happiness. Through sharing Pipher's journey, we can begin to see where, in our own lives, we can start to form our own practice, our own paths toward peace. Recommended.

Check out CWC's state website (<http://calwriters.org/>),  
the website for NorCal (<http://www.cwcnorcalwriters.org/>),  
and the one for CWC-South ([www.socalwritersshowcase.com](http://www.socalwritersshowcase.com)).

## poetry page

## WOMEN OF THEIR WORD: Women throughout the Decades

## FEATURED POET: Nelly Sachs



## JOB

O you wind rose of torment!  
 Torn by primeval storms  
 In ever-changing directions of the tempest  
 Yet your south is loneliness  
 Where you stand is the navel of pain.

Your eyes are sunk deep into your skull  
 Like cave-dwelling doves in the night  
 Brought out blind by the huntsman  
 Your voice is silenced  
 From asking too many whys.  
 To the worms and the fishes your voice has gone.  
 Job, you have wept through all the watches of the night  
 But someday the star sign of your blood will  
 Outshine all the rising suns.

-Alysa Chadow

The German-Jewish poet Nelly Sachs (1891-1970), a co-winner of the 1966 Nobel Prize in Literature (along with S. Y. Agnon), was at first a romantic, then a lyric poet whose works often spoke for the fate of the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Born into a wealthy German-Jewish family in Berlin, Sachs was physically fragile and subsequently educated at home. Although she did show talent as a dancer as a child, her parents discouraged this as a career, and she grew up sheltered and introverted.

Sachs and her mother, with the help of the Swedish writer and Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlof, escaped to Sweden during World War II. Deeply depressed by the events of the Holocaust, she was on more than one occasion hospitalized for depression. Upon winning the Nobel Prize in 1966 along with Agnon, she remarked that her co-winner, who was Israeli, represented the Jews of the future, while she represented those who perished in the Shoah (the Hebrew word for the Holocaust).

Sachs often used German/Christian imagery in her early poetry, but switched to more Jewish biblical themes in her later work. "Job," which also makes use of her favorite metaphor of the flower, is a good example of this change.

NOTE: Check out the beginning of the final chapter of Richard Adams's novel *Watership Down*. One of Sachs's poems is quoted there.



Jack London Award honorees. Photo courtesy of Linda Brown

## Central Board News

People ask what the Central Board (CB) does with the \$20 of our annual dues. Most recently it hosted July's annual statewide picnic in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park and the bi-annual Jack London Awards, approved two new branches, and met to kick off our new fiscal year that began July 1, 2015.

The picnic attracted CWC members and guests from throughout the state to commune together at the Fire Circle on Saturday, July 25, cheer on those who read their works (or the works of others) at the Open Mic, and enjoy the LitCake contest visually and gastronomically. We enjoyed perfect weather on the site where Jack London and others met and formed the CWC in 1909, creating a special vibe for members to build their statewide network.

Your CB board of directors approved two new branches, Coastal Dunes in Nipomo, near Santa Barbara, and North State in Chico, bringing the number of statewide branches to 21. Margie Yee Webb (Sacramento) is the volunteer in charge of new branch development.

The Jack London Awards luncheon honored 14 members whose service at the branch level has been exemplary, meriting this award independent of writing accomplishments. Doug Fortier (Mendocino) chaired this event.

CB vice-president Joyce Krieg (Central Coast) created *Jack London's Great CWC Road Trip Adventure*, a virtual tour of the CWC branches, and screened it for CB's board of directors.

Treasurer Sharon Svitak (Tri-Valley) reports that CWC passed its second IRS audit in two years. This year's audit looked at the group exemption status of the branches, and last year's reviewed our activities to ensure we qualified for its CWC's 501(c) 3 nonprofit, tax-exempt status.

Of course being a club and a California corporation requires reviewing the proposed budget, following up on promised actions, and considering research from committees, which include Executive, Public Relations and Website (CWC-BB's John Byrne Barry is the webmaster), Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, Standards, New Branch Development, *Literary Review*, *The Bulletin*, NorCal and SoCal, Friends of Joaquin Miller Park, (represented by yours truly), and the new Archive Committee-Reports/Record Retention.

Your board addressed a request for continued funding for the High Desert's Dorothy C. Blakely Memoir Project, active membership category changes (see p. 6), modernizing the CWC logo (not now), scholarship monies, and a policy for endorsements, sponsorships, and partnerships,

You do not have to be the CB Representative to make things happen at the state level. If you have ideas or questions for the CB board, please contact me through MRMS.

- Linda Brown, Central Board Representative

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### Correction

In the June 2015 issue, a sentence thanking retreat guests Bob Garfinkle (Fremont Area Writers) and Sean Hazlett (Mount Diablo) was inadvertently cut. I apologize to the piece's author, Madelen Lontiong, and to both gentlemen whose names were omitted. We appreciated that they "shared their ideas and words of wisdom with us and gave us many helpful ideas and much to think about."

## Branches' Membership Rank

| <u>Rank</u> | <u>Branch</u>        | <u>Members</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1           | Redwood              | 284            |
| 2           | South Bay            | 188            |
| 3           | Sacramento           | 152            |
| 4           | Mt. Diablo           | 137            |
| 5           | Central Coast        | 132            |
| 6 or 7      | High Desert          | 103            |
| 7 or 6      | SF/Peninsula         | 103            |
| 8           | Tri-Valley           | 97             |
| 9           | Berkeley             | 96             |
| 10          | Writers of Kern      | 87             |
| 11          | Mendocino            | 71             |
| 12          | Marin                | 66             |
| 13          | San Fernando Valley  | 63             |
| 14          | Napa Valley Writers  | 59             |
| 15          | Fremont Area Writers | 58             |
| 16          | Long Beach           | 56             |
| 17          | Orange County        | 49             |
| 18          | Inland Empire        | 41             |
| 19          | East Sierra          | <u>27</u>      |
|             | Total                | <u>1,869</u>   |

### Did You Know?

Each CWC branch is required to have at least 51 percent of its members classified "Active" in relationship to published works, not volunteer efforts. If you have recently published a book, please check MRMS for your classification and review the criteria in the Membership Article found at <http://calwriters.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CWC-Policies-and-Procedures-7-19-15.pdf> to ensure you are properly classified. If your membership category needs changing, or you need help accessing MRMS, contact CWC-BB Membership Co-Chair, Therese Pipe.

## Humor Corner

### There Is a "Their" There, But Is "Their" the Way?

- Lucille Bellucci

To those who object to the prevailing use (except by stern TV journalists and nitpicking academics) of the plural pronoun following a singular antecedent, I say everyone should talk the way they want.

Given this freedom, let us reword some proverbs: *Anybody who stumbles twice over one stone deserves to break their shins. A fool should not have their own axe. Every person is the offspring of their own works. Who spits against the wind, spits in their own face. If thine enemy hungers, feed them; if they thirst, give them drink. Happiness belongs to they who earns it.* And, of course, this: *A fool and their money are soon parted.*

Do these feel like sand in your teeth? Do they make you cry out "Zounds! What abominations are these?" The reason behind this warp in pronoun usage is, obviously, the desire of the speaker (fearful of gen-

der discrimination) to avoid doing the diligence of saying "he or she," therefore causing a disruption in the flow of the sentence. Used more than once, in fact, it could distract the listener from absorbing the message and cause them to fall face forward into their rhubarb pie.

I would propose a solution, though I have no slightest hope of its ever catching on amongst the populace. Let lawyers and writers carry on as they always have. Upon those others, let us try to foist the term (which is already being bandied about) *shehee* pronounced as written or written as *she/he*, an elision as musical and graceful as, say, *sh'boom*.

See? It is possible to avoid sexist language and not cause tics to develop in the face of the listener.



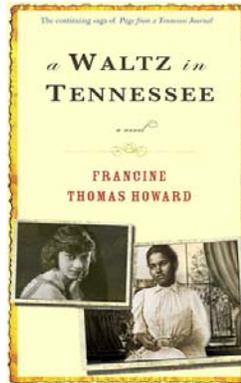
## Member News

Berkeley Branch members are encouraged to send us writing-related news. Please write "Member News" in the subject line and send to [writeangles@gmail.com](mailto:writeangles@gmail.com) no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

*Expect Trouble* by JoAnn Smith Ainsworth is a semifinalist in the [East Texas Writers Guild](#) first-chapter contest. This paranormal suspense thriller about U.S. government recruiting psychics to find a Nazi occult practitioner and spy will be released by She Writes Press in June 2016.



<http://venturegalleries.com/blog/east-texas-writers-guild-first-chapter-book-awards/>



Francine Thomas Howard (CWC-BB's vice president) just released her fourth book, *A Waltz in Tennessee*, a continuation of her best-selling novel, *Page from a Tennessee Journal*, an Amazon #1 Kindle download in both the United States and Germany.

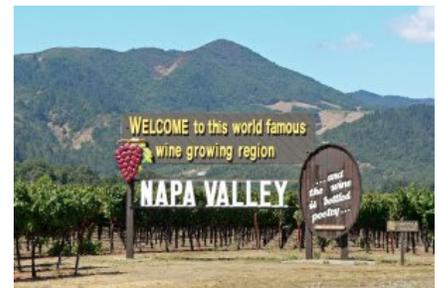
On August 10, Francine was the featured guest on the radio broadcast, "Black in the Valley," hosted by Dr. Carlie Tartakov, a national authority on multiculturalism in America. The broadcast, out of Amherst, Massachusetts, highlighted the complexities of America's troubled racial legacy.

## Tidbits

### Jack London Legacy Plans for Year 2016

Next year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jack London's death at the age of 40. Central Board Representative Linda Brown is working with Oakland City staff and interested parties to plan a number of events from January 12 (his birthday) through November (the month he died) that will showcase London and his legacy. If you are interested in Jack London or our club history, or if you would like to help arrange readings, workshops, contests, and/or displays, please contact Linda Brown through MRMS.

Provided that funding is secured, CWC authors may have the chance to promote their work at a display either in Oakland City Hall or in libraries as a tie-in to the anniversary celebration. When that opportunity arises, Linda Brown will put out the word.



#### Save The Date:

The Jack London Society 13th Biennial Symposium  
September 15-17, 2016  
Napa Valley College  
Napa Valley, California

### Missouri Review Contest Deadline October 1

This year is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Jeffrey E. Smith Editors' Prize. First-place winners in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction each receive a \$5,000 prize plus a feature in the spring issue and travel to the gala reading and reception in Columbia Missouri. Learn details at [www.missourireview.com/tmrsubmissions/editors-prize-contest](http://www.missourireview.com/tmrsubmissions/editors-prize-contest).

Coming up in the October issue of *Write Angles*: a review of *Observation Hill* by CWC-BB member Tim Jollymore, board members bios, and much more.

