



# PHI BETA KAPPA

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION  
THE GAMMA ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA  
Association Chartered June 14, 1946

December 2023

Go to the Mobile copy <https://pbknca.com/Newsletter/>

## From the President

November 9, 2023, marked the end of the historic SAG-AFTRA strike. At 118 days, it was the longest labor strike in Hollywood history, with the Screen Actors Guild joining forces with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists against the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. Demands included wage and pension increases, higher residuals for streaming services, and protections against artificial intelligence (AI).



Writers and actors aren't the only ones concerned about AI; many liberal arts professors fear that students will use AI to complete their assignments, preventing them from learning course material and essential critical thinking skills. Still, other professors see the potential of AI as a beneficial learning aid and research tool that will fundamentally change research and publishing for the better. At present, essays written by AI typically sound formulaic and robotic and tend to include egregious citation errors, but this will likely change. One thing is certain: we are in uncharted waters on the precipice of tremendous change. If you are curious about AI, I encourage you to try it yourself with "Bard," Google's AI: <https://bard.google.com>. Enter a command and see what happens.

On the topic of online tools, I invite you to learn about the exciting events and programs on offer at PBKNCA by visiting us at <https://pbknca.com/>. Additionally, all of you are invited to join our LinkedIn group at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4570815/>, and please follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PBKNCA> and Instagram at [\\_phetakappa\\_nca](https://www.instagram.com/phetakappa_nca).

As always, PBKNCA board members, committee members, trusted advisors, valued supporters, and friends have worked diligently toward fostering liberal arts and sciences education. I extend my deepest thanks and gratitude to our Treasurer, Duncan Missimer, who, after many years of diligent service, will soon step down. His departure will create an opportunity for someone new to join our outstanding team. Please let us know if you want to take on this critical volunteer role.

Joining PBKNCA and renewing your membership is easy to do on our website, thanks to our diligent communications team. A very warm welcome and thank you to all our new and returning members!

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I look forward to hearing your thoughts on AI and other topics online and at our Asilomar conference.

Warmly, Melissa X. Stevens, President

## Teaching Excellence. Nominate your professor!

We are now seeking nominations for the prestigious PBKNCA Teaching Excellence award, which carries an honorarium and a certificate. Nominate an outstanding professor: someone skilled who taught an especially memorable course, had a notable impact on your life, or whom you found inspiring. Making such a nomination is an excellent way of expressing gratitude to that person. Previous awardees may be seen at <https://pbknca.com/Teaching>.

Faculty members of any rank (including emeriti, lecturers, and graduate student instructors) at the following schools are eligible for nomination: San Francisco State University, Santa Clara University, Stanford University, The University of the Pacific, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and UC Santa Cruz. Your nominees need not be Phi Beta Kappa members. You may make multiple nominations, but please use a separate form for each. Nominations for spring 2024 must be received by December 18, 2023. Please use the webform at <https://pbknca.com/Nomination-Form>.

We look forward to learning about your favorite professors!

Melisa Lasell, Teaching Excellence Chair

Thank you to the 2023 Teaching Excellence Award Committee members: Andrea Braga, Melisa Lasell, Leilani Miller, and Melissa Stevens.

## PBKNCA Book Club



There is an ongoing virtual book club open to interested members.

**Vaccination, booster and mask may be required, but may be changed as needed later. [for a virtual book club?]**

Contact Program VP O'Neil Dillon at [oneilsdillon@gmail.com](mailto:oneilsdillon@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Events

**Currently, the Phi Beta Kappa Northern California Association suggests masking for indoor activities.**

Note: The price of the events is for current PBKNCA members; elapsed- or non-members (except guests of members) will pay a surcharge. Full event information, and means of credit card payment, are available on our website <https://pbknca.com/Events/>.

If you won't be able to make an event, contact O'Neil Dillon at [oneilsdillon@gmail.com](mailto:oneilsdillon@gmail.com) ASAP, or if it is the day of the event call him at 510-207-8761 as there may be others on the waiting list who will then be able to take your place.

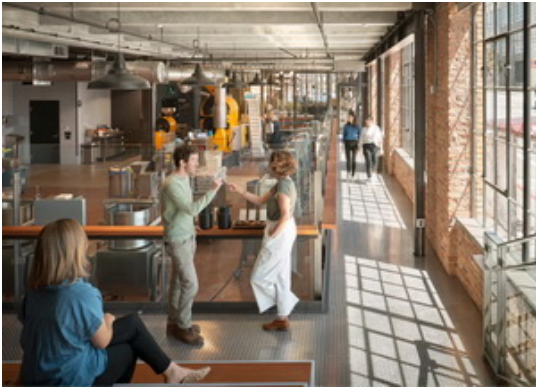
**No-shows do NOT receive a refund! Cancellations do.**

**Sign up for events at <https://pbknca.com/Events>**

If you want to register for an event but don't have Internet access, please contact O'Neil Dillon, cell 510-207-8761.

**Calling all Young Professional chocolate connoisseurs Dec 16. 12 PM**

Join Phi Beta Kappa Young Professionals Association for a factory tour at Dandelion Chocolate. Dandelion has



been providing high-quality and artisanal chocolate treats in San Francisco for over a decade. This tour will feature **tastings of cacao pulp, cocoa beans, melted chocolate, and squares of chocolate, as well as a complimentary café beverage of choice** (hot chocolate, mocha, latte, etc). We also encourage you to support this local business and stock up on Dandelion's famed chocolates for the winter season.

**Date & Time:** Saturday December 16th, 12pm-1pm

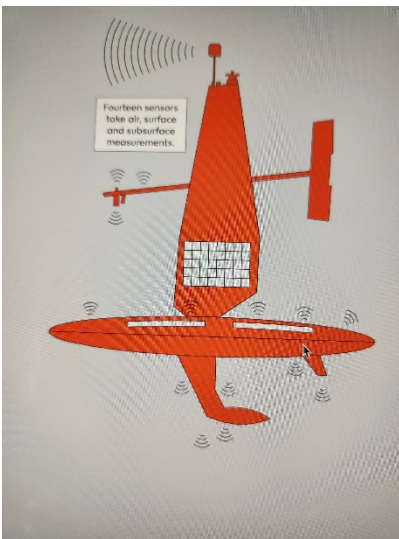
**Location:** 2600 16th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

**Cost:** PBKNCA members \$30, Non-members \$35

**And here's the sweetest part:** All proceeds from this chocolate tour will go towards the Phi Beta Kappa of Northern CA Scholarship fund.

There are limited slots. Register by December 8th. If you have any questions, please contact Danielle West at [westdanielle22@gmail.com](mailto:westdanielle22@gmail.com). Register at <https://pbknca.com/event-5490718>

## Saildrone Explorer SD 1045, January 9. 11 AM



Are you interested in oceanography, climatology, sea level rise, ocean mapping, marine security, why hurricanes are getting stronger and moving slower, and what oceanographic features of a changing planet like sea-water salinity and temperature affect hurricane behavior?

Ever wonder what it is like being on the sea surface in a hurricane with 143 MPH gusts and 80-foot waves? Now is your chance to learn from data and video that have never been collected before!

Richard Jenkins has developed an un-crewed (drone) sailboat with 14 different sensors to monitor ocean conditions both above and below the ocean surface. He is the CEO of the Saildrone Company in Alameda, California. He works with NOAA and governments and businesses all over the world.

We will have a tour of Saildrone, See <https://www.saildrone.com/>

Register at <https://pbknca.com/event-5381009>. Event full, but a waitlist is available

## 37th Annual Asilomar Conference Feb 16–19, 2024



Sign up at <https://pbknca.com/event-5159419> or go to [pbknca.com](https://pbknca.com), select “Events”, then “Current Asilomar”  
**Do NOT make a reservation at Asilomar. Information for reserving full room + meals will be sent to registrants. Please wait for this, rather than registering directly, since we are committed to 45 reservations.**



*The goal of liberal education is to understand the world in all its complexities, to challenge us and yes... to make us uncomfortable from time to time.*

– Fred Lawrence, General Secretary, PBK Society

Once again, the antidote to news of fires, floods, fights and criminality – a new season for the PBKNCA Asilomar Conference in the Spring! It is again time to reserve your space for a fresh weekend of learning, inspiration, fellowship and a breath of sanity, on the magnificent Monterey coast! Past participants describe the weekend as “the best aspects of college, without the exams” and “the greatest high of the year – without drugs!”

If you have questions on this year’s program, please contact [dfrontczak@scu.edu](mailto:dfrontczak@scu.edu). For registration or logistics matters, please contact Barry Haskell at [bghaskell@comcast.net](mailto:bghaskell@comcast.net). Registration is \$150, which goes mainly to scholarships. Cost will be similar to last year, about \$550 per person double occupancy, and includes all nine meals and parking. All registered participants will receive forms to reserve their Asilomar accommodations, including meals; please check your email. (Remember, to be part of the PBKNCA package, do not reserve directly with the facility.)

Please join us once again for the annual Asilomar Conference, where we gather to learn, engage in discussions, and to listen to one another in new ways. Speakers are still being confirmed; here’s a sneak peek at what’s planned for 2024:



***Friday night: Brant Robertson, Ph.D., PBK. Astrophysics, U.C. Santa Cruz***

### **Exploring the Most Distant Reaches of the Universe with James Webb Space Telescope**

In December 2021, NASA launched the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), the most powerful telescope ever put into space. Prof. Brant Robertson of UC Santa Cruz has been a leader in efforts to use JWST to study the early cosmos with remarkable success, including the discovery of the most distant galaxy known in the universe. In this presentation, Prof. Robertson will share the newest discoveries with JWST and reveal how scientists find and study the faintest and most objects in the sky.

Dr. Robertson is a Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at University of California, Santa Cruz. He previously held the Maureen and John Hendricks Visiting Professorship at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton NJ, an Assistant Professorship in Astronomy at University of Arizona, and a Hubble Fellowship at Caltech. Dr. Robertson also held a Spitzer and Institute Fellowship at the Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics and the Enrico Fermi Institute at the University of Chicago. He earned his doctorate in Astronomy at Harvard University and a BS from University of Washington with a double major in Physics and Astronomy. He studies theoretical astrophysics, mainly through computational means, and works in the scientific areas of galaxy formation and evolution. His research has been featured in the television programs 60 Minutes and COSMOS and has been covered by news media including TIME Magazine, the Washington Post, FOX News, and the BBC.



**Saturday Morning: Susan Shillinglaw, Ph.D., San Jose State University**

### **John Steinbeck and the Land, People and History of California**

Many know John Steinbeck as a writer on migrants and workers – recalling their studies of *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men*. But Susan Shillinglaw, professor of English Emerita at San Jose State University and **former Director of the SJSU Center for Steinbeck Studies**, reminds us that his work reflects an array of additional interests, including a passion for ecology and the natural sciences.

Dr. Shillinglaw has been acclaimed as “one of the top three of four scholars in the world” on Nobel-prize winning author John Steinbeck. **She currently serves as a board member of the Western Flyer Foundation, which is developing educational programs in conjunction with the restored purse seiner that Steinbeck and his close friend, marine biologist Edward F. Ricketts, sailed to Baja in 1940. She and her scientist husband have long worked on ways to integrate arts and sciences in the curriculum (the focus of several National Endowment for Humanities Steinbeck Institutes the two co-directed).** “We needn’t see the humanities and sciences as separate ways of thinking,” she observes, “but rather integrate the written word with science... A lot of scientific endeavors are stories about where you start, where you end up, what happens and how it impacts us, and how it changes our understanding of the world.” She views Steinbeck as a quintessential California author: “I am not a native of this state, but Steinbeck’s love of place and land and people and history have given me a great appreciation and love for the state. In many ways he made me a Californian.”

Dr. Shillinglaw earned her B.A. from Cornell College and M.A. / Ph.D. degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her scholarly work includes several edited books and scholarly essays, five introductions for Penguin Classics, *A Journey Into Steinbeck’s California* (2006, 2011, 2019); a **biography** of Steinbeck’s first marriage, to San Jose native Carol Henning, **John and Carol Steinbeck: Portrait of a Marriage** (2013); and ***On Reading The Grapes of Wrath*** (Penguin, 2014). **She is currently completing a book on Steinbeck’s landscapes.** These projects have challenged her to write for a broad audience, whose positive, visceral response allows her to touch thousands of people in lectures around the world/. Why? As she puts it, “Steinbeck endures because he does not permit readers to complacently dig in, like the hermit crab. He embraces the fullness of life. With compassion, tolerance, and humility, he surveys landscapes: of place, of spirit, of a nation.”



**Saturday afternoon: Erwin Chemerensky, J.D., PBK, Dean, U.C. Berkeley School of Law**

### **Free Speech in Academia: Universities Grapple with First Amendment Rights**

Erwin Chemerensky became the 13th Dean of Berkeley Law on July 1, 2017, when he joined the faculty as the Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law. Prior to assuming this position, from 2008 to 2017, he was the founding Dean and Distinguished Professor of Law, and Raymond Pryke Professor of First Amendment Law, at the University of California, Irvine School of Law. Before that he was the Alston and Bird Professor of Law and Political Science

at Duke University from 2004 to 2008, from 1983 to 2004 was a professor at the University of Southern California Law School, and from 1980 to 1983 at the De Paul College of Law.

He is the author of sixteen books, including *Worse than Nothing: The Dangerous Fallacy of Originalism* (2022) and *Presumed Guilty: How the Supreme Court Empowered the Police and Subverted Civil Rights* (2021). He has authored more than 250 law review articles, is a contributing writer for the Opinion section of the Los Angeles Times, and writes regular columns for the Sacramento Bee, the ABA Journal and the Daily Journal, among many others. He frequently argues appellate cases, including in the United States Supreme Court. In 2016, he was named a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2017, National Jurist magazine again named Dean Chemerinsky as the most influential person in legal education in the United States. In 2022, he became President of the Association of American Law Schools.

Dean Chemerensky earned his J.D. from Harvard in 1978, and his B.S. from Northwestern University.



## **Saturday night: Jennifer King, Ph.D., PBK, Stanford**

### **After AI – Will Privacy Exist? What must we do to preserve it?**

AI is advancing rapidly and changing the world as it does so. Privacy is no exception – AI systems tend to be data-centric, relying on vast quantities of data to train them, motivating companies to collect ever greater amounts and types of data. Generative AI systems, such as ChatGPT, build data sets by scraping websites across the internet. In doing so, they may include private or identifiable information in their catch. What are the implications for our personal and informational privacy? What regulatory mechanisms will make a difference, and what systemic changes might be needed? And can our democratic systems withstand the authoritarian threats that these technologies can enable?

Dr. King is the Privacy and Data Policy Fellow at the Stanford University Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. An information scientist by training, Dr. King is a recognized expert and scholar in information privacy. Sitting at the intersection of human-computer interaction, law, and the social sciences, her research examines the public's understanding and expectations of online privacy as well as the policy implications of emerging technologies. Her past work includes projects focusing on social media, genetic privacy, mobile application platforms, the Internet of Things (IoT), and digital surveillance. Her scholarship has been recognized for its impact on policymaking by the Future of Privacy Forum, and she has been an invited speaker before the Federal Trade Commission. She has been featured in numerous publications and outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, National Public Radio, CNBC, Bloomberg, CNET and MIT Technology Review, among others.

Dr. King completed her Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in Information Management and Systems at the University of California, Berkeley School of Information. Prior to joining HAI, Dr. King was the Director of Consumer Privacy at the Center for Internet and Society at Stanford Law school from 2018 to 2020, and before entering academia she worked in security and product management for several Internet companies, most notably Yahoo!.



**Sunday morning: Michael Dylan Foster, Ph.D., PBK, U.C. Davis: East Asian Languages and Cultures**

**“The Persistence of the Kappa and Other Creatures of Japanese Folklore”**

This talk introduces a panoply of Japanese folkloric creatures, often called *yōkai*. I start with the kappa, a river imp found in legends and folktales throughout the Japanese archipelago. Although there are references to kappa-like beings in texts from over a thousand years ago, today this water goblin is more common than ever, infesting popular culture formats such as anime and video games. The kappa survives because of its mutability, its ability to adapt itself to the concerns of the given historical moment.

Folkloric creatures like these are often dismissed as trivial or childish, but their persistence in the cultural imagination suggests that they actually reveal a great deal about how humans grapple with a complex and changing world.

Dr. Foster is a professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Davis, and the recipient of a PBKNCA Teaching Excellence Award (2023). He teaches classes on Japanese folklore, heritage, tourism, and popular culture, and is the author of *The Book of Yōkai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore*; *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai*; and articles and reviews. Since 2022, he has served as the “Yōkai Navigator” for a television series about Japanese folkloric creatures on NHK World.



**Sunday afternoon: Robert Shanklin, Ph.D., PBK Santa Clara University, Philosophy**

**Toward a 21st Century Global Pragmatism**

*Pragmatism & Mateo*: Pragmatism is one of many indigenous American philosophical traditions. Its heyday was roughly the 1890s to 1950s, though it continues to be studied and taught today. Pragmatism can be distinguished from other philosophical traditions more by its methods than its tenets. Pragmatism tends to eschew the “first principles” often favored by canonical European philosophers and philosophies, such as the Utilitarian principle of maximizing utility, or Kant’s Categorical Imperative. To that point, Cornel West’s influential book on pragmatism is subtitled “America’s Evasion of Philosophy.” Pragmatism tends to focus more on processes or methods for addressing pressing practical problems, from ethics to education to scientific language and processes. I

argue that, in a number of areas of applied ethics, when we are “doing it right” we are actually employing a form of pragmatism. That is to say: much of our best teaching, writing, and consulting in these fields is pragmatist, though rarely acknowledged as such. I am to show why that is so, and then to start articulating a modern pragmatism that would make sense in an increasingly globalized interconnected world.

Dr. Shanklin is Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy Department at Santa Clara University. His work centers on comparative approaches in philosophy, aiming to connect different thought- and wisdom-traditions. His teaching and publications include Chinese Philosophy, Business Ethics, Tech Ethics, Human Rights, Aesthetics, and Philosophy of Language. He has also advised firms based in Silicon Valley and elsewhere on business ethics and China.





**Sunday night: Lucille Lang Day, Ph.D., PBK U.C. Berkeley,  
Poet, Writer, and Science Educator**

**Poetry as Microscope and Time Machine**

In this presentation, Lucille Lang Day will read from and discuss her poetry, which draws inspiration from the ideas and concepts of science as well as from historical events, large and small. She sees poetry as a tool for sparking our curiosity about and deepening our understanding of science, promoting awareness of environmental issues, and getting new perspectives on history, including ones opened by truths about Native American history that most of us were not taught in school. All of these aims in Day’s poetry are in addition to the age-old quests to probe the aesthetics and possibilities of language and the subtleties of complex, ever-shifting emotional states

Why science and history? In fact, Day believes that poetry need not be limited to any particular realm of human experience and knowledge. It is an excellent medium for exploring facts and feelings about music, psychology, business administration, or anything else.

Dr. Day is the author of four poetry chapbooks and seven full-length collections, most recently “Birds of San Pancho and Other Poems of Place”; as well as two children’s books and a memoir, “Married at Fourteen: A True Story.” She edited the anthology “Poetry and Science: Writing Our Way to Discovery” and coedited “Fire and Rain: Ecopoetry of California, and Red Indian Road West: Native American Poetry from California.” Her many honors include the Blue Light Poetry Prize, two PEN Oakland – Josephine Miles Literary Awards, the Joseph Henry Jackson Award, and eleven Pushcart Prize nominations. The founder and publisher of Scarlet Tanager Books, she received her MA in English and MFA in creative writing at San Francisco State University, and her BA in biological sciences, MA in zoology, and Ph.D. in science/mathematics education at the University of California, Berkeley. She is of Wampanoag, British, and Swiss-German descent. <https://lucillelang-day.com>



**Monday morning: Katherine Magoulick, Ph.D. Candidate, PBK,  
UC Berkeley Integrative Biology**

**Studying Migrations in the Fossil Record**

Katherine (Kat) Magoulick, a PBKNCA scholarship awardee for 2023, is a Ph.D. candidate at UC Berkeley studying Integrative Biology. She received her B.S. in Zoology and B.A. in History from Michigan State University, where she was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

In this presentation, Kat discusses her doctoral work examining the controls on mammalian migration during the Great American Biotic Interchange (GABI). She uses the fossil record to study past migrations—why did some species migrate while others did not? During the period under study (approximately 2.5 million years ago), there was a series of migrations across the isthmus of Panama between North and South America. Her dissertation research focuses on establishing the ecological drivers of the patterns of dispersal and thereby, it is hoped, increasing our ability to make predictive models to conserve living biota and improving our ability to predict how animals will move across the landscape as the climate changes.



Her research uses ecological niche modeling (ENM) to determine the extent to which climatic factors alone can account for the migration patterns, or whether other factors such as predation intensity are needed to explain these patterns. The broader impacts of this work range from strengthening online repositories of paleontological data to enhancing our understanding of how species will respond to ongoing global change.

## Dogpatch Art Walk, March 23rd, 2024, 11 AM



This exclusive, guided tour of contemporary art will begin at the Minnesota Street Project, a three-warehouse complex dedicated to educating the public through exhibitions, galleries and programs. Led by collector, traveler and art historian Rhoda Becker; participants will have access to galleries, meet owners and collectors, speak with artists, and get an insider's perspective on this vibrant contemporary art community. Our guide will have previewed the most current exhibits and created a varied itinerary showcasing current artists and works. They recommend allowing three hours to view all galleries and visit with the creatives.

The Minnesota Street Project is in Dogpatch which is the new epicenter of innovation, craft and artistic expression. The Museum of Craft and Design, the California College of the Arts, the San Francisco Center for the Book, entrepreneurial ventures, and various art spaces make this an internationally recognized art destination. After the tour, people may want to explore this vibrant area. Nearby cafes are available for lunch and refreshments, or bring your own and eat in the nearby park

When: March 23rd, 2024

Where: The Minnesota Street Project, 1275 Minnesota St. San Francisco

Time: 11 AM, Length: 3 hours

Group limit: 20

Cost: members \$40 (\$15 for scholarships), Non-members \$50 (\$25 goes for scholarships)

Parking: Ample street parking

PBKNCA Rep: Tina Hittenberger. Register at <https://pbknca.com/event-5381075>

### ΦBK Board, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

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Rocklin, (530) 933-1550, melstevens@berkeley.edu  
O'Neil Dillon, First Vice President – Programs  
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**The Editor thanks Dr. Larry Lerner for proofing this newsletter**

Note – Please do not return this form if you have already paid the deposit.

ΦBK at Asilomar February 16-19, 2024, Deadline for Registration: January 20, 2024

Please pay the appropriate fee:

- A/ You are a currently paid member of PBKNCA or a new initiate who has joined PBKNCA – \$150.00**
- B/ You were elected to PBK in college but have not joined PBKNCA or your dues have lapsed – \$180.00**

Please make checks payable to PBKNCA. Enter “Asilomar” on check  
Mail to: Barry Haskell, 1190 Fairbrook Dr., Mountain View, CA 94040  
Questions? Call Deirdre Frontczak at 707 546-4238

Member Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Member Phone #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Member Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Member Email (essential!)** \_\_\_\_\_

First time you have attended our Asilomar Conference? \_\_\_\_\_ Where initiated to ΦBK (For your nametag) \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_